**Lesson 7**

**Cubism**

**THE COURSE TEXT and WORKSHEET (required to be completed and submitted)**

**Name and parallel group (A or B): ……………………………………………………………………………..**

**Date of submission: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

*Before you read*

**Warm-up questions**

What do you know about Picasso? Does ‘Cubism’ have any advantages

over ‘Realism’? Why ‘Cubism’? Was it a popular artistic movement?

How did ‘Cubism’ break the artistic conventions?

**Skimming the text**

Read the text’s title (headings and subheadings) and

• Write some of the text’s keywords in the following blanks.

……………… ……………… ………………… ………………

• Write the names of some important people and places given in the

reading passage.

……………… ………………… ………………… ………………

• Read the first sentences of each paragraph. What do you think the

reading is probably about?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

**Group work (classroom activity)**

Discuss the following terms in groups and compare your answers with

your partners.

• Technological progress • Conventions of art

• Picasso • Perspective

• Photography • Space reconfiguration

*Part Ι. Reading*

**Cubism**

[1] ‘Cubism’ was a truly revolutionary style of modern art developed by

*Pablo Picasso* and *Georges Braques*. It was the first style of abstract art

which evolved at the beginning of the 20th century in response to a world

that was changing with unprecedented speed. ‘Cubism’ was an attempt by

artists to revitalize the tired traditions of western art which they believed

had run their course. The ‘Cubists’ challenged conventional forms of

representation, such as perspective, which had been the rule since the

Renaissance. Their aim was to develop a new way of seeing which

reflected the modern age.

[2] In the four decades from 1870-1910, western society witnessed more

technological progress than in the previous four centuries. During this

period, inventions such as photography, cinematography, sound recording,

the telephone, the motor car and the airplane heralded the dawn of a new

age. The problem for artists at this time was how to reflect the modernity

of the era using the tired and trusted traditions that had served art for the

last four centuries. Photography had begun to replace painting as the tool

for documenting the age. Artists needed a more radical approach - a “new

way of seeing” that expanded the possibilities of art in the same way that

technology was extending the boundaries of communication and travel.

This new way of seeing was called ‘Cubism’ - the first abstract style of

modern art. *Picasso* and *Braque* developed their ideas on ‘Cubism’ around

1907 in Paris and their starting point was a common interest in the later

paintings of *Paul Cézanne*.

[3] The limitations of perspective were also seen as an obstacle to progress

by the ‘Cubists’. The fact that a picture drawn in perspective could only

work from one viewpoint restricted their options. As the image was drawn

from a fixed position, the result was frozen, like a snapshot, but the

Cubists wanted to make pictures that reached beyond the rigid geometry

of perspective. They wanted to introduce the idea of ‘relativity’ - how the

artist perceived and selected elements from the subject, fusing both their

observations and memories into the one concentrated image.

**Image: GEORGES BRAQUE (1882-1963)**

[4] A typical ‘Cubist’ painting depicts real people, places or objects, but

not from a fixed viewpoint. Instead it will show you many parts of the

subject at one time, viewed from different angles, and reconstructed into a

composition of planes, forms and colors. The whole idea of space is

reconfigured: the front, back and sides of the subject become

interchangeable elements in the design of the work.

[5] The ‘Cubists’ believed that the traditions of western art had become

exhausted and another remedy they applied to revitalize their work was to

draw on the expressive energy of art from other cultures, especially

African art. However, they were not interested in the true religious or

social symbolism of these cultural objects, but valued them superficially

for their expressive style. They viewed them as subversive elements that

could be used to attack and subsequently refresh the tired tradition of

western art. This inspiration to cross-reference art from different cultures

probably came from *Paul Gauguin*, the French ‘Post-impressionist’ artist,

whose paintings and prints were influenced by the native culture of Tahiti

and the Marquesas Islands where he spent his final years.

**PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973)**

[6] ‘Cubism’ was born in France but emigrated across Europe and integrated

with the artistic consciousness of several countries. It emerged as ‘Futurism’

in Italy, ‘Vorticism’ in England, ‘Suprematism’ and ‘Constructivism’ in

Russia, and ‘Expressionism’ in Germany. It also influenced several of the

major design and architectural styles of the 20th century and prevails to this

day as a mode of expression in the language of art.

