

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

IN THIS UNIT YOU WILL ...

Watch and listen	watch and understand a video about an art district in Beijing.
Reading skill	scan to find information.
Critical thinking	understand and evaluate analogies.
Grammar	paraphrase quotations; use substitution; use ellipsis.
Academic writing skills	write arguments, counter-arguments and refutations.
Writing task	write an argumentative essay.





UNLOCK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Do you like art and design? If so, what media (e.g. painting, music, architecture, fashion) do you like?
- 2 Are you artistic? If so, what kinds of artistic activities do you like doing?
- 3 Look at the photo. Would you call this art? Why / Why not?
- 4 Are art and design important for a country's economy? Why / Why not?



WATCH AND LISTEN



ACTIVATING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

PREPARING TO WATCH

- 1 Work with a partner and answer the questions.
 - 1 Where can you find art, either in your own home city or town, or in a city you have visited?
 - 2 Can you find art outside of museums? Where?
 - 3 What happens to older buildings in your city? Are they usually knocked down, or are some used for a different purpose?
 - 4 What are some examples of old buildings that have a new function?
- 2 Look at the pictures from the video. Discuss the questions with a partner.
 - 1 Where do you think these pictures were taken?
 - 2 How are these places different from where you usually find art?
 - 3 Do you consider the pieces in the video art? Why / Why not?

PREDICTING CONTENT USING VISUALS

GLOSSARY

state-run (adj) operated by the government

present a ... face (phr) give a ... impression

mainstream arts scene (phr) the places and ways in which well-known artists usually work and exhibit their work

struggling artists (n) artists who are working hard but whose work is not well known

WHILE WATCHING

- 3 Watch the video. Which sentence best represents the main idea of the video?
- 1 Art Zone 798 hosts art exhibitions, film festivals, fashion shows, and theatre productions.
 - 2 Art Zone 798 is a popular attraction today but soon another popular space will replace it.
 - 3 Art Zone 798 began as a work space for struggling artists and is now a major arts centre.

- 4 Watch again. Complete the summary.

Years ago, Art Zone 798 was a ¹_____. In the 1990s, after the buildings were abandoned, ²_____ began to move in. It was the perfect space for the ³_____ that many of these artists created. Many different kinds of artists worked at Art Zone 798, including ⁴_____, fashion designers, photographers and film directors. Soon, more well-known artists began to display their work there, and the centre became ⁵_____ with tourists and local visitors. In addition to the art work, there are services for visitors, including ⁶_____. Struggling artists can no longer ⁷_____ in Art Zone 798. They have moved to ⁸_____.

- 5 Circle the statements you can infer from the video. Discuss your answers with a partner.

- 1 The government opposed the artists' centre when it began in the 1990s.
- 2 It is possible for some artists to earn a good income today in Beijing.
- 3 It may still be difficult for some artists to earn enough money in Beijing.
- 4 There are many other centres like Art Zone 798 in Beijing.

DISCUSSION

- 6 Discuss the questions with your partner. Compare your answers with another pair.
- 1 Would you like to visit Art Zone 798? Why / Why not?
 - 2 Have you visited an art centre like this at home or in another country? What was it like?
 - 3 Do you think there should be special spaces where struggling artists can work and show their work? Should the government support the space? Why / Why not?

UNDERSTANDING MAIN IDEAS

SUMMARIZING

MAKING INFERENCES

READING 1

UNDERSTANDING KEY VOCABULARY

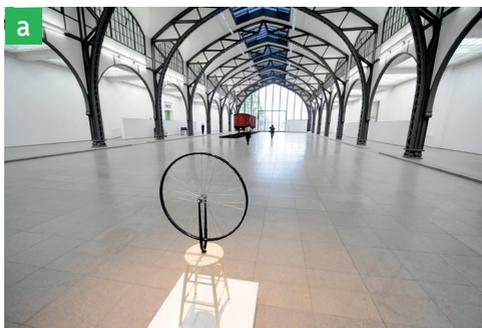
PREPARING TO READ

- 1 You are going to read a magazine article about the nature of art. Read the definitions. Complete the sentences with the words in bold.

