

### Worksheet 1

### Introduction to Vermeer

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You've probably seen *Girl with a Pearl Earring* before, but how much do you know about the story behind it? Did you know the painting has inspired a book, a poem and a film? Let's find out more about what makes it so special. First, let's find out about the artist, Johannes Vermeer.

Go to <http://www.ibiblio.org/louvre/paint/auth/vermeer/>

Now tick the correct answer.

1. What was his nationality?
  - Belgian
  - German
  - Dutch
  - Swedish
  
2. Where was he from?
  - Antwerp
  - Delft
  - Hamburg
  - Gotenberg
  
3. When did he live?
  - 1400s
  - 1500s
  - 1600s
  - 1700s
  
4. How many paintings did he create?
  - over 100
  - 35
  - 75
  - 25
  
5. His paintings usually show:
  - street scenes
  - one or two people inside a room
  - horses and dogs
  - country scenes

## Worksheet 2

## Vermeer's Life

Let's find out more about the life of this influential artist.

Go to <http://notablebiographies.com>

Search for Jan Vermeer.

Read the biography.

Now tick the correct answer.

1. Vermeer's father was:
  - an artist and an innkeeper
  - an art dealer and a shopkeeper
  - an art dealer and an innkeeper
  - a shopkeeper and an artist
  
2. How many children did Vermeer and his wife have?
  - six
  - eleven
  - fifteen
  - three
  
3. As well as painting Vermeer also:
  - sold paint
  - had an inn
  - had a farm
  - sold paintings for other artists
  
4. How old was Vermeer when he died?
  - 75
  - 32
  - 43
  - 56
  
5. Which statement is true?
  - He made a lot of money from his paintings.
  - He died in a war.
  - He had money problems when he died.
  - He was famous in his lifetime.

## Worksheet 3

## Vermeer and Delft

Let's find out about the other artists Vermeer knew in Delft.

Go to <http://www.delft.nl/webEN/>

Click on **Vermeer**

**Read about Johannes Vermeer, his life and work and the Delft School.**

Now answer these questions.

1. Name four characteristics of the golden era of painting in Delft.

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2. When was it?

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3. Name six famous and/or influential painters from this area.

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4. Which of these painters influenced Vermeer?

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5. Which painting by de Hoogh was important to Vermeer?

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6. What is the name of the famous city painting by Fabritius?

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7. What do you need to view this picture?

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## Worksheet 4

## Vermeer's Neighbourhood

Here you can learn about the area where Vermeer lived.

Go to <http://www.essentialvermeer.com/>

Click on [Vermeer's neighbourhood](#).

Look at the map and table.

Then complete the table below.

Where was the painter raised?	_____
What was the name of the artist's guild?	_____
What was the name of Vermeer's mother-in-law?	_____
Where was Vermeer buried?	_____

Click on [Mechelen](#).

Now answer these questions.

1. a) What was Vermeer's father's name?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) How much did he buy the inn for?

\_\_\_\_\_

c) How many fireplaces did the inn have?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. a) When did Vermeer become vice dean of the guild?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) When was the guildhouse built?

\_\_\_\_\_

c) What was the name of the street it was on?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. a) When did Vermeer and his family move to his mother-in-law's house?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) What was the name of the area the house was in?

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c) How many people in the town were Catholics?

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4. a) When was the church started?

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b) What is wrong with the tower?

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c) How many tombstones does Vermeer have?

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Worksheet 5

The Painting

Now let's look at different aspects of the painting itself.

Go to <http://www.girl-with-a-pearl-earring.20m.com/>

Under the heading 'Subject Matter' click on [the young girl](#) and read the information.

Then do the same for [the turban](#), [the pearl](#), [the dress](#) and [the dark background](#).

Now complete the table.

The turban	The turban depicted in the painting is of _____ origin. It is made of _____ material which highlights the _____ shape of the girl's head. Scholars believe that the material is some kind of _____ cloth such as _____ or caffia.
Vermeer's name and the signature	Vermeer was baptized Johannes Vermeer. Some books call him _____ Vermeer but the painter _____ used that name. The surname is a contraction of Van der Meer which means '_____ _____'.
	The signature of <i>Girl with a Pearl Earring</i> is located in the _____ . It is larger than signatures in other paintings by Vermeer. Sometimes Vermeer's signature is _____ in tone placed against a _____ background. Sometimes Vermeer's signature is _____ in a corner of the painting. Other times it jumps immediately to the _____ .

