“These are days of great beauty in tone and color; after I have made some progress in painting, I will succeed in expressing a little of it.”

—Vincent van Gogh
You will discover the letter as a literary form and as a means of communication.

You will use dictionaries and glossaries to expand your vocabulary.

You will learn the rules for the use of comparative and superlative adjectives.

You will study jargon.

You will explore electronic newspapers.

---

**Share Your Ideas**

- Are you interested in painting, sculpture, music, or any other kind of art?
- What do you feel when you see a work of art?
- Have you ever visited a museum? If so, what was your experience like?
- What can you learn about artists through their works? What do they reveal?
- What do you know about art movements? Do you have a favorite painter?

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**Up Next...**
From the Letters of Vincent van Gogh

Letter 183

The Hague, 24 March 1882

Theo,

I have been working very hard lately, and am busy from morning till night. First, the little drawings for C.M. They are finished, and I have sent them to him. I had hoped he would pay me at once, and since he has not, I am afraid he will forget it, and when will he send it now???

I continue to make such little views of the city almost every day, and have the knack now.

I wish Tersteeg or others, who pretend to be friendly or to want to help me would ask for things that I can make, instead of asking for impossible things which discourage instead of encourage me. Enfin, que soit. But I had trouble enough making them, perhaps more than 30 guilders’ worth. If people understood that nothing is nothing, and that days without a penny in my pocket are very hard and difficult, I think they would not begrudge me the little money I get from you which keeps me afloat in these hard times, not unnerve me by reproaches for taking it from you.

Don’t I deserve my bread if I work hard? Or am I not worthy of the means, which enable me to work…

Well, I’m getting on all right and feel that I am making progress. I must go on drawing for a year or at least a few months until my hand has become quite firm, and my eye steady; and then I don’t see any obstacles to my becoming quite productive in things that will sell. It is only reasonable for me to want these few months’ time. I cannot go quicker than that, for I should produce bad work, and that isn’t necessary: with a little patience my work can be good.

Can you send me some money soon? I hope so…

I wish you would become a painter; you can if you want to, and you wouldn’t lose by it— You would only become something better than if you remained an art dealer, even if you were the best of all art dealers. But you’ll have to plunge into it with all your strength to bring out the best that’s in you.

Before You Read

- How would you feel if someone read all your e-mails or text messages without your permission?
- What would that person discover about you?

Insight

Vincent Willem van Gogh (1853–1890)

Vincent van Gogh was a self-taught Dutch artist who used his talents to be a great artist as a draftsman and as a painter. Always determined to push and develop his skills—although consistently short of funds—Van Gogh was never short of inspiration. His life came to an abrupt end when he committed suicide. At that moment, his work was beginning to receive critical acclaim.

First published about a century ago, his letters are an amazing resource to study his life and works. They show his views on art, his struggle with mental illness, and his relationship with his loved ones.

- knack: [næk] n. a special skill or talent
- enfin, que soit: French for “finally, that is”
- begrudge: [bɛɡɹʤ] v. to give reluctantly; look upon with disapproval
I haven’t sent you any little sketches recently, I’m waiting until you come to see them for yourself— That’s better. I am busy drawing some figures and also a few landscapes, for instance, a nursery here on Schenkweg...

Theo, if you can send me some money, do; the sooner you send it, the sooner I shall be relieved of the worry.

Well—I have to work anyhow—adieu, write soon,

Yours sincerely,

Vincent

Letter 302
Sunday night
The Hague, 2 July 1883

Dear brother,

It may be feverishness, or nerves, or something else, I don’t know, but I don’t feel well. Perhaps I am thinking more than is necessary about that expression in your letter concerning various things; I hope so. And I have an uneasy feeling I can’t shake off, though I have tried to overcome it.

There isn’t any reason for it, is there? If there is anything, then tell me straight out of what kind of obstacles there are.

At all events, write too, by return of mail if possible, whether there is anything or not. I can’t help it if there is no reason for it, but all at once I’m in the dumps. It may be a reaction from my overexerting myself...

In fact, I have no real friend but you, and when I am in low spirits, I always think of you. I only wish you were here, that we might again talk together about moving to the country.

Except for what I told you about, there is nothing the matter with me, and things are going well—but perhaps I am a little feverish or something—I feel miserable. I had to pay money right and left—landlord, paint, baker, grocer, shoemaker, heaven knows what—and only a little is left. But the worst is that after many such weeks, one feels one’s resistance ebbing, and is overcome by a pervading feeling of weariness.

