

IB/AP ART Summer Creative Assignment

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## Vincent van Gogh's letters to his brother Theo



**"How rich art is; if one can only remember what one has  
seen, one is never without food for thought or truly  
lonely, never alone."**

*Vincent van Gogh, Letter to Theo (15 November 1878)*



After having failed as an art dealer and a Protestant evangelist, Van Gogh decided at the age of 27 to become an artist. He received very little of formal education and mostly, with singular feverishness and dedication, studied and practiced on his own. In his 33rd year he moved to Paris, blossoming into a brilliant colorist. Two years later he moved south to Arles, producing bold, bright paintings and drawings at a miraculous rate. He started suffering bouts of insanity. He killed himself at the age of 37. Vincent and his brother Theo who had supported him financially and emotionally throughout his career had been able to sell only one painting while he was still alive. Their daily correspondence offer tremendous insights into Vincent's' life and works. His letters are a striking, and sometimes painful, exploration of a man consumed with doubt, filled with compassion and profoundly troubled.

### **ASSIGNMENT Part 1**

After reading the book; “Letters to My Brother”, by Vincent Van Gogh;

In a 5 paragraph essay (minimum 1 page, single space, font Times Roman, p12) present how the artist expresses his emotion.

**How he describes his art**, the colors, brushstrokes, composition.

**Describe where is he finding his inspiration** how this helps him to reveal the subject's mood. **Find the clues** about the artist's state of mind. Talk about Van Gogh's depression, despair, and hopelessness and **how his artwork was received** by his family, friends and society. **Discuss his feelings** and what was going on in his life and **their influence on his artwork**. (All quotes from the text need to be in addition to the 5 paragraph structure of your text).

### **Part 2**

**Write 5 letters** to a friend, family, or a teacher describing your own experiences with art, summer travels, illustrate the letters with sketches of the things you are describing.

### **Part 3**

**Create a landscape painting** (oil, acryl, watercolor) min. size 14X18, relevant to your summer experience you are describing in your letters.



Verder een dode maan in de hoogte van de teekening  
dan het dode van een paar tien meter gehak. Spellen en  
manieren.  
En dan het dode van een lent veld met een roef door gebouwen,  
de velden in gelijke gaten gevuld, en naar te begermen  
(reuzen is van Paillard). En dan een dode van alle velden.



Nu heb ik daerby een beproef van sand aquarel te  
maken als bovenstaand motief.

Suggested research to complement your reading

[http://www.artquotes.net/masters/vangogh/vangogh\\_landscape.htm](http://www.artquotes.net/masters/vangogh/vangogh_landscape.htm)

[http://www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/HD/gogh/hd\\_gogh.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/HD/gogh/hd_gogh.htm)

<http://earthrenewal.org/vincent.htm>

<http://www.serve.com/Lucius/VanGogh.index.html>

<http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/10/152.htm>