<p>The young girl</p>	<p>The identity of the young girl in the painting is _____. There are four possible candidates: Maria, Vermeer's _____-year-old _____, Magdalena Van Riujven, the daughter of Vermeer's principle _____, the girl from <i>The Art of Painting</i> and a _____ called Griet – although there is _____ to support this.</p>
<p>The pearl</p>	<p>In the _____-_____ pearls were an extremely important _____ _____. They are linked with _____ and _____. The pearl earring in this Vermeer painting is in the shape of a _____ or _____.</p>
<p>The background</p>	<p>The _____ background contributes to the _____ _____ of the painting. It was originally _____ in colour, a combination of two pigments: _____ and weld.</p>
<p>The dress</p>	<p>The girl is wearing a _____ dress with heavy _____ and a _____ _____.</p>

## Worksheet 6

## The Painting and Science

Vermeer's paintings look very natural, like photographs. But he lived before photography was invented. Many people think Vermeer used a camera obscura in his paintings – a kind of early camera.

Go to <http://historyforkids.utah.gov>

Click on **Fun and Games**

Click on **Photo Facts and Fun**

Click on **History of Photography** and read the information.

Now tick the correct answer.

1. What do the words 'camera obscura' mean?
  - hidden camera
  - hidden room
  - dark room
  - light room
  
2. Who invented the first camera obscura?
  - Aristotle
  - the Chinese
  - the Romans
  - the Spanish
  
3. When was the camera obscura first used by artists like Michelangelo?
  - in the 1700s
  - in the 1600s
  - in the 1500s
  - in the 1800s
  
4. The sitter is outside the camera obscura and the artist is:
  - inside
  - outside
  - under
  - on top
  
5. A camera obscura in a box was invented in the 1700s. People found that they got a better picture by using:
  - a mirror
  - a lens like in a pair of spectacles
  - a piece of glass
  - a window



## Worksheet 7

## Pearls

The beautiful pearl earring that the young girl is wearing has fascinated art historians. But do you know where pearls come from?

Go to <http://www.karipearls.com/index.html>

Click on **Video Index**

Click on **Understand how Natural Pearls are Formed**

Choose the correct answer.

Another name for oysters is crustaceans/molluscs.

How often do you find a 1 in 1,000 oysters /1 in 10,000 oysters.  
natural pearl?

Why does the oyster make a because some sand or dirt gets in/because  
pearl? it makes them like seeds from a plant.

What is the material called luster/nacre.  
that the oyster makes?

This white material is made of calcium carbonate/sodium carbonate.

It is composed of millions of microscopic crystals/microscopic fibres.

## Worksheet 8

## The History of Pearls

Some more history now. Pearls used to be very expensive – how much do you know about their history?

Go to <http://www.karipearls.com/index.html>

Click on [Video Index](#)

Click on [Natural Pearls in History](#)

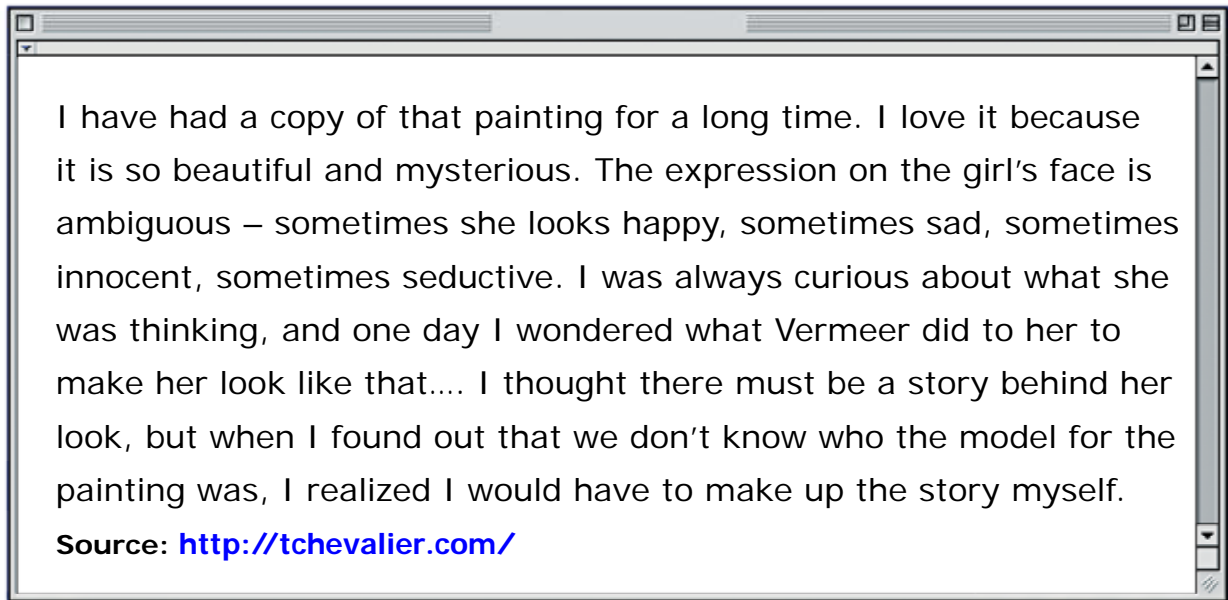
Tick the correct answer.