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- **sketch**: [sketʃ] n. a hastily executed drawing or painting, especially a preliminary one
- **Schenkweg**: a street in The Hague, Netherlands, where Van Gogh lived
- **overexert**: [ouvərəˈɛr(t) ] v. to make an excessive effort
- **ebb**: [eb] v. to diminish
If you can’t send anything at once, brother, at all events try to write me by return of mail if possible. And as to the future, if there is some danger, tell it straight out, “homme avisé en vaut deux,” it is better to know exactly what one has to fight against.

I have tried to work a little today, but suddenly I was overcome by a depression, which I cannot exactly account for. At such moments one wishes one were made of iron, and regrets that one is only flesh and blood.

I had written you early this morning, but after I had mailed my letter, it suddenly seemed as if all my troubles crowded together to overwhelm me, and it became too much for me because I could no longer look clearly into the future. I can’t put it any other way, and I can’t understand why I shouldn’t succeed in my work.

I have put all my heart into it, and for a moment at least, that seemed to me a mistake.

But, boy, you know it yourself—what things in practical life must one devote one’s strength and thought and energy to? One must take a chance and say, I will do a certain thing and carry it through. Well, then it may turn out wrong, and one may hit an impenetrable barrier when people do not care for it; but one needn’t care after all, need one? I don’t think one has to worry over it; but sometimes it becomes too hard, and one feels miserable against one’s will.

And now I thought, I am sorry that I didn’t fall ill and die in the Borinage that time, instead of taking up painting, for I am only a burden to you...

Things are looking dark right now...

Work is the only remedy; if that does not help, one breaks down. And you see the trouble is that the possibility of working depends on selling the work, for there are expenses—the more one works, the greater the expenses are (though the latter is not true in every respect). When one does not sell and has no other income, it is impossible to make progress, which would otherwise follow of its own accord.

The fact is, brother, that the general state of affairs oppressed me more than I could bear, and I am telling you my thoughts. I only wish you would come soon. And do write soon, for I need it. Of course, there is nobody but you whom I can speak to about it, for it does not concern other people, and they have nothing to do with it.

- **homme avisé en vaut deux**: French for “forewarned is forearmed”
- **overwhelm**: [ˈouər(ə)welm] v. to overcome in mind or feeling
- **Borinage**: area of Belgium where Van Gogh lived
Letter 565
Arles, c. 23 December 1888

My dear Theo,

Thank you very much for your letter, for the 100 Fr. note enclosed and also for the 50 Fr. money order.

I think myself that Gauguin was a little out of sorts with the good town of Arles, the little yellow house where we work, and especially with me. [Gauguin had written to Theo that Vincent and he could not go on living together “in consequence of incompatibility of temper.” The quarrel was made up and Gauguin wrote another letter, speaking of the first as a bad dream.]

As a matter of fact, there are bound to be for him, as for me, further grave difficulties to overcome here. But these difficulties are rather within ourselves, than outside. Altogether, I think that either he will definitely go, or else definitely stay. Before doing anything, I told him to think it over and reckon things up again.

Gauguin is very powerful, strongly creative, but just because of that he must have peace.

Will he find it anywhere if he does not find it here?
I am waiting for him to make a decision with absolute serenity.

A good handshake,
Vincent

[On the following day, December 24, a telegram arrived from Gauguin that called Theo to Arles. Vincent, in a state of terrible excitement and in a high fever, had cut off a piece of his own ear and taken it as a present to a woman in a brothel. There had been a violent scene; Roulin the postman managed to get him home, but the police intervened, found Vincent bleeding and unconscious in bed, and sent him to the hospital. Theo found him there, “poor fighter and poor, poor sufferer” and stayed over Christmas. Gauguin went back with Theo to Paris...]

Gauguin: Eugène Henri Paul Gauguin, French Postimpressionist painter that lived in van Gogh’s house for several months

temper: [ˈtempər] n. a characteristic state of mind, temperament

brothel: [ˈbraːθəl] n. an establishment where one pays for affection
My dear Theo,

Thanks for your letter. You are absolutely right when you say that M. Salles has been splendid in all of this, I am under the greatest obligation to him.

I want to tell you that I think I have done well to come here, because by seeing the reality of the assorted madmen and lunatics in this menagerie, I am losing my vague dread, my fear of the thing. And bit by bit I am getting to consider that madness is just a disease like any other. Thus the change in surroundings will do me good, I think.

As far as I can tell, the doctor here is on the opinion that what I had is some sort of epileptic attack. But I haven’t asked him more about it.