*Part ΙΙ. Word study: Pronunciations, definitions and examples*

**Emerge (v.) /**ɪˈməːdʒ/

Move out of or away from something and come into view.

*After 30 years of painstaking research, some of the answers are beginning*

*to* ***emerge****.*

**Evolve (v.) /**iˈvalv/

Develop gradually, esp. from a simple to a more complex form**.**

*Failure to* ***evolve*** *can then lead to extinction.*

**Exhausted (adj.) /**ɪɡˈzɔːstɪd/

(1) Drained of one's physical or mental resources. (2) Very tired.

*Aren't you* ***exhausted*** *from gossiping?*

**Extend (v.) /**ikˈstend/

(1) Cause to cover a larger area; make longer or wider. (2) Expand in

scope, effect, or meaning**.**

*I feel very tired. I may* ***extend*** *my vacation.*

**Herald (v.) /**ˈherəld/

Be a sign that (something) is about to happen.

*Clouds, too, often* ***herald*** *changes in the weather.*

**Obstacle (n.) /**ˈabstəkəl/

A thing that blocks one's way or prevents or hinders progress.

*Poverty is not an* ***obstacle*** *for education, is it?*

**Prevail (v.) /**prɪˈveɪl/

(1) Prove more powerful than opposing forces; be victorious. (2) Be

widespread in a particular area at a particular time; be current.

*Surely, justice and truth will* ***prevail*** *in the end.*

**Reconstruct (v.) /**riːkənˈstrʌkt/

Build or form (something) again after it has been damaged or destroyed.

(2) Form an impression, model, or re-enactment of (a past event or thing)

from the available evidence.

*In order to* ***reconstruct*** *the earthquake damages, we need a great deal of*

*money.*

**Revitalize (v.) /**riːˈvʌɪt(ə)lʌɪz/

(1) Imbue (something) with new life and vitality. (2) Revive.

*Your precise economic comments* ***revitalized*** *the company.*

**Revolutionary (adj.) /**rɛvəˈluːʃ(ə)n(ə)ri/

Engaged in or promoting political revolution.

*His* ***revolutionary*** *moral changes confused us all.*

**Rigid (adj.) /**ˈrɪdʒɪd/

Unable to bend or be forced out of shape; not flexible.

*A* ***rigid*** *code of ethics was established to improve the staff's relationships.*

**Subversive (adj.) /**səbˈvərsiv/

Seeking or intended to subvert an established system or institution.

*What's really* ***subversive*** *is to try to change the system from within.*

**Unprecedented (adj.) /**ʌnˈprɛsɪdɛntɪd/

Never done or known before.

*To our knowledge this rapid growth is* ***unprecedented****.*

*Part ΙΙΙ. Exercises*

**A. Open questions**

Based on the text you have read, answer the following questions orally.

1- Why do we call ‘Cubism’ a truly revolutionary style?

2- What did the ‘Cubists’ challenge? Why?

3- Can you discuss some of ‘Cubist’ paintings?

4- Why did ‘Cubists’ approach African art?

5- Which art schools have been derived from ‘Cubism’?

**B. Comprehension check**

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Write “T”

before true statements and “F” before false ones.

…..... 1. ‘Cubism’ was an attempt to revitalize the old traditions of

Western art which had run their course.

……. 2. In order to change the way of seeing the world, cubists

challenged the concept of perspective.

……. 3. The later paintings of Paul Cézanne were the starting point of

‘Cubism’.

……. 4. Cubists were interested in the true religious or social

symbolism of African art.

……. 5. ‘Cubism’ was a native school of French art which did not go

out of France.

……. 6. ‘Cubism’ is the result of African art.

…… 7. ‘Cubism’ was formed in Germany and immigrated to France

later.

**C. Multiple choice questions**

Read the reading passage carefully and select the most appropriate

answer for each of the following multiple-choice test items.

1- ‘Cubism’ was …………….

A) a response to a world that was changing with unprecedented

speed.

B) to revitalize the tired traditions of western art.

