A $190 Million Van Gogh!
(November 24, 2026)

TEACHING GUIDE

ℹ️ **What?** The auction sale of a painting by Vincent van Gogh, Chestnut Trees in Blossom, for 190.4 million US dollars. 🖼️

👤 **Who?** Vincent van Gogh, a very famous Dutch painter, and the auction house Sotheby's. 🎨

🌍 **Where?** In New York, in the United States, where the sale took place. The painting itself was made in France, in the village of Auvers-sur-Oise.

🕰️ **When?** On Wednesday, November 18, 2026. The painting was made in May 1890.

❓ **Why is it important?** Because it is the most expensive Van Gogh painting ever sold at auction, even though the painter sold almost none of his paintings during his lifetime.

🎯 **For this activity, your goal will be to learn a little more about this painting and about Vincent van Gogh.** 🌸

OBJECTIVES

- Observe Van Gogh's Chestnut Trees in Blossom using a grid
- Discover the main stages of Vincent van Gogh's life
- Match five famous painters with their artistic style
- Compare Van Gogh's style with other styles of painting

SUBJECTS

- **Visual Arts**
  - Observing an artwork
  - Art movements
  - A painter's color and brushwork
- **English**
  - Reading a biographical text
  - Finding information
  - Justifying an opinion
- **Social World**
  - Biography of a historical figure
  - Auctions and the art market
  - Landmarks in time (17th to 20th century)

COMPETENCIES

- Observe carefully and describe what you see
- Find your way on a grid
- Read a text and pick out the key information
- Search for information in an online resource
- Justify a point of view

DURATION

- Approximately 60 minutes

GETTING STARTED

- Ask the child whether they know a famous painter or a painting that has stuck with them
- Ask them how they think the price of a painting is set
- Remind them that a grid, like in the game Battleship, lets you find a square using a letter and a number
- Ask them how they feel when they look at a very colorful painting

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LEARNING MADE RELEVANT

EXPLORERS

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STEP 1 — A Painting Up Close. The child looks at the painting with a grid on it and spots details square by square (short answers).

Q1 — A man walking, wearing a yellow straw hat.
Q2 — 3 (three women).
Q3 — A4 or A5 (accept both).
Q4 — Red chimneys (on a green roof).
Q5 — Orange (or pink) and white; in spring.

STEP 2 — Who Was Vincent van Gogh? The child reads a short text about the painter's life and answers five multiple-choice questions.

Q6 — b) The Netherlands.
Q7 — b) 27.
Q8 — c) His brother Theo.
Q9 — b) More than 70.
Q10 — d) Johanna, Theo's wife.

STEP 3 — Five Painters, Five Styles. The child looks up each painter on WikiArt and writes down their style, then gives an opinion on Van Gogh's painting (short answers and an open answer).

Q11 — Impressionism.
Q12 — Neo-Impressionism.
Q13 — Cubism (WikiArt also lists other movements).
Q14 — De Stijl.
Q15 — Baroque.
Q16 — Open, justified answer (often Impressionism or Neo-Impressionism). In fact, Van Gogh is a Post-Impressionist.

WRAPPING UP

- Ask the child which painting from the banner they would like to hang at home, and why
- Talk it over with them: is it normal for a painting to be worth 190 million dollars?
- Invite them to draw the same object in two styles (in tiny dots, then in geometric shapes)
- Remind them that if they ever feel sad, as Van Gogh did, they can always talk to a trusted adult



FURTHER EXPLORATION

📖 Paula K. Manzanero. *Who Was Vincent van Gogh?* Penguin Workshop

EXPLORERS™ +PLUS

EXPLORERS PLUS — Paintings Worth a Fortune!

1 — $259.9M
2 — About 2.4 times
3 — Number 7A (Pollock), $9.2M
4 — 3 artworks
Mystery word — ARLES