aesthetic (adj) relating to the enjoyment or study of beauty, or showing great beauty
conceptual (adj) based on ideas or principles
contemporary (adj) existing or happening now
distinction (n) a difference between similar things
established (adj) generally accepted or familiar; having a long history
notion (n) a belief or idea
significance (n) importance

- 1 A sculpture in which the artist's main idea or message is considered more important than the technique can be called _____ art.
- 2 The new museum in town has a lot of _____ appeal. The exterior of the building is very beautifully designed.
- 3 It is common these days to prefer _____ architecture, but I like the classic, old homes in my neighbourhood.
- 4 In art class we learned the _____ between fine art and applied art.
- 5 It is now well _____ that Pablo Picasso was one of the great artists of the twentieth century.
- 6 Art historians often explain the _____ of very famous works of art and how they may have influenced our society.
- 7 Many people share the _____ that the term 'art' also applies to things like car and video game design.

- 2 Read the descriptions (1–4) and match the artists to the photographs (a–d) of their work.
- 1 **Andy Warhol:** An artist who was famous for his colourful paintings of ordinary objects such as soup tins. _____
 - 2 **Damien Hirst:** A radical British artist who famously used dead animals in his work. _____
 - 3 **Marcel Duchamp:** An early twentieth-century French artist who changed what people thought of sculpture. _____
 - 4 **Yayoi Kusama:** A Japanese artist famous for her use of bright colours and dots. _____



WHILE READING

SKILLS

Scanning to find information

Scanning is a reading technique used to look for specific information in a text. If you know what information you want from a text, you do not need to read it all. Just move your eye quickly down the page looking for the key words related to the information you want. When you find the information, you can just read that part in detail.

- 3 Scan the magazine article on page 152 and put the artists in the order in which they are mentioned.
- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| a Yayoi Kusama _____ | c Marcel Duchamp _____ |
| b Damien Hirst _____ | d Andy Warhol _____ |

ALL THAT ART IS

1

What is art? This question has puzzled philosophers and great thinkers for centuries. In fact, there is disagreement about exactly what art is. Most of us would agree that Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is art, but what about a video game? One dictionary definition states that art is 'making objects, images or music, etc. that are beautiful or that express certain feelings'. This, however, could be regarded as too broad a definition. There are actually a number of different categories of objects and processes under the umbrella term of *art* which can be explored.

2

Art is typically divided into two areas: fine art (such as painting, sculpture, music and poetry) and applied art (such as pottery, weaving, metalworking, furniture making and calligraphy). However, some claim that the *art* label can also be attached to car design, fashion, photography, cooking or even sports. Fine art is categorized as something which only has an **aesthetic** or **conceptual** function. This point was made over a thousand years ago by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who wrote, 'The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things but their inward **significance**'. He noted that artists produced objects, drama and music which reflected their emotions and ideas, rather than just trying to capture a true image of nature. Andy Warhol, the American artist famous for his Pop Art in the 1960s, once said, 'An artist produces things that people don't need to have'. This is the **distinction** between fine and applied art. Applied arts require an object to be functional as well as beautiful.

3

In the twentieth century, artists began to challenge the **established** idea of art. The French artist Marcel Duchamp changed people's **notion** of what sculpture was, for example, by mounting a bicycle wheel upside down on a stool in 1913 and calling it art. Duchamp said, 'Everything an artist produces is art'. In 2002, Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama created a viewer participation work called 'The Obliteration Room'. In this work, a white room, with white furniture and objects, is covered by visitors with many colourful sticker dots. Today, many people complain about the lack of skill in the production of conceptual artistic objects. Some **contemporary** artists use assistants to produce all their art for them. British artist Damien Hirst claims that as long as he had the idea, it is his work. He has compared his art to architecture, saying, 'You have to look at it as if the artist is an architect, and we don't have a problem that great architects *don't* actually build the houses'.

4

Despite a hundred years of modern art, fine art is still regarded as a preserve of the wealthy. Hirst's works, for example, sell for millions of dollars. Even so, we can see examples of art all around us which are not expensive. Many towns and cities have public art which can be enjoyed by all. Some museums, like the National Art Museum of China in Beijing, are free. Others are free for children and students. Street art is also popular in different neighbourhoods around the world. One British artist, Banksy, has become world-famous for unauthorized¹ works of art painted on building walls. These can be viewed at no charge by anyone who knows where to look for them.