Have you received the case of paintings, I am curious to know if they have suffered, yes or no? I have two more on the go—violet irises and a lilac bush, two subjects taken from the garden.

The idea of my duty to get back to work occurs to me a lot, and I believe that all my faculties for work will soon come back to me. It’s just that the work often absorbs me so much that I think that for the rest of my life I will always be a bit absent-minded and awkward when shifting for myself.

I won’t write you a long letter—I want to try to reply to my new sister’s letter, which moved me very much, but I don’t know if I’ll be able to do it.

A handshake,

Ever yours,

Vincent
Letter 652

Auvers, 23 July 1890

[This letter was found on Vincent’s body after his suicide on the 27th.]

My dear brother,

Thanks for your kind letter and for the 50 Fr. note it contained.

There are many things I should like to write you about, but I feel it is useless. I hope you have found those worthy gentlemen favorably disposed toward you.

Your reassuring me as to the peacefulness of your household was hardly worth the trouble, I think, having seen the weal and woe of it for myself. And I quite agree with you that rearing a boy on a fourth floor is a hell of a job for you as well as Jo.

Since the last thing that matters most is going well, why should I say more about things of less importance? My word, before we have a chance of talking business more collectedly, there is likely to be a long way to go.

The other painters, whatever they think of it, instinctively keep themselves at a distance from discussions about actual trade.

Well, the truth is, we can only make our pictures speak. But still, my dear brother, there is this that I have always told you, and I repeat it once more with all the earnestness that can be imparted by an effort of a mind diligently fixed on trying to do as well as one can- I tell you again that I shall always consider that you are something other than a simple dealer in Corots, that through my mediation you have your part in the actual production of some canvases, which even in the cataclysm retain their quietude.

For this is what we have got to, and this is all or at least the chief thing that I can have to tell you at a moment of comparative crisis. At a moment when things are very strained between dealers in pictures by dead artists, and living artists.

Well, I have risked my life for my work, and it has cost me half my reason —all right— you can still choose your side, as far as I can tell you are not one of those dealers in men, I am sure you act with true humanity, but what do you expect?

- **weal**: [wil] n. well-being, prosperity, or happiness
- **Jo**: Johanna Gesina van Gogh-Bonger, Vincent van Gogh’s sister-in-law, Theo’s wife
- **earnestness**: [ərˈnɛstnɪs] n. seriousness, the quality of having sincere intentions
- **cataclysm**: [ˈkætəklaɪzm] n. a sudden and violent physical action that produces change
FOCUS the reading

> Vincent van Gogh’s letters shed light into the creative process of a genius and provide a deeper understanding of his relationship with art. After reading his letters, can you answer the question “who is Van Gogh?” **Look for** evidence in the text—facts and details—to support your conclusion. On a separate sheet of paper, **create** a table like the one below in order to list the facts and details that help you reach your conclusion regarding Van Gogh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Relationship with His Family</th>
<th>Relationship with His Peers</th>
<th>Mental Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Who is Theo? What details from the letters allow you to reach this conclusion?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>What details imply that Vincent van Gogh is struggling economically?</td>
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<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>What important detail is revealed in Letter 183 regarding Theo and Vincent’s relationship?</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Explain the importance of the following quotation: “In fact, I have no real friend but you, and when I’m in low spirits, I always think of you.” What does this reveal about Theo and Vincent’s relationship?</td>
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<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Describe the relationship between Vincent and Gauguin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>What does the ear incident reveal about Vincent's personality?</td>
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<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Where is Vincent when he writes Letter 591? What is significant about this place?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Does Vincent paint while in Saint-Rémy?</td>
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<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>What does Vincent recommend Theo do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>In his last letter to Theo, Vincent implies that he has been more than “a simple dealer.” How has Theo been more than a dealer?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CONNECT to the reading

> **Answer** the following questions in complete sentences.

  a. Who is Theo? What details from the letters allow you to reach this conclusion?
  b. What details imply that Vincent van Gogh is struggling economically?
  c. What important detail is revealed in Letter 183 regarding Theo and Vincent’s relationship?
  e. Explain the importance of the following quotation: “In fact, I have no real friend but you, and when I’m in low spirits, I always think of you.” What does this reveal about Theo and Vincent’s relationship?
  f. Describe the relationship between Vincent and Gauguin.
  g. What does the ear incident reveal about Vincent's personality?
  h. Where is Vincent when he writes Letter 591? What is significant about this place?
  i. Does Vincent paint while in Saint-Rémy?
  j. What does Vincent recommend Theo do?
  k. In his last letter to Theo, Vincent implies that he has been more than “a simple dealer.” How has Theo been more than a dealer?
ANALYZE the reading