1. Queen Elizabeth I of England had many dresses covered in pearls. How many did she have?
  - 500
  - 1000
  - 3000
  - 5000
  
2. Queen Elizabeth I also had many wigs full of pearls. How many wigs did she have?
  - 100
  - 50
  - 40
  - 80
  
3. Ordinary or common people were forbidden to wear pearls by the:
  - Indians
  - Romans
  - Chinese
  - Greeks
  
4. Pearls were called 'tears of the moon' by the:
  - Chinese
  - Ancient Greeks
  - Romans
  - Indians

## Worksheet 9

## Tracy Chevalier

*Girl with a Pearl Earring* inspired a book by Tracy Chevalier, an American writer who now lives in England and studied writing at university in England. What inspired her to write about the girl in Vermeer's painting?



Tracy Chevalier loves all Vermeer's paintings and she has seen all thirty-six of them. She thinks there are stories in all his paintings but she decided to tell this one.

Now go to <http://tchevalier.com/>

Click on **Books**

Click on ***Girl with a Pearl Earring*** (the book cover)

Click on **Story**

Now answer these questions.

1. In the book the name of the girl is:

- Greta
- Gertruud
- Grazia
- Griet

2. How old is she?

- 14
- 16
- 18
- 20

3. Vermeer's wife is called:

- Greta
- Cornelia
- Maria
- Catharina

4. Vermeer has a daughter who causes trouble with the girl. She is called:

- Maria
- Elisabeth
- Cornelia
- Agnes

5. The girl's job is:

- a cook
- a maid
- a model
- a children's nurse

6. Vermeer asks the girl to help him with his work. His wife is:

- pleased
- angry
- worried
- relaxed

**Before you read part of the book have a look at one reader's review. Go to <http://blogcritics.org/archives/2004/10/05/205117.php> and read Dana Huff's review.**

**Now answer the following questions.**

7. Did the reader enjoy the book?

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8. What didn't she like about the book?

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9. What did she think Tracy Chevalier missed out?

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10. How does the review writer feel about the character of Griet?

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11. What does the writer say is a good word to describe the book?

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## Worksheet 10

## The Book

Let's look in greater detail at the first chapter of the novel.

Go to <http://tchevalier.com/>

Click on **Books**

Click on *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (the book cover)

Click on **First Chapter**

Read the first section of the first chapter of the story.

Then tick the correct answer.

1. What was the girl doing when the visitors arrived?
  - cleaning the floor
  - washing
  - chopping wood
  - chopping vegetables
  
2. The woman visitor looked:
  - tired
  - upset
  - untidy
  - very beautiful
  
3. The man, Vermeer, was:
  - noisy
  - relaxed
  - unfriendly
  - bored
  
4. Vermeer asked the girl why she had put the vegetables in a circle. She said:
  - her mother told her to do it
  - she was playing a game
  - they are in the right order
  - the colours look better like that
  
5. The man and woman came to the girl's house:
  - to paint her
  - to give her a job
  - to eat soup
  - to see her father
  
6. The girl needed to work because:
  - she was bored
  - her mother didn't like her
  - her father had had an accident
  - her father was dead

## Worksheet 11

## The Film

The director of the movie, Peter Webber, had studied art history and this helped him make the movie. When he first read the script he didn't want to make the movie, but later he realized it was a fascinating story about power, attraction, money and art. He also looked at the work of other artists like Rembrandt to get the effects of light and shadow he wanted.

The producer, Andy Paterson and his wife, screenwriter Olivia Hetreed, read the book and decided Griet was a very interesting character. She wanted to be free at a time when poor people couldn't choose how to live. The author Tracy Chevalier was very pleased with the movie and thought it was true to the book and even had some good extra ideas.

