

PAINTING

Task 1: Read this description of a painting and complete the gaps with the verbs in brackets in the Present Simple or Past Simple. Then decide to which of the paintings below does it make reference.

KEY (painting 3)

Around 1469, a wealthy money changer commissioned a young painter named Sandro Botticelli to paint an altar piece. The scene this young artist set out to paint was well-known: the Three Wise Men, or Magi, arriving at the birth place of Jesus Christ. Many earlier paintings illustrate the Magi arriving at a stable, stately manger, fitting for the son of God. The young Botticelli, however, chose to place the scene in the dilapidated Roman ruin. At the center of this structure, he placed a sturdy rock for Mary and Jesus to sit high above their visitors. With this decision, Botticelli seemed to say Christianity will be built on sturdier stuff than Rome. Botticelli then populated the space with important men from his city. On the right side, he paints the man who paid for this work, Gaspare del Lama, looking out at the viewer and confidently pointing at himself so that there is no question who is responsible for this masterpiece. The Three Wise Men appear at the center of this painting, kneeling to Mary and Jesus. As models for these important figures, Botticelli used members of the important Medici family. Del Lama's career as a money changer would not have been possible without the help of the powerful Medici family, in particular Cosimo de Medici, who appears prominently at Mary's feet. The other wise men can be identified as Piero and Giovanni de Medici, Cosimo's two sons. And the young heir to Medici power, Lorenzo, could not be omitted from this painting's composition. He appears to the left of the manger. This painting seems to say the Medici legacy, with its many healthy heirs, will be built on sturdier stuff than Rome. Botticelli then filled the rest of the space with other friends and powerful figures from Florence. And, among the Florentine elite, the young, confident artist painted himself looking directly at the viewer. Paintings like "The Adoration of the Magi" reveal much more than a simple retelling of a biblical story. They can tell the story of, among other things, a modestly-born money changer attempting to spend his money virtuously by making a local chapel more beautiful, or the story of an ambitious younger painter, elevating the reputation of his craft to stand among the wealthy elite of his city.

(Full transcript:

Around 1469, a wealthy money changer commissioned a young painter named Sandro Botticelli to paint an altar piece. Botticelli would, of course, become known as one of the greatest painters of the High Renaissance, producing works like "La Primavera" and "The Birth of Venus." But, in 1469, he had not yet earned this reputation. The scene this young artist set out to paint was well-known: the Three Wise Men, or Magi, arriving at the birth place of Jesus Christ.

Botticelli would aspire to take this common theme and produce an entirely original work, while asserting himself among the most important citizens of Florence. Many earlier paintings illustrate the Magi arriving at a stable, stately manger, fitting for the son of God. The young Botticelli, however, chose to place the scene in the dilapidated Roman ruin. At the center of this structure, he placed a sturdy rock for Mary and Jesus to sit high above their visitors. With this decision, Botticelli seemed to say Christianity will be built on sturdier stuff than Rome. Botticelli then populated the space with important men from his city. On the right side, he paints the man who paid for this work, Gaspare del Lama, looking out at the viewer and confidently pointing at himself so that there is no question who is responsible for this masterpiece. Though born the son of a barber, del Lama amassed a good sum of money through currency exchange in his lifetime. He earned enough money to buy a burial chapel and decorate it with a pretty painting. The Three Wise Men appear at the center of this painting, kneeling to Mary and Jesus. As models for these important figures, Botticelli used members of the important Medici family. Del Lama's career as a money changer would not have been possible without the help of the powerful Medici family, in particular Cosimo de Medici, who appears prominently at Mary's feet. The other wise men can be identified as Piero and Giovanni de Medici, Cosimo's two sons. The business of money exchange had dubious ethical and legal associations, so the friendship of this powerful family was important. And the young heir to Medici power, Lorenzo, could not be omitted from this painting's composition. He appears to the left of the manger. This painting seems to say the Medici legacy, with its many healthy heirs, will be built on sturdier stuff than Rome. Botticelli then filled the rest of the space with other friends and powerful figures from Florence. And, among the Florentine elite, the young, confident artist painted himself looking directly at the viewer. Botticelli's presence in this painting illustrates a radical shift in the perception of artists during this time period. Botticelli did not view himself as a common craftsman hired for a simple job. He viewed himself as a friend to the powerful families of Florence. Paintings like "The Adoration of the Magi" reveal much more than a simple retelling of a biblical story. They can tell the story of, among other things, a modestly-born money changer attempting to spend his money virtuously by making a local chapel more beautiful, or the story of an ambitious younger painter, elevating the reputation of his craft to stand among the wealthy elite of his city.)

Painting 1



Painting 2



Painting 3



Painting 4



TASK 2: Listen to the description of the painting and correct your answers.

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/dissecting-botticelli-s-adoration-of-the-magi-james-earle#watch>

TASK 3: Complete the following paragraph with the appropriate prepositions.

*Dream Caused by the Flight of a
Bee around a Pomegranate a
Second before Waking Up
(Salvador Dalí, 1944)*

<http://www.museothyssen.org>

**KEY:**

Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee around a Pomegranate a Second before Waking Up was one of the few pictures Dalí painted in the United States. In this “hand-painted dream photograph” — as Dalí generally called his paintings — we find a seascape of distant horizons and calm waters, perhaps Port Lligat, amidst which Gala, once again, is the subject of the scene. Next to the naked body of the sleeping woman, which levitates above a flat rock that floats above the sea, Dalí depicts two suspended droplets of water and a pomegranate, a Christian symbol of fertility and resurrection. Above her flies a bee, an insect that traditionally symbolises the Virgin. In Gala’s mind the buzzing of the bee is translated into a dream in which a huge fish bursts out of the pomegranate in the upper part, and in turn spews out two menacing tigers and a bayonet; a second later the bayonet will sting Gala in the arm. Above them an elephant with long flamingo legs, found in other compositions of the period, carries on its back an obelisk — like Bernini’s elephant in the Piazza Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome — which symbolises the power of the pope.