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

a. Who do you think Vincent refers to when he says, “I think they would not begrudge me the little money I get from you”?

b. What is Vincent’s mood in Letter 183? Use specific details to support your answer.

c. There is another significant shift in mood in Letter 302. What specific details let you know that Vincent is depressed?

d. Explain the significance of the following quotation: “At such moments one wished one were made of iron, and regrets that one is only flesh and blood.”

e. What does Vincent mean when he says: “(...) work often absorbs me so much that I think that for the rest of my life I will always be a bit absent-minded and awkward”?

f. What role does poverty play in Vincent’s mental illness?

g. What is Vincent’s opinion of madness? How does being in an asylum change his perspective?

h. Explain the following quotation: “Well, I have risked my life for my work, and it has cost me half my reason…”

i. When he discusses the relationship between painters and the business of selling their paintings, he says, “We can only make our pictures speak.” What does he mean by this? Can a painting sell itself?

EVALUATE the reading

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

a. What do you think of Vincent van Gogh after reading some of his letters?

b. Do you think that Vincent van Gogh was a tortured artist? Why or why not?

c. What do you think about Theo van Gogh after reading the letters his brother sent him?

d. Vincent closes his last letter to Theo with a question, “but what do you expect?” Do you think he did this intentionally, or is the letter unfinished?

Epistolary Genre

While an epistle is a letter written to a group of people or a single person, the epistolary genre is a branch of literature that uses letters, diaries, newspaper clippings, e-mails, blogs, or other documents to tell a story. An epistolary novel presents such documents in order to mimic real life and provide realism to the text. Such fictional texts are rich in detail and allow the reader to feel connected to the author of those letters. Furthermore, telling a story through letters makes the characters and the plot more personal, giving a new dimension to the point of view.

In the case of Vincent van Gogh’s letters, they are entirely factual and nonfictional. His letters serve both as historical and literary documents that uncover details of his life and the time he lived in.
Dictionaries and Glossaries

DISCOVER the concept

Everybody knows a dictionary is a reference book used to look up the meaning of words. But a dictionary is much more than that. In a dictionary, not only can we find the definition of a word, but also how it is spelled, how it is pronounced, its etymology, or origins, and its lexical category—that is, whether the word is a verb, an adjective, or a noun. Sometimes, there are even notes on the word’s usage, such as whether you should use it in a formal or an informal context.

A glossary, on the other hand, is more or less similar to a dictionary since they are both arranged in alphabetical order. However, unlike the dictionary, where you can find multiple meanings for a word, the glossary is a compilation of specialized vocabulary—that is, terms related to a specific area with their meanings. Words will vary depending on the content of the book. For example, at the end of a basic math book, you might find a glossary of terms related to math such as equation, exponent, improper fractions, mixed numbers, and negative numbers. A specialized glossary can be very helpful when reading or studying a certain discipline, since it can help you grasp difficult terminology.

PICTURE the concept

palette (n.) [ˈpælət]-1. thin and usually oval or oblong board or tablet with a thumb hole at one end, used by painters for holding and mixing colors. 2. any other flat surface used by a painter for this purpose. 3. the set of colors on such a board or surface.

Right next to the word there will be an abbreviation; this abbreviation will tell you the lexical category of the word. The (n.) in this case means the word is a noun.

The pronunciation of the word will appear in brackets [ ].

It's probable that a word might have more than one definition; if that's the case, the different definitions will be numbered.
PRACTICE the concept

1. Define the following painting terms using an art glossary. You can look for the glossary in the library or on the Internet.
   a. oil
   b. tone
   c. color
   d. palette knife
   e. paintbox
   f. figure
   g. drawing

2. Look up the etymology, or origin, of the following words in a dictionary.
   a. sketch
   b. landscape
   c. outline
   d. proportion
   e. modeling
   f. canvas

3. Match each word with its definition.
   a. Having or showing desire
   b. A condition of instability or danger
   c. To cause someone to lose confidence or enthusiasm
   d. That has been spread throughout
   e. To enter a state of action rapidly
   f. To load heavily
   g. A special skill or talent
   h. To give reluctantly

   1. longing
   2. burden
   3. knack
   4. begrudge
   5. unnerve
   6. crisis
   7. pervade
   8. plunge

4. Search in a dictionary for the pronunciation of the following words.
   a. overexert
   b. overwhelm
   c. discourage
   d. impenetrable
   e. quarrel
   f. oppress
Adjectives: Degrees of Comparison

UNDERSTAND the concepts

Adjectives can do more than just modify nouns and pronouns. They can also serve to compare. When you are comparing two nouns or pronouns, you show an equal or unequal relationship between two persons or things.