C) to develop a new way of seeing which reflected the modern age

D) All of the above

2- ‘Cubists’ challenged the ……………. of artworks.

A) medium B) perspective

C) genre D) form

3- All of the following are the characteristics of ‘Cubism’ except …………

A) relativity

B) fixed viewpoint

C) depicting normal people

D) different angles of view

4- ‘Interchangeable’ in paragraph 4 is closest in meaning to …………

A) acceptable. B) identical.

C) noticeable. D) different.

5- ‘Cubism’ is the first …………….

A) art school of the 20th century.

B) expressive art

C) abstract art school

D) formal art movement

**D. Word formation**

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the following table.

Make necessary changes.

**Noun Verb Adjective Adverb**

emergence emerge emergent

evolution evolve evolutionary evolutionarily

extension extend extensive extensively

revolution revolutionize revolutionary revolutionarily

1- Instead of escaping from your problems you should …………….

your situations.

2- The truth will ……………. one day, be sure!

3- It is a very time-consuming and gradual process. Nothing would

happen …………….

4- Egypt is the country of ……………. Deserts.

5- He is very old and tired. Probably, it is his last ……………. on the

stage before retirement.

**E. Synonym finding**

Find a single word in the passage which means:

1 exceptional, unique (para.1) ……………………..

2 creation, innovation (para.2) …………………….

3 every 10 years (para.2) …………………….

4 barrier, blockage (para.3) …………………….

5 mix, combine (para.3) ……………………..

6 exchangeable, similar (para.4) ……………………..

7 very tired (para.5) ……………………..

8 then, after (para.5) ……………………..

9 awareness (para.6) …………………….

10 manner, means (para.6) ……………………..

**F. Matching**

Match the words in column Ι with their appropriate equivalents in

column ΙΙ. Insert the letters in the parentheses provided. There are more

choices in column ΙΙ than required.

**column Ι column ΙΙ**

1 prevail (……) a. mirror

2 revitalize (……) b. local, natural

3 reflect (……) c. move abroad

4 progress (……) d. sequence

5 native (……) e. put together

6 emigrate (……) f. revive

7 integrate (……) g. current, usual

h. advance, development

**G. Cloze test (classroom activity)**

There are some missing words in the following text. Find the best

choice for each blank and mark it in your book.

Historians have divided the history of ‘Cubism’ into phases. In one

scheme, the first phase of ‘Cubism’, known as *Analytic Cubism*, a phrase

…..(1)….. by Juan Gris, was both radical and influential as a short but

highly significant art movement between 1910 and 1912 in France. A

second phase, *Synthetic Cubism*, ….(2)….. vital until around 1919, when

the ‘Surrealist’ movement gained …..(3)…... English art historian Douglas

Cooper proposed another scheme, describing three phases of Cubism in

his book, *The Cubist Epoch*. According to Cooper there was ‘Early

Cubism’, (from 1906 to 1908) when the movement was initially

…..(4)….. in the studios of Picasso and Braque; the second phase being

called ‘High Cubism’, (from 1909 to 1914) during ….(5)….. Juan Gris

emerged as an important exponent and finally ‘Late Cubism’ (from 1914

to 1921) as the last phase of ‘Cubism’ as a radical avant-garde movement.

**1**. A) made B) caused C) coined D) created

**2**. A) remained B) shocked C) found D) opened

**3**. A) certainty B) popularity C) validity D) reliability

**4**. A) initiated B) asked C) made D) developed

**5**. A) where B) when C) which D) whom

**References**

Barr, A. H. (1936). *Cubism and Abstract Art.* New York: Museum of Modern

Art.

Cauman, J. (2001). *Inheriting Cubism: The Impact of Cubism on American Art*.

New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries.

Cooper, D. (1970). *The Cubist Epoch*. London: Phaidon in association with the

Los Angeles County Museum of Art & the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Golding, J. (1959). *Cubism: A History and an Analysis.* New York: Wittenborn.

Source: KHAGHANINEJAD, Saber Mohammad. *English for the Students of Art*. Fars: Shiraz University Press 2016. ISBN 9789644626636.

(Adapted for Academic English course, Catholic theological faculty, Charles University, Prague.)