5

Art anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake, in the book *What is Art For?* offers one intriguing function of art: 'the heightening of existence'. In other words, art makes our ordinary, everyday lives a little more special. This notion may not apply to all art, but perhaps we can agree that it is a good goal towards which all artists should reach.

¹unauthorized (adj) without official permission

Sweeping It Under the Carpet by Banksy



4 Read the magazine article again. Write *T* (true), *F* (false) or *DNS* (does not say) next to the statements. Then correct the false statements.

- _____ 1 The writer feels that the dictionary definition of *art* is too wide.

- _____ 2 Metalworking is an example of fine art.

- _____ 3 Some people argue that sports are a type of art.

- _____ 4 Aristotle was the first to say that art should be affordable for all.

- _____ 5 Andy Warhol invented Pop Art.

- _____ 6 'Art for art's sake' refers to applied art.

- _____ 7 Duchamp's bicycle wheel was sold at an art exhibition for a very high price.

- _____ 8 Damien Hirst produces all his own art.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

5 Which of the artists mentioned in the article would probably have these opinions? Write the names of the artists.

- 1 It is the idea of the work of art that is most important.

- 2 Art isn't functional. _____
- 3 Everything an artist makes can be considered art.

- 4 A building wall can be used like a canvas. _____
- 5 It does not matter if the artist doesn't actually make the work of art.

- 6 Everyone can be part of the creative process. _____

DISCUSSION

6 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- 1 What do you think is the main purpose of art? Does it need to have a purpose, or can it just be beautiful?
- 2 Do you think car design should be classified as art? What about graffiti? Explain your answer.
- 3 Which of the artists in the text do you agree with? Why?



READING 2

USING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

PREPARING TO READ

- 1 You are going to read an essay about photography. Work in pairs. Discuss which of the activities in the box you think are considered art.

computer games cooking drawing fashion
football gardening sculpture photography

UNDERSTANDING KEY VOCABULARY

- 2 Read the sentences and choose the best definition for the words in bold.

- 1 Critics **perceived** him to be an especially good painter of real-life situations.
a thought of in a particular way b misunderstood
- 2 A camera, unlike a person's hand, is a **mechanical** device.
a related to fixing equipment b related to machines
- 3 This artist uses many different **mediums**, such as chalk, oil, paint and pencil.
a materials used to create art b characteristics of art
- 4 The artist uses a **sophisticated** 3D printer to create perfectly identical plastic models of real people. The models show great detail from the wrinkles in people's faces to the folds in their clothing.
a basic and simple b highly developed and complex
- 5 News reporting, unlike other kinds of writing, is expected to be **objective** and not based on someone's opinion.
a based on facts and reality b focused on real objects
- 6 Although I do not think Banksy has the right to paint on buildings without permission, I do **acknowledge** that his work is very imaginative.
a agree; admit something is true b make a guess about something
- 7 I prefer sculptures that show something I can recognize rather than **abstract** ones.
a detailed b not of real things or people
- 8 The splash of white paint across the painting might look like an accident, but the artist placed it there **deliberately**.
a intentionally b dangerously



WHILE READING

- 3 Quickly scan the essay opposite. In which paragraphs are these points discussed?

- 1 The concept that fine art is one thing and photography is another. _____
- 2 Photography is more objective than other kinds of art. _____
- 3 Some photographers are more vocal about calling themselves artists. _____
- 4 Photography is a means of producing art, but it's not always art. _____