**Equal comparisons**

Equal comparisons are used to state that two persons or things are the same or equal when it comes to the trait under comparison. The pattern for equal comparison is as + adjective + as.

**Example**

Van Gogh was as talented as Picasso, since they were both great artists.

**Unequal comparisons**

Unequal comparisons show a relationship in which one of the subjects is superior to the other in some way. Most unequal comparisons are formed by adding -er to the end of the adjective. The word than follows the comparative adjective.

**Example**

John is quieter than Rose.

In formal circumstances, a subject pronoun can be used after than. In informal circumstances, an object pronoun is more common.

**Example**

John is taller than she (is).

**Superlative**

When you compare three or more persons or things, you use the superlative. This form indicates that one of the subjects under comparison is the best in regard to that quality. Most superlatives are formed by adding -est to the end of the adjective. When the superlative is used in a sentence, you add the article the before the adjective and the preposition of (if a plural noun follows) or in (if a singular noun follows).

**Example**

John is the quietest of all the kids. He is the quietest in the classroom.
PRACTICE what you learned

1. Combine the two sentences to show equal comparisons.
   a. Van Gogh’s letters are revealing. His brother’s letters are revealing as well.
   b. Van Gogh was a hardworking man. His brother was also a hardworking man.
   c. Tersteeg was unfriendly to Van Gogh. Van Gogh’s other friends were also unfriendly.
   d. Van Gogh was nervous about showing his paintings. Other artists feel the same way.
   e. Vincent was sincere in his letters. Theo was also sincere.
   f. Letter 183 is very sad. Letter 591 was also very sad.
   g. Van Gogh’s paintings are beautiful. Van Gogh’s sketches are beautiful as well.

2. Rewrite the following sentences, filling in the blanks with the correct form of the comparative.
   a. Portland is ______ than New York. (small)
   b. English is ______ than math. (easy)
   c. Although Mercury is ______ to the Sun, Venus is the hottest planet. (close)
   d. My room is ______ than yours. (neat)
   e. The story is ______ than I thought. (short)
   f. My car is ______ than Angela’s. (fast)
   g. That bag is ______ than mine. (heavy)

3. With the information given, write a sentence using unequal-comparison adjectives.
   a. Van Gogh’s *Vase with Fifteen Sunflowers* has vivid colors. *The Red Vineyard* is very dark.
   b. Van Gogh only sold one painting while alive. Picasso sold many paintings throughout his life.
   c. Van Gogh’s Letter 302 is long. Van Gogh’s Letter 565 is short.
   d. Theo has money. Vincent has no money.
   e. Vincent’s brother was kind. His friends were not.
   f. Sketches are drawings in black and white. Frescoes are paintings with colors.
   g. Letter 652 was written in 1890. Letter 591 was written in 1889.

4. Rewrite the following sentences, filling in the blanks with the correct form of the superlative.
   a. Of all the artists of his day, Van Gogh was the ______ from achieving fame. (far)
   b. John is the ______ of all the kids. (tall)
   c. The drawings for his uncle Cornelis were the ______ ones. (small)
   d. His hands are the ______ of the bunch. (long)
   e. That work experience was the ______ she ever had. (great)
   f. Mother’s letters were the ______ of all. (short)
   g. Theo sent his brother the money at the ______ opportunity. (early)
Adjectives: Comparative and Superlative Rules

UNDERSTAND the concepts

As mentioned before, in order to form comparative and superlative adjectives, you must follow some rules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rules</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective has only one or two syllables,</td>
<td>add -er</td>
<td>add -est</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fast—faster</td>
<td></td>
<td>fast—fastest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective has only one or two syllables but ends with -e,</td>
<td>add -r</td>
<td>add -st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fine—finer</td>
<td></td>
<td>fine—finest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective has two syllables but ends with one of these suffixes: -ish, -ous, -ful, -ic, -ant, -ive, -less, -ing, -like, -ward, -ose, -ai, -act, -er, or if it has three syllables or more,</td>
<td>use more or less plus the adjective</td>
<td>use most or least plus the adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beautiful—more beautiful</td>
<td>beautiful—least beautiful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective ends with -y and is preceded by a consonant,</td>
<td>change the y to i and add -er</td>
<td>change the y to i and add -est</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy—happier</td>
<td>happy—happiest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective has only one syllable and ends with a consonant preceded by a vowel,</td>
<td>double the consonant and add -er</td>
<td>double the consonant and add -est</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sad—sadder</td>
<td>sad—saddest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irregular comparisons