To read a film review go to <http://bbc.co.uk/films>

Click on **Movies**

Click on **Reviews Archive**

Under the film reviews section click on the letter **G**

Click on ***Girl with a Pearl Earring***

Read the review by Susan Hodgetts.

Find the answers to the following questions.

1. The movie is described as a costume drama. What adjective is also used to describe it here?

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2. Who will like the film?

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3. The review says the main actors are:

- good
- bad
- excellent
- average

Now go to <http://www.girlwithapearlearringmovie.com/>

Tick the correct answer(s).

4. When was the movie made?

- 2005
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004

5. How many Academy Award nominations did the movie have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

6. Who played Griet?

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7. Who played Vermeer?

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Now go to <http://movies.about.com/> and search for 'Girl with a Pearl Earring Movie Trailer'.

Then click on the link to the trailer and watch it.

8. What is the attitude of Vermeer's wife?

- relaxed
- unfriendly
- friendly
- bored

9. What does Vermeer ask Griet to look at?

- a painting
- the clouds
- the sea
- the river

10. Which colour doesn't she say?

- grey
- blue
- white
- yellow



## Webquest Project

## Girl with a Pearl Earring

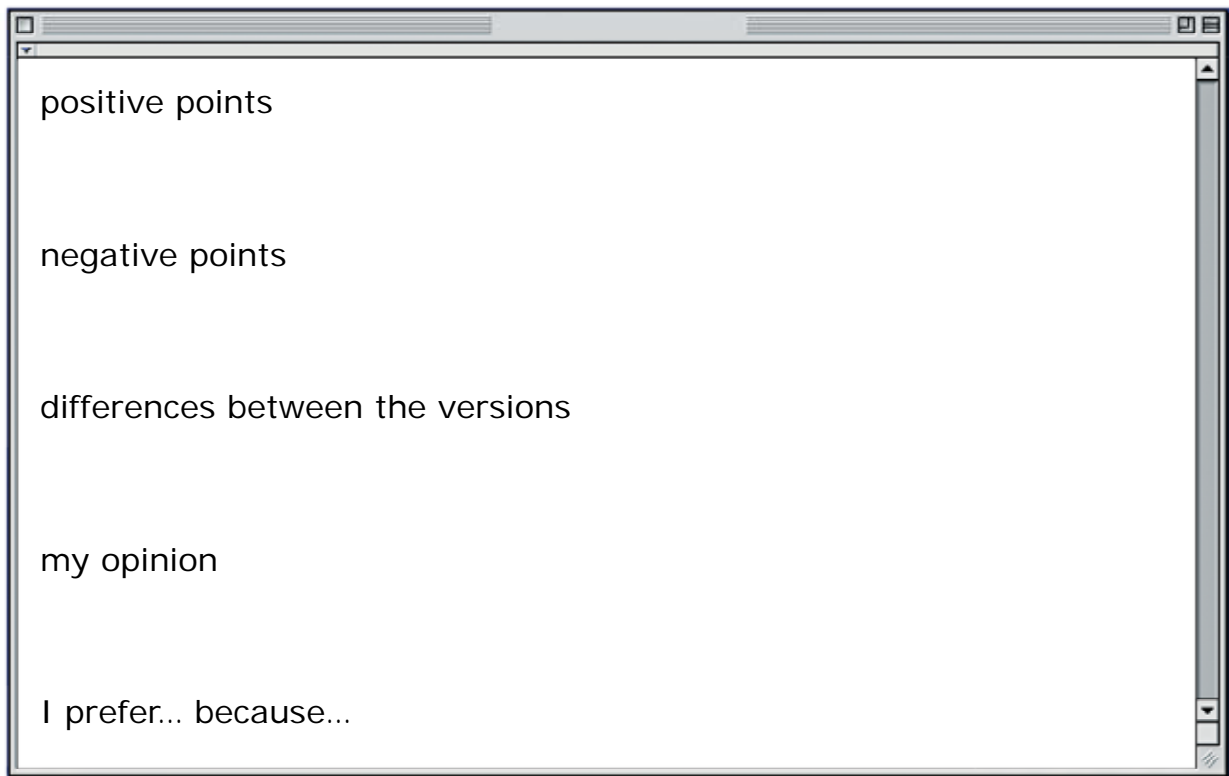
You have learnt a lot about the background of a very famous painting and the book and film that it inspired.

Think of other works that have inspired writers or artists, for example Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. *Romeo and Juliet's* story has been told in a film, a ballet and an opera.