SCANNING TO FIND INFORMATION

PHOTOGRAPHY AS ART



- 1 The production of fine art is the use of skill and imagination to create aesthetic objects or experiences which can be shared with other people. Photography is thought by some to be a form of fine art because it is made using the same critical and creative process that a painter or sculptor would use. It seems clear, however, that there is a significant difference between creating images by hand – using paint, clay or other tools – and pointing a **mechanical** device at something interesting and clicking. Although photography does have some features in common with other kinds of art, it cannot be said that photography is unquestionably art.
- 2 It is true that photography can be appreciated on the same level as other recognized forms of visual art. Sometimes decisions involved in creating a photograph are similar to those made by any other artist. A photograph is not always just a record of the world, but a **deliberately** created image with its own artistic features. Ansel Adams, the American photographer, commented on this point when he noted that *take* is not the right verb for a photograph. Instead, he said, one *makes* a photograph. To this end, there is a growing trend for photographers to call themselves artists. However, we cannot ignore the fact that artists can sell their pieces in the higher-priced, fine-art markets, whereas photographers cannot. A photograph by German artist Andreas Gursky, for example, recently sold for almost \$4.5 million. No one would likely pay that much for a photograph unless the photographer presented himself as an artist.
- 3 Although some photography can be **abstract**, most photographs are basically **objective** records of a particular place at a particular time. Certainly we can appreciate a beautiful photograph when we see one, but any beauty that is **perceived** in the picture comes from the time and place where it was taken, and it is not the creation of the photographer. Also, **sophisticated** and expensive equipment often plays a greater role in the success of a photograph than the photographer's creativity. Even some of the greatest photographers **acknowledge** that there is a limit to the amount of influence they can have on a final product. Henri Cartier-Bresson, the famous French photographer, admitted that luck was the most important factor. Finally, photography is so widely used for practical functions that have little or nothing to do with art, such as police work, advertising and news reporting, that it cannot claim to be made for aesthetic purposes alone.
- 4 People have argued whether photography is art ever since the first photographers shared their work. A photographer may make the same aesthetic choices as a fine artist: subject matter, lighting, colour or even a theme or message. However, cameras can also be purely functional tools, capturing visual records and presenting information. Photography is a **medium** that can be used to make art, but that does not mean that all photography is art.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

MAKING INFERENCES

- 4 Read the essay again. Answer the questions.
- Which statement would the author of the article agree with most?
 - Photography is never art.
 - Photography shares some things in common with other art forms.
 - Why does the author mention the high selling price of the Andreas Gursky photograph?
 - to imply that photographers may call themselves artists to make more money
 - to show that even if it is not art, photographs are valuable
 - Why does the author paraphrase Henri Cartier-Bresson?
 - because it indirectly supports the thesis
 - to show that some photographers disagree with him

UNDERSTANDING PARAPHRASE

- 5 Match the paraphrases (a–e) to the original statements (1–5).

Original statements

- ... any beauty that is perceived in the picture is the beauty of the time and place where it was taken, and it is not the creation of the photographer. _____
- ... there is a significant difference between creating images by hand – using paint, clay or other tools – and pointing a mechanical device at something interesting and clicking. _____
- ... photography is so widely used for practical functions that have little or nothing to do with art, such as police work, advertising and news reporting, that it cannot claim to be made for aesthetic purposes alone. _____
- ... he noted that *take* is not the right verb for a photograph. Instead, he said, one *makes* a photograph. _____
- ... no one would likely pay that much for a photograph unless the photographer presented himself as an artist. _____

Paraphrases

- Since photography is frequently used for non-artistic purposes, it cannot be considered art.
- People are willing to pay a lot of money for a photograph which is perceived as art.
- Art cannot be created by a machine.
- The aesthetic value of a photograph comes from the natural world, not from the skill of the person holding the camera.
- Photography requires artistic input.

6 Match the opinions (1–5) to the people (a–e).

Opinions

- 1 There's no reason for a great photograph to be any cheaper than a great painting. _____
- 2 Even a child could take a great picture of that view. _____
- 3 There's a lot more skill to making a picture than just pointing a camera at something and clicking. It's something that I create. _____
- 4 Most of us would just walk by and not notice something that could make a fabulous photo. And even if we did notice we probably wouldn't know how to take a photo that would stir other people's feelings. _____
- 5 Sometimes you just see something that will make a great picture and the light is perfect and you have your camera with you. At other times, nothing seems to be right. _____

People

- a Ansel Adams
- b Henri Cartier-Bresson
- c Andreas Gursky
- d The author of the essay
- e Someone who believes photography is art

DISCUSSION

7 Work with a partner. Use ideas from Reading 1 and Reading 2 to discuss the following questions.

- 1 Look at the five statements in Exercise 6. What is each statement saying? Which do you agree with? Which do you disagree with?
- 2 Do you agree with the author's thesis 'It cannot be said that photography is unquestionably art'? Why / Why not?
- 3 Can a photograph ever be worth as much as a painting?
- 4 In Reading 1, the author mentions 'the heightening of existence' as one of the functions of art. Do you think photographs can achieve this? Why / Why not?