Some adjectives (as well as adverbs) have irregular comparisons. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>worse</td>
<td>worst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>far</td>
<td>farther</td>
<td>farthest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many/much</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>most</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRACTICE what you learned

1. With the information given, write a sentence using unequal-comparison adjectives.
   a. Theo was lucky. Vincent had no luck.
   b. I have one painting in the study. The Sanders have many paintings in their study.
   c. Picasso’s self-portraits are happy. Van Gogh’s self-portraits are sad.
   d. Starry Night is a very famous painting. Café Terrace is not that famous.
   e. Van Gogh completed over a thousand drawings. He painted 900 paintings.

2. Write an unequal comparison for each sentence.
   a. Selling one painting is good. Selling a lot of paintings is _______. (good)
   b. Vincent’s letters were _______ than his brother’s. (sad)
   c. I am _______ of myself than you think. (sure)
   d. It is hard to tell which of the two felt _______. (bad)
   e. I thought I was smart, but he is _______. (smart)
   f. Van Gogh’s paintings are _______ than his drawings. (famous)

3. Write the comparative and superlative forms for the following.
   a. nice
   b. useless
   c. pretty
   d. ill
   e. famous
   f. hot
   g. basic
   h. reluctant

4. With the information given, write a sentence using superlatives.
   a. Temperas cost $5. Mineral pigments cost $18. Other types of paint available in the market are cheaper than temperas.
   b. In my opinion, appreciating paintings is difficult, but appreciating literary works is more difficult. However, appreciating music is even more difficult than appreciating literary works.
   c. Green vegetables are healthier than meat. However, raw green vegetables are even healthier.

GET IT RIGHT

➤ Some of the following sentences are written correctly. Others are written incorrectly. Choose the correctly written sentences. Keep in mind the rules of comparisons. Fix the incorrect sentences.

   a. I am more good than the other painters.
   b. Sam is sadder than her.
   c. Sandra’s paintings are most sad than John’s.
   d. I am smarter than you.
LEARN the concepts

Let’s take a trip down memory lane. Think about visits to your doctor’s office. You have probably noticed that when the doctor explains what’s going on with your health, he or she uses some words or terms that you don’t understand. In fact, not all adults understand these words either, because they’re part of a specialized vocabulary—in this case, medical. That type of vocabulary is called jargon. **Jargon** is terminology that is related to a specific profession, activity (hobbies, sports), field of study, event, or group. It is a language used by people who work in a particular field or who share a common interest. As a person gets involved in a specific area, he or she learns its jargon.

When you don’t know the meaning of a word that is part of jargon, you might use context clues to help you. You can also ask an expert on the subject or look up the word in a glossary. As you know, these can be usually found in technical books, textbooks, and manuals.

Managing jargon properly lets you express yourself accurately. However, always keep context in mind. Don’t use complicated jargon to talk to people who may be unfamiliar with it. Remember, your goal is to get your message across.

**Example**

*Painting jargon:*

*Betty has sent me a paintbox with paint, brushes, a palette, a palette knife, oil, and turpentine—in short, everything I need.*

**Example**

*Computer jargon:*

*You can download the new files from the server.*

**Example**

*Newspaper jargon:*

*Because of its shocking and provocative leads, the paper has increased its circulation.*

**Example**

*Business jargon:*

*Morris & Co. had to get down and dirty in order to become a game changer in the market.*
PUT IT in practice

1. Read each sentence. Then identify all the jargon words or phrases.
   a. In every game, a batter starts with an at-bat every time he or she faces a pitcher.
   b. Ernesto needs to get all his ducks in a row before investing in that pizzeria.
   c. If you use a firewall, your laptop won’t get any viruses, and hackers won’t download your software.
   d. Thanks to Marty's touchdown, we finally won a game this season.
   e. Dr. Reynolds told us that the best thing for Carla and her baby was a C-section.
   f. The patient suffered a cardiac arrest.
   g. The police officer read the burglar his Miranda rights during the arrest. Then he was sent to the slammer.
   h. Two things that are included in a newspaper article are the lead and the byline.
   i. The director wanted the cameraman to do a close-up of her face.

