

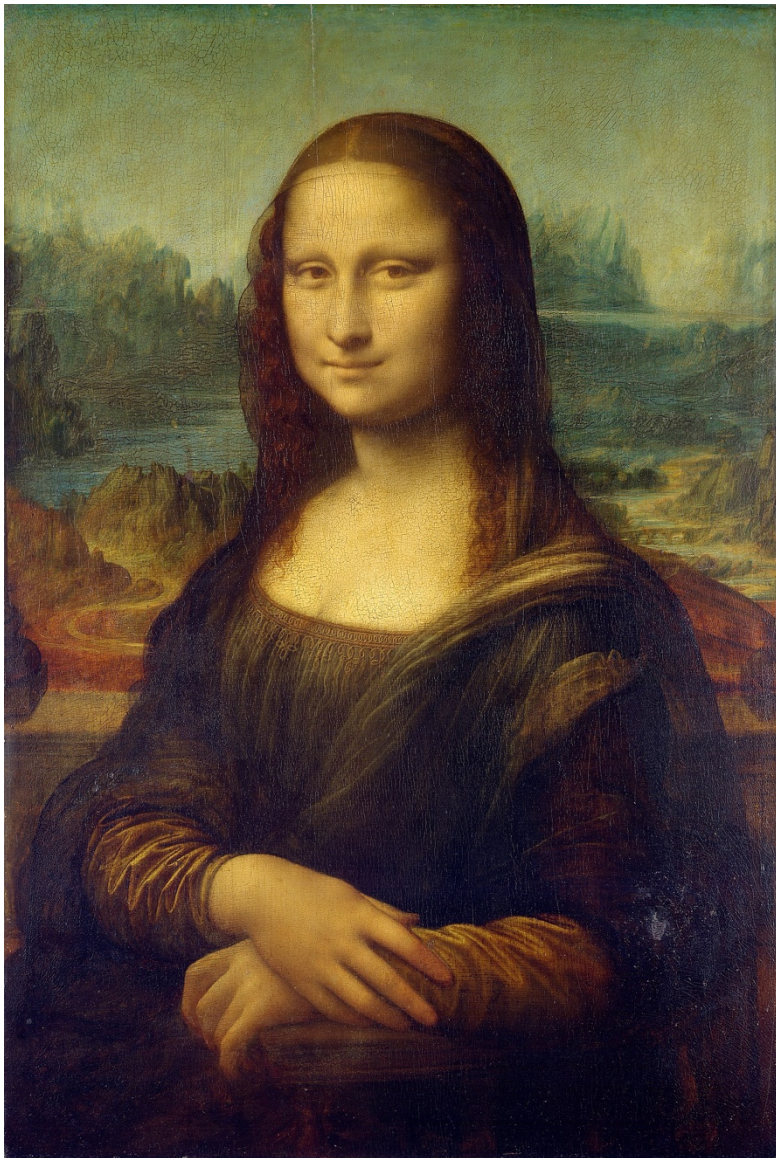
Art/Western Cultural History essays

Essay #4: Compare and contrast another painting from this time period to da Vinci's.

4 paragraphs: an introduction paragraph, a paragraph about the similarities between the two paintings, a paragraph about the differences between the two paintings, and a conclusion paragraph.

Use the handouts (in your art binder) about the art elements, art study with the 5 common topics, and the art terminology for analyzing art. These handouts will help guide your thoughts.

Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, c. 1506, oil painting on wood
High Renaissance



Compare this work to another similar Renaissance painting.

Talk about similarities and difference in:

- Medium/technique
- Composition (are both arranged similarly? Symmetrical? Same size figures? Same number of figures? Same arrangement of figures?)
- Use of colors
- Are objects in the painting the same? Are there different objects?
- How about symbolism?
- Their treatment of space?
- How about the background?
- The style (details, facial features, treatment of fabric, lighting, etc.)
- Are there things going on in the world that impacted both artists?
- How about their worldview?
- The meaning and story behind each painting?

Hint: Include the two images in your paper (two additional pages). And give the information for each painting under each image. When writing about art, visuals are helpful!

Here are some ideas for paintings to compare to da Vinci's.

Look up portrait paintings by these Renaissance artists for a comparison:

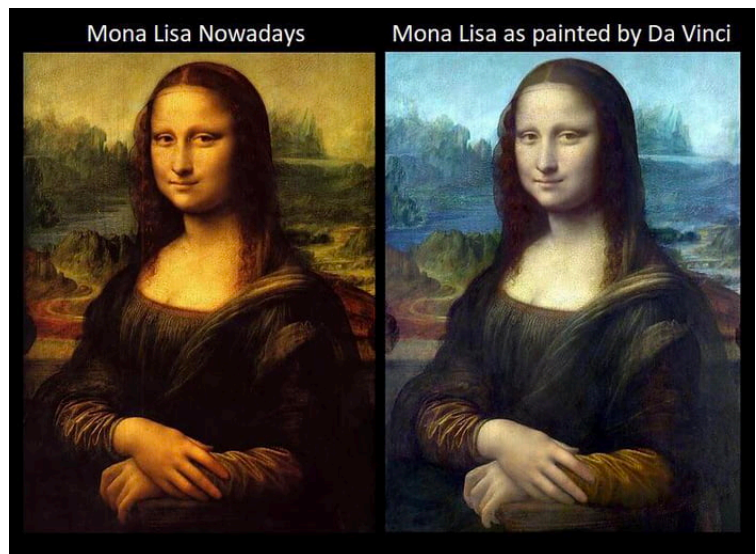
- Raphael
- Michelangelo
- Rogier van der Weyden
- Hans Holbein
- Van Eyck
- Titian
- Giorgione
- Tintoretto
- Bronzino
- Giorgio Vasari