PARAPHRASING QUOTATIONS

One very important skill in academic writing is *paraphrasing*. Paraphrasing means putting someone else's ideas or quotations into your own words without changing the meaning. When you do this, you must cite the original source. Paraphrasing is used by writers to avoid *plagiarism* (using another person's ideas or work and pretending that it is your own) and to avoid including too many direct quotations.

Here are four techniques you can use to paraphrase:

- 1 Use reported speech – explaining someone else's opinion without using the same words by using reporting verbs such as *admit, state, say, feel, insist, believe, point out, emphasize, maintain, deny, suggest* and *theorize*.
 'Of course, it's all luck.' – Henri Cartier-Bresson
Henri Cartier-Bresson, the famous French photographer, admitted that luck was the most important factor.
- 2 Use synonyms or antonyms for key words.
Henri Cartier-Bresson admitted that luck was a significant component.
- 3 Change the part of speech of some words
Henri Cartier-Bresson made an admission that luck was important.
- 4 Change the sequence of the ideas in a sentence
Luck was important, according to Henri Cartier-Bresson.

Notice how all of these strategies are used in the paraphrase below.

Original quote: 'The chief enemy of creativity is good sense.' – Pablo Picasso

Paraphrase: *Pablo Picasso felt that doing things in the usual, sensible way was the main obstacle to imaginative art.*



- 1 Read the quotations and write sentences paraphrasing them. Your paraphrase should include the suggested language.
 'A picture is worth a thousand words.' – Napoleon Bonaparte (use the verb *explain*)
Napoleon Bonaparte explained that a picture could tell us the same as a thousand words could.
- 1 'A picture is a poem without words.' – Horace
 (use the reporting verb *pointed out* and a synonym phrase for *poem*)

- 2 'Creativity takes courage.' – Henri Matisse
(use the reporting verb *felt* and an antonym for *courage*)

- 3 'The painter has the universe in his mind and hands.' – Leonardo da Vinci
(use the reporting verb *state* and sequence the ideas differently)

2 Paraphrase the quotations using the strategies given opposite.

- 1 'Creativity is the power to connect the seemingly unconnected.'
– William Plomer _____

- 2 'I fight pain, anxiety and fear every day, and the only method I have found that relieves my illness is to keep creating art.' – Yayoi Kusama

- 3 'Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.'
– Thomas Merton _____

VOCABULARY FOR ART AND DESIGN

3 Read the definitions. Complete the sentences with the best adjective.

abstract (adj) not of real things or people
avant-garde (adj) relating to ideas and styles which are very original and modern
decorative (adj) made to look attractive
expressive (adj) showing what somebody thinks or feels
figurative (adj) showing people or things in a similar way to real life
lifelike (adj) looks very real
monumental (adj) very big
moving (adj) causing strong feelings of sadness or sympathy

- 1 The _____ bronze sculpture weighs seven tons.
- 2 It was a(n) _____ performance which left many people in tears.
- 3 I think art is purely _____. It is only there to look nice.
- 4 The tiger sculpture was so _____ that people were a little scared by it.
- 5 Her work was very _____; her ideas took years for people to accept as normal.
- 6 _____ art can look easy to produce because there are no realistic images.
- 7 He was interested in _____ art and produced many realistic portraits of people.
- 8 The paint was applied quickly to the picture in a(n) _____ and emotional way.



a lifelike sculpture



a figurative drawing

CRITICAL THINKING

At the end of this unit, you will write an argumentative essay. Look at this unit's writing task below.

Fashion, cooking and video games have all been likened to fine art. Choose *one* of these and discuss whether it should be considered fine art, comparable to painting or sculpture.