2. Read each sentence. Then classify the underlined jargon word(s) as computer science, business, or law. Look for their meaning in a glossary. Refer to the Internet if necessary.
   a. The system crashed this morning.
   b. That’s not what you said on your deposition.
   c. We don’t accept rubber checks here, only cash.
   d. The witness will go through a cross-examination.
   e. You must install the software on the driver.
   f. This morning we had a meeting to discuss value added features for our next product.
   g. The jury will deliver a verdict at any moment.
   h. Caroline filed a lawsuit against the company, demanding at least $500,000 in damages.
   i. In an effort to curb inflation, Chinese investors raised the key interest rate again.

3. Write two jargon words or phrases for each field. You can consult the Internet, if necessary.
   a. art
   b. computer science
   c. sports
   d. medicine
   e. business
   f. comic books
   g. movies
   h. literature

4. Write three sentences using jargon words or phrases from one specific field of your liking.
The Letter

READ to write

Vincent van Gogh
54, rue Lepic
75018, Paris, France
July 25, 1886

Dear Mr. Van Gogh,

I was moved by your most recent “still life” painting of the workers’ shoes. Your oil painting evokes the struggles of our factory laborers and reminds us of the hardships one must face in the big cities in order to survive. I think your point of view in this painting really triggers the eye of the viewers and makes them reflect upon the burden of life and how much hard work goes into living a decent life. For me, it is admirable that you bought those shoes at a flea market and decided to wear them on a long walk in a rainy day, in order to understand what you were about to paint. You truly are a great artist!

My sincerest admiration,

Estela Poitiers

Complimentary close

Signature

Name

UNDERSTAND the theory

Letter writing is a common way of communication. Before the Internet became popular, many people communicated through letters instead of e-mails. We know many details about historical periods thanks to the letters that common people, like you, wrote in their time, narrating what was happening in their neighborhood. There are different types of letters. Depending on the recipient, your letter will fluctuate between formal and informal. When you write to one of your peers in a personal way, those letters are considered informal. If you are looking for someone to donate funds to your club or sports team, that letter must be a formal one. Letters are a good way of communicating your objectives and reaching compromises with others.
GET to work

PLANNING

1. Think about a social problem in your community or school that affects you as a student.
2. Do research about the problem and make a list of all the government and nongovernment organizations that could help you resolve that problem.
3. Brainstorm and consider the possible solutions for that problem.

DEVELOPING

1. Decide to which organization you will write the letter. Verify their address and the specific person, if any, who you will address the letter to.
2. Write a thesis statement where you state the purpose of your letter.
3. Outline the supporting details that may sustain your thesis statement.
4. Confirm that the facts you will use are accurate and verifiable.

WRITING

1. Include the heading, the inside address, the date, and the salutation.
2. Write an introductory paragraph in which you explain the purpose of your letter and why the problem you write about is important to you and other seventh graders. Develop each supporting idea in a different paragraph; give examples to validate your thesis statement. Always consider your recipient and write the letter in a respectful tone.
3. Make sure you have a conclusion paragraph where you recap your thesis statement and reiterate the social problems that must be solved.
4. Add in the complimentary close and your name. Certify your letter with your signature.

EDITING

- My letter has a heading, inside address, date, salutation, complimentary close, and signature.
- The facts in my letter are correct and the addresses used were verified. My finished work has a defined thesis statement, and my supporting details make it stronger.
- My work is organized and coherent. It follows a logical structure of exposition and argumentation, and conveys the urgency of solving a social problem in my community.
- I used appropriate, clear, and precise language and syntax.
Young and old readers alike actively seek the news and feel empowered by knowing what is going on in the world. Electronic newspapers are either newspapers that exist solely on the World Wide Web, in electronic paper, or the electronic versions of newspapers that also exist in print. These newspapers are more and more popular for several reasons. The increasingly fast-paced lifestyle we lead makes it imperative that information be obtainable quickly and efficiently. We have been trained by search engines such as Google and Yahoo to “search” information, rather than “scan” through print newspapers to acquire knowledge of unfamiliar topics. Electronic newspapers allow us to access reliable and up-to-date information at the fast pace we are accustomed to. Moreover, for newspaper companies, electronic delivery might result in significant cost savings.

Electronic newspapers can compete with broadcasting companies. While in the past newspapers showcased yesterday’s news, and news broadcasting provided the most up-to-date information, now electronic newspapers can give readers the news as soon as it is available. With many Internet-ready mobile devices available, readers can be connected anywhere and anytime. Through electronic newspapers, quality information can reach these “wired” readers without having to wait and buy tomorrow’s print newspaper. Moreover, electronic newspapers provide minute-by-minute coverage of events and catalog these events as fast as the author can type. In which case, electronic newspapers can be refreshed by the reader and instantly receive the most up-to-date information. This information is usually accompanied with audio and/or video that enhances the reader’s experience and provides the audiovisual representations that a print newspaper lacks.