About da Vinci:

- One of the leading artists of the High Renaissance in Italy.
- Lived 1452-1519
- Best example of a “Renaissance man” – he mastered many trades: painting, sculpting, architecture, engineering, science, etc.
- Da Vinci was a genius who epitomized the Renaissance humanist ideal
- He is believed to have been a Christian/Catholic

Mona Lisa

- This is the world’s most famous portrait. It is a new kind of portrait, depicting the sitter as an individual personality who engages the viewer psychologically. It is a convincing representation of a person. Unlike earlier portraits, it doesn’t serve solely as an icon of status.
- The identity of the sitter is still debated. Some believe the woman depicted is Lisa Gherardini or Lisa del Giocondo, the wife of the noble Florentine merchant Francesco del Giocondo.
- Mona means “my lady” in Italian.
- Her gaze is directed at the viewer. Renaissance etiquette dictated that a woman shouldn’t look directly into a man’s eyes. This self-assured young woman engages the audience psychologically.
- This painting shows Leonardo’s skill with chiaroscuro and atmospheric perspective. It is also a prime example of Leonardo’s famous smoky *sfumato* (misty haziness, smoky haze); subtle adjustment of light and blurring.
- Due to the nature of oil painting darkening over time, this painting is darker today than 500 years ago, and the colors are less vivid. The varnish that was painted over it caused the colors to appear mostly yellow and brown.
- The landscape with roads and bridges seem to lead nowhere, adding to the mysterious quality.
- Originally, Mona Lisa was represented in a *loggia* (columnar gallery), but later the painting was trimmed, eliminating the columns. The remains of the column bases are still seen to the left and right of Mona Lisa’s shoulders.
- The painting has the symmetrical, stable, triangular composition of many Renaissance paintings.



Faded colors

original colors

Art comparison chart

These are just a few questions to get you thinking about how to compare the works of art. All of these questions may not apply, and there might be additional questions that are relevant; this is not a complete list. The information above, your own observations, and with additional research you can complete this chart to help with your essay. I have *started* the chart to help get you going. Spend some time truly observing each work and fill in the chart.

	Artwork #1 Artist: Leonardo da Vinci Title: <i>Mona Lisa</i>	Artwork #2 Artist: Title:
Describe the composition of each work	- symmetrical, triangular composition	
Describe the use of color in each piece	- yellows, browns, blue, red	
Describe the use of values, light, and shadow	- even lighting with soft highlights and shadows – chiaroscuro & sfumato - full range of values	
Describe the use of space. Is it flat or more three-dimensional and realistic?	- deep sense of space with the landscape behind her - atmospheric perspective (mountains in the distance are hazy)	
What is the story, meaning, mood, emotions, etc.?	- mysterious - slight smile	
What/who is depicted? What is happening in the image?	- The woman is sitting for a portrait - The identity of the sitter is still debated. Some believe the woman depicted is Lisa Gherardini or Lisa del Giocondo	

<p>Under what conditions was this artwork created? (for example, was a war going on, persecution, were the arts thriving...?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thriving arts during the High Renaissance in Italy - private commission (do research) 	
<p>What was the worldview or prevailing philosophy at the time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Christianity/Catholic - Humanism 	
<p>Is there any symbolism used?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (do research) 	
<p>Is there anything about the artist that influenced their decisions making? For example, were they a Christian? Were they commissioned by someone and told what to create?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (do research) 	
<p>Is there a focal point in each?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The woman's face/eyes 	
<p>Did a previous art style influence this artwork?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 	
<p>Do these two works of art have a direct relationship to each other?</p>		

Essay Outline

After completing the chart, you will have it to refer to for writing your essay.

Think of your thesis. Was one artist more of a master? Did one artist impact the world more? Or did one of the artworks have more of an impact on you? Why? Or are both artists great examples of a certain style or technique? Did an event in the world or certain politics play a major role in how the artwork was made?

Thesis:

Introduction paragraph:

Do some research. Introduce each artist. Where are they from? What time period?

Some ideas to consider including: How were they trained? Did both artists work in the same style? Did they have similar artistic goals, styles, patrons, etc.? Was there something going on in the world that affected both artists? Briefly introduce each painting. What is depicted in each? What is the technique in each? What is the style for each?

Similarities paragraph:

Use the questions on page 2 and the comparison chart to put the similarities together.

Differences paragraph:

Use the questions on page 2 and the comparison chart to put the differences together.

Conclusion paragraph:

Wrap it up. Restate thesis. Back it up. Give context/circumstances to each artist and artwork (what was going on in the world, what were the artists beliefs, etc.). How did this relate to the artwork and artist? Did it impact their artwork? Did it dictate what they painted and why? Did a previous art style or artist influence these artists? Or did either of these artists influence the art world?