- Go back to Reading 2 and find examples where the author has a particular opinion, presents an opinion which is different and then explains why the other side is wrong. Complete the table.



ANALYZE

<p>paragraph 1 argument:</p> <p><i>It cannot be said that photography is unquestionably art.</i></p>	<p>argument against author's opinion:</p> <p><i>Photography does have features in common with other kinds of art.</i></p>	<p>why the other side is wrong:</p> <p><i>Pointing a mechanical device at something interesting and pushing a button is not enough to be 'art'.</i></p>
<p>paragraph 2 argument:</p>	<p>argument against author's opinion:</p>	<p>why the other side is wrong:</p>
<p>paragraph 3 argument:</p>	<p>argument against author's opinion:</p>	<p>why the other side is wrong:</p>

Understanding and evaluating analogies

An *analogy* is a comparison between two things, often used to help explain a principle or idea. They might seem to have no clear relationship, but by focusing on particular factors, interesting similarities can be identified. An example might be how a doctor and a detective approach their work in similar ways – they are both looking for causes which are not immediately obvious.



- 2 Read the quotations that use analogies. Circle whether they support or challenge the idea that fashion, cooking or video games are fine art.

1 'Unlike art, fashion rarely expresses more than the headlines of history'. – Alice Rawsthorn	support / challenge
2 'Video games are a unique form of artistic expression through what I call the "three voices": the voice of the designer or artist, the voice of the game and its mechanics and the voice of the player'. – Chris Melissinos	support / challenge
3 'The same amount of artistic expression goes into clothes, a piece of pottery or a painting'. – Zandra Rhodes	support / challenge
4 'For most gamers, video games represent a loss of those precious hours we have available to make ourselves more cultured, civilized and empathetic'. – Roger Ebert	support / challenge
5 Cooking 'doesn't involve the sense of transmission of human emotion in the way that the arts at their highest do'. – Denis Dutton	support / challenge
6 'The art of cooking: it's when you mix craftsmanship at the highest level with creativity'. – Éric Ripert	support / challenge

- 3 Complete the sentences. Give reasons for your answers.

- I *agree* / disagree with Zandra Rhodes's argument that the same amount of artistic expression goes into clothing, pottery and paintings because clothes have to be practical enough to wear.
- I *agree* / *disagree* with Éric Ripert when he says cooking is the mixture of great craftsmanship with creativity because _____.
- I *agree* / *disagree* with Roger Ebert, who argued that video games make us less civilized and empathetic, because _____.
- I *agree* / *disagree* with Denis Dutton, who suggests that cooking doesn't involve the expression of human emotion in the way that other forms of art do, because _____.
- I *agree* / *disagree* with Chris Melissinos's argument that video games are a unique form of artistic expression because _____.
- I *agree* / *disagree* with Alice Rawsthorn's suggestion that fashion is not a true art form because _____.

- 4 Work with a partner. Can you think of any analogies of your own related to the essay question?



GRAMMAR FOR WRITING

SUBSTITUTION

GRAMMAR

In academic writing, writers try to avoid repetition when possible. To do this, you can substitute pronouns or other words for nouns or noun phrases. In the sentence below, *this* is used to avoid repetition.

Although many people find cars beautiful, ~~finding cars beautiful~~ **this** does not make cars art.

Here, two pronouns are used in this way:

A work of art can mean different things to different people.

That is one reason people may find **it** interesting.

- 1 Read the paragraph and underline the words the author has substituted for the full name of the car.

The Jaguar E-type is probably one of the most famous cars ever produced. The two-seater roadster was the fastest sports car on the market in 1961. The aerodynamic styling of the car is functional yet beautiful. The bullet shape of the E-type contrasts with the body's curves. The machine's most prominent feature is the long, projecting bonnet which contains the powerful engine. The view of the car's shape is as beautiful from the driving seat as it is to the pedestrian. It is easy to see why Enzo Ferrari called it 'the most beautiful car in the world'.