Online-only newspapers are newspapers that do not have a hard copy and exist solely on the web. An example is Southport Reporter, an independent web-only newspaper introduced in 2000 in the United Kingdom. In addition, it is growing increasingly popular for companies to abandon print and go exclusively online. One such company is US News & World Report, which switched from print to online in December 2010.

Electronic newspapers are not only available online, but are also “printed” on electronic paper. Electronic paper and electronic ink are display technologies designed to mimic the appearance of ordinary ink and paper. Unlike conventional backlit flat-panel displays, electronic paper reflects light like ordinary paper and thus proves more comfortable to read. Electronic paper is available on e-readers and cell phone displays. The information can be downloaded using a wireless Internet connection.

The way we communicate is changing rapidly. The introduction of electronic newspapers and its subsequent success testifies to that change. Not only are we able to get the news as fast as we can click or type to search for it, but we are also able to communicate our own ideas and share the information we read in electronic newspapers.
Electronic newspapers are technically environmentally friendly because they eliminate the use and waste of paper. However, for electronic newspapers to be truly environmentally friendly, more people have to read the news either online or on an e-reader. Moreover, printing companies need to decrease the number of print versions in anticipation of those readers who would rather read electronically. For the most part, electronic newspapers are popular and widely used, but they are not at all the norm. Most of us still prefer to read the newspaper in print, even if we have already seen an electronic version. Older readers particularly, who lack the necessary electronic knowledge, still prefer to read the news in print.
1. Reread the selection letters included in the chapter and look for more information on Vincent van Gogh and his brother, Theo van Gogh. On a separate sheet of paper, create a diagram like the one below in order to compare and contrast the two brothers. Then write a short paragraph in which you describe their relationship.

```
Characteristics

Vincent            Theo

Physical          Physical
              Emotional

```

2. Write a fictional narrative piece in the form of one or more letters. Remember to include the main parts of the letter studied in the chapter.

3. Look for the following words in a dictionary. In your notebook, write down the word’s category, pronunciation, definition, and origin. Then create a sentence with each word.
   a. absent-minded
   b. dealer
   c. depression
   d. dispose
   e. oppress
   f. overcome
   g. quietude
   h. regret

4. Look for the following words in a literary glossary. Then look for them in a regular dictionary. Explain whether there are differences in the way the word is defined. Finally, mention other examples of literary jargon.
   a. tone
   b. foil
   c. juxtaposition
   d. nemesis
   e. mood
   f. imagery
5. **Combine** the following sentences to show equal comparisons.
   a. The English test was difficult. The science test was also very difficult.
   b. Andrea is mischievous. Her little brother is also mischievous.
   c. The teacher said I am smart and responsible. She thinks Robert is also smart and responsible.
   d. Marion was sick. Joanna wasn’t feeling well either.

6. **Rewrite** the following sentences, filling in the blanks with the correct form of the comparative or the superlative.
   a. Jamie’s paintings were the _________. (creative)
   b. Helena was ________ and ________ than Joseph. (tall, flexible)
   c. Her photographs were ________ than those of the winner of the contest. (good)
   d. Marco’s mixed media sculpture was the ________ one of all. (weird)

7. **Copy** the following table in your notebook. **Write** the rule that applies for the formation of the comparative and the superlative, and **provide** an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective has only one or two syllables,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective has only one or two syllables but ends with -e,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective has two syllables but ends with one of these suffixes: -ish, -ous, -ful, -ic, -ant, -ive, -less, -ing, -like, -ward, -ose, -al, -act, -er, or if it has three syllables or more,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective ends with -y and is preceded by a consonant,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the adjective has only one syllable and ends with a consonant preceded by a vowel,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **Read** each sentence and **identify** the jargon words or phrases. Then **explain** their meaning in your own words. **Look for** their meaning in a glossary, if necessary.
   a. The player can play at right back or in the center of defense.
   b. Do not boil the vegetables; blanch them, and then stir-fry them.
   c. I am going to do some cardio, and then some weight training.
   d. She took his vitals and said his blood pressure was a little high.
   e. Lens aperture can be adjusted according on the effect one wants to achieve.

9. **Think** about suggestions to make more digital newspapers more accessible and popular among the elderly in your community. **Write** a formal letter to your elderly neighbors, presenting your suggestions.

10. **Look for** information on other artistic movements, apart from Impressionism. **Interpret** a work of art from the movement you selected.