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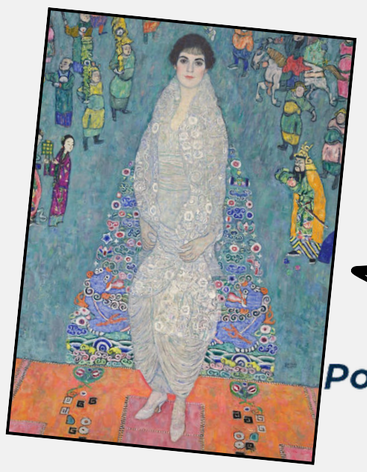
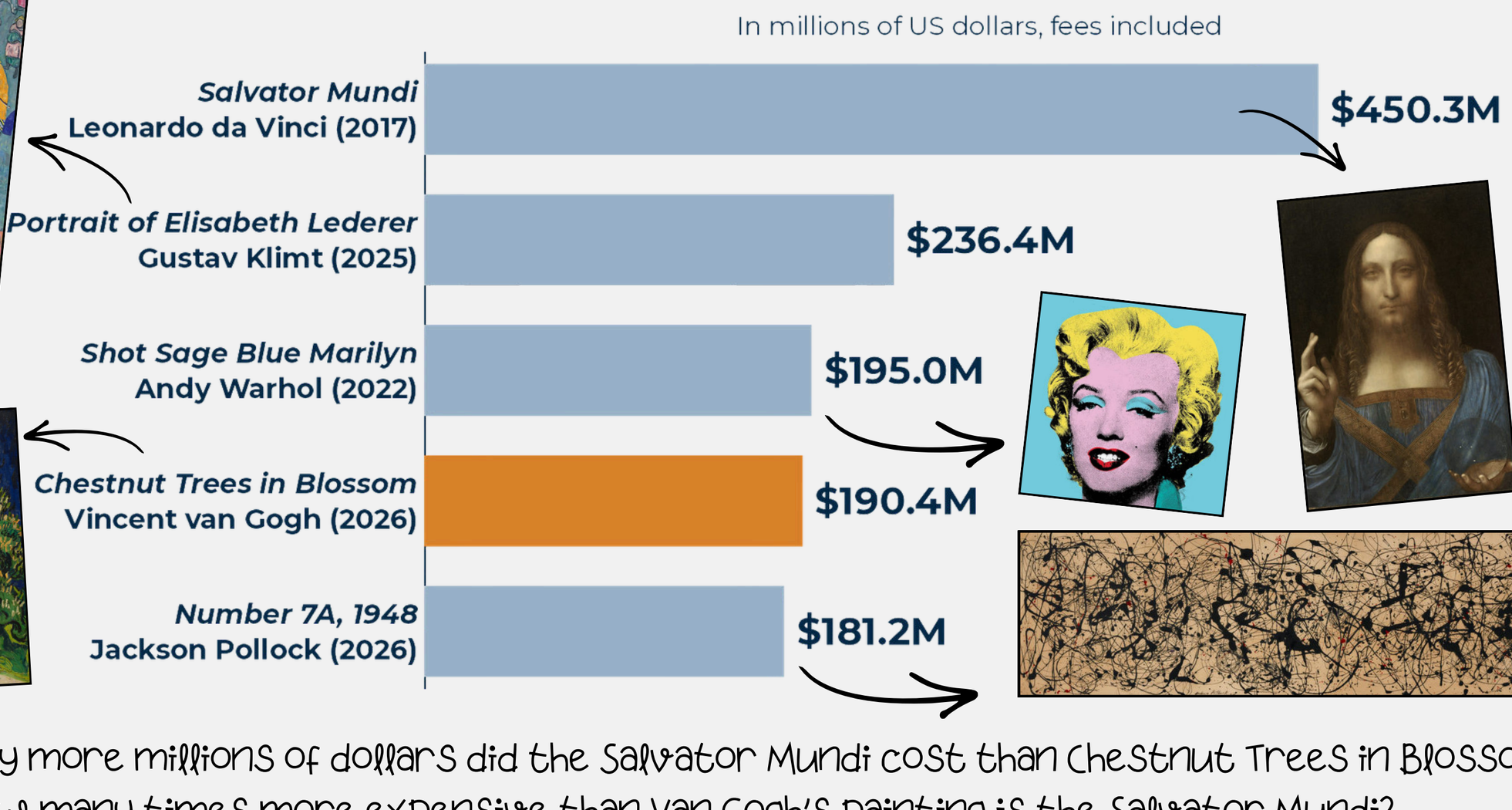
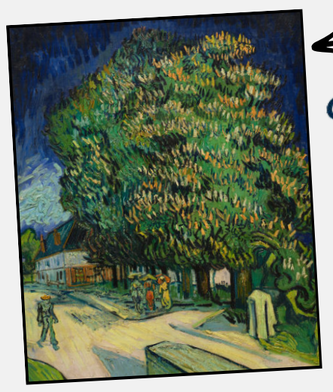
Paintings Worth a Fortune!

Van Gogh's painting has just joined the list of the most expensive artworks ever sold at auction! Look carefully at the chart, then answer the questions.

The 5 Most Expensive Artworks Sold at Auction





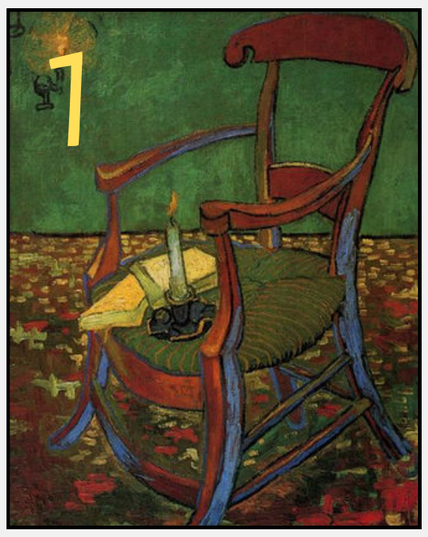


1. How many more millions of dollars did the Salvator Mundi cost than Chestnut Trees in Blossom?
2. About how many times more expensive than Van Gogh's painting is the Salvator Mundi?
3. Which artwork on the chart cost the least? How many millions of dollars separate it from Van Gogh's painting?
4. How many of these artworks were sold in 2025 or 2026?

Here are five famous paintings by Vincent van Gogh. Go to his WikiArt page (www.wikiart.org/en/vincent-van-gogh): you'll find them all among his famous works.

In the title of each painting, take the letter shown. Careful: don't count spaces or apostrophes!

1. ____ → 2nd letter
2. ____ → 2nd letter
3. ____ → 1st letter
4. ____ → 3rd letter
5. ____ → 1st letter











Put the five letters in order: what word do you get?

Hint: it's the town in the South of France where Van Gogh painted his famous Sunflowers.