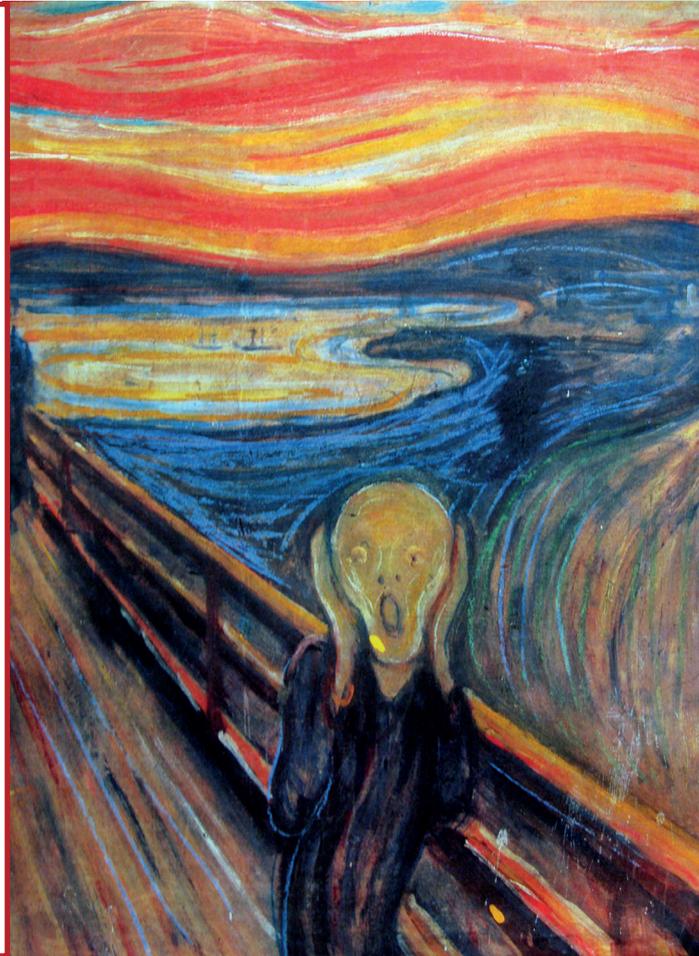
ELLIPSIS

Another way to avoid repetition is to leave out some words which have already been mentioned. This is called *ellipsis*.

Some photos have a very clear meaning, but other photos **do not** ~~have a clear meaning~~.

- 2 Read the paragraph and cross out any words or phrases which can be removed without affecting the meaning of the text. Add any substitutions (such as pronouns) which you think are necessary.

The Scream is the popular name given to each of four paintings of *The Scream* by the artist Edvard Munch who painted *The Scream* between 1893 and 1910. The National Gallery in Oslo holds one painting of *The Scream*, the Munch Museum holds two more paintings of *The Scream*, and the fourth version of *The Scream* sold for \$119 million at Sotheby's on 2 May, 2012. To explain the picture of *The Scream*, the artist Edvard Munch wrote in his diary, 'One evening I felt tired and ill. I stopped and looked out over the sea – the sun was setting, and the clouds were turning blood red. I sensed a scream passing through nature; it seemed to me that I heard the scream.'



ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS

ARGUMENTS, COUNTER-ARGUMENTS AND REFUTATIONS

SKILLS

Arguments

In academic writing, it is important to know how to create an effective argument. Using facts, statistics or other kinds of examples will make your argument more convincing. Also, the logic of your argument should be clear. Here is an example of a weak argument:

My cousin Tom is not a good artist because I don't like his paintings.

This argument does not contain any support other than the writer's opinion, and it does not come across as logical. Also, an argument is not a statement of fact – it is something people might disagree with.

My cousin Tom only paints with the colour brown.

Here is an example of a stronger argument:

My cousin Tom's art is not as interesting as Picasso's because Tom always paints the same subject and only uses the colour brown.

This argument uses specific characteristics of the painter's work as support, and it is logical how the writer arrived at his or her opinion.

- 1 Read each pair of arguments and circle the stronger argument. Explain why you think the other argument is weaker.
 - 1 a Photography is art because 73% of people reported that they have had a 'very emotional response' to a photograph at least once.
 - b Photography should be considered art because we often see framed photos hanging in people's homes and offices.

 - 2 a Fashion is art because fashion designers have to make decisions about colour and working with colour is an artistic activity.
 - b Fashion design uses creativity to make us think or feel emotion just like other types of art.
-
-
- 3 a Students should study art because, in my opinion, it is fun to create art.
- b Students should study art because it has been linked with general success in other subject areas.
-
-

Counter-arguments and refutations

You can strengthen your argument by giving a *counter-argument* and a *refutation*. By presenting the counter-argument, you show that you have considered another point of view. By refuting it with reasons and evidence, you show why the counter-argument does not weaken your own point of view.

Consider this argument:

Photography is a useful medium, but it is not art.

The writer follows this with a counter-argument:

It is true that photography and fine art have some things in common.

Then the writer gives a refutation. Refuting the counter-argument shows the strength of the writer's position:

However, it is still the case that using your hands to create art requires more imagination than using a mechanical device.

The phrase '*However, it's still the case that ...*' indicates the author's argument is still valid.

- 2 Work with a partner. Complete these counter-argument and refutation sentences in a way which makes sense.

1 Critics of mandatory art education say that art is not as important as academic subjects. Even though that might be true, _____

2 Some people believe that art is only for the rich. However, _____

3 Opponents of public funding for art _____

Nevertheless, public art beautifies our town and enriches our community culture.

- 3 Read the arguments and counter-arguments and give a refutation.

1 **Argument:** Photography is fine art, just like paintings and sculptures.

Counter-argument: Some people say that photography is not truly fine art because anyone can pick up a camera and take photos.

Refutation: _____

2 **Argument:** Graffiti artists deserve praise and recognition for their work.

Counter-argument: Many critics do not believe that graffiti artists like Banksy should receive praise for their work because it is illegal.

Refutation: _____

- 4 Work in pairs. Compare your answers and refutations. Do you agree? If not, explain to your partner why you think you are right.

WRITING TASK

Fashion, cooking and video games have all been likened to fine art. Choose *one* of these and discuss whether it should be considered fine art, comparable to painting or sculpture.

PLAN

- 1 Look back at your notes in Critical thinking. Create an outline for your essay using the following structure for your body paragraphs.

Body paragraph 1: Evidence in favour of one position, counter-argument, refutation
Body paragraph 2: Evidence in favour of one position, counter-argument, refutation
Body paragraph 3: Evidence in favour of one position, counter-argument, refutation

- 2 Refer to the Task checklist below as you prepare your essay.

WRITE A FIRST DRAFT

- 3 Write your essay. Write 350–400 words.

REVISE

- 4 Use the Task checklist to review your essay for content and structure.

TASK CHECKLIST	✓
Did you provide strong arguments for your position as well as counter-arguments and refutations for each argument?	
Did you paraphrase information correctly?	

- 5 Make any necessary changes to your essay.

EDIT

- 6 Use the Language checklist to edit your essay for language errors.

LANGUAGE CHECKLIST	✓
Did you use substitution and ellipsis where appropriate?	
Did you use vocabulary for art and design?	

- 7 Make any necessary changes to your essay.

OBJECTIVES REVIEW

1 Check your learning objectives for this unit. Write 3, 2 or 1 for each objective.

3 = very well 2 = well 1 = not so well

I can ...

watch and understand a video about an art district in Beijing. _____

scan to find information. _____

understand and evaluate analogies. _____

analyze and evaluate arguments _____

paraphrase quotations. _____

use substitution. _____

use ellipsis. _____

write arguments, counter-arguments and refutations. _____

write an argumentative essay. _____

2 Go to the *Unlock* Online Workbook for more practice with this unit's learning objectives.



WORDLIST

abstract (adj)

acknowledge (v)

aesthetic (adj)

avant-garde (adj)

conceptual (adj)

contemporary (adj)

decorative (adj)

deliberately (adv)

distinction (n)

established (adj)

expressive (adj)

figurative (adj)

lifelike (adj)

mechanical (adj)

medium (n)

monumental (adj)

moving (adj)

notion (n)

objective (adj)

perceive (v)

significance (n)

sophisticated (adj)

= high-frequency words in the Cambridge Academic Corpus