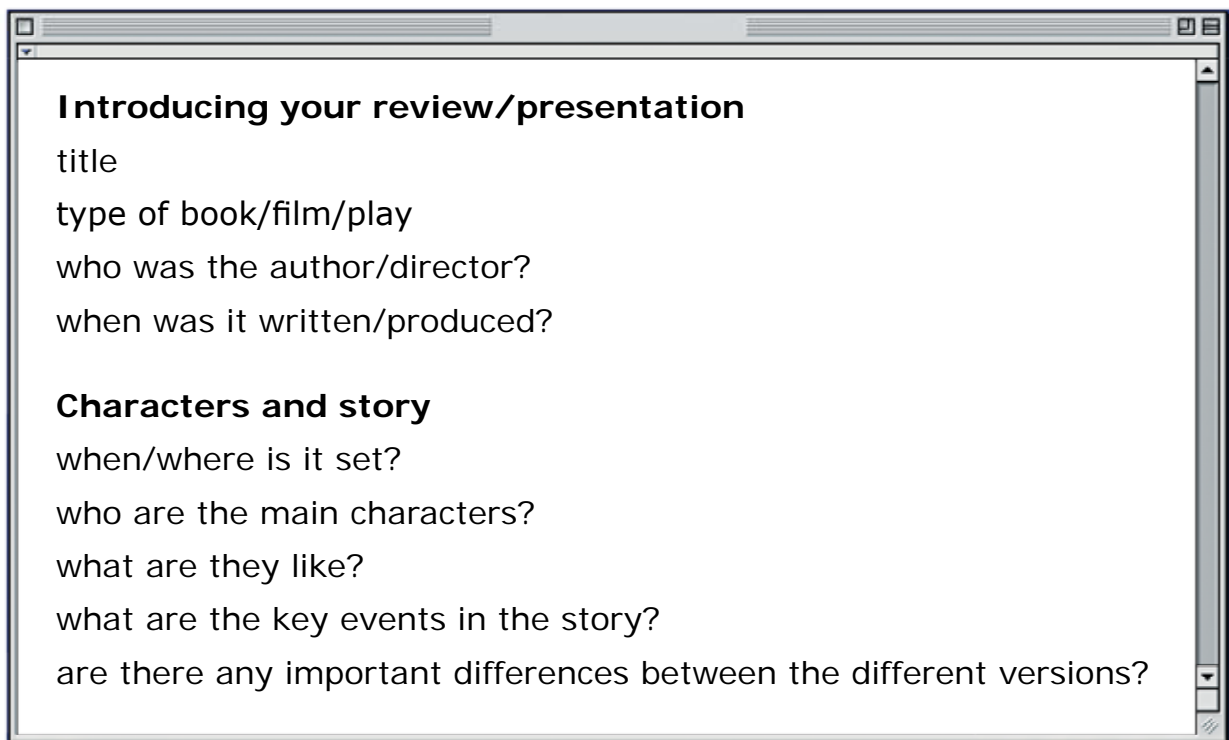
Work in pairs or small groups. Choose an artistic work that has inspired several different versions. These versions could be in the form of a book, a film or a play. For example, Tolkien's book trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* has inspired a film and a musical. J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books have become successful films.

In your groups complete the chart and decide which version you prefer.

title
medium (i.e. book, film, play, musical)
author/director/artist
main characters
where/when the story is set
main points of the story



**In your groups write a review or prepare a short presentation, saying why you prefer one version to another. Use these ideas and phrases to help you.**



### **Your opinion**

which did you enjoy the most? Why?

would you change anything?

which would you recommend?

### **Useful phrases**

..... was written/produced by ..... in ....

..... tells the story of ....

It is based on a book/film/play of the same name.

It takes place in the country of ..... in the .....

As the story unfolds .....

In the end .....

In my opinion .....

I preferred the ..... to the ..... because

What I liked was the way .....

I didn't think ..... worked as well as .....

What I didn't like was .....

I would/n't recommend ..... because .....

### Answer Key

#### Worksheet 1

1. Dutch
2. Delft
3. 1600s
4. 35
5. one or two people inside a room

#### Worksheet 2

1. an art dealer and an innkeeper
2. eleven
3. sold paintings for other artists
4. 43
5. He was famous in his lifetime.

#### Worksheet 3

1. people's clothing, interiors, exteriors and cityscapes
2. in the (mid) 17th century
3. famous painters: Leonaert Bramer, Michiel Jansz. van Mierevelt  
particularly influential painters: Paulus Potter, Jan Steen, Carel Fabritius, Pieter de Hoogh
4. Pieter de Hoogh
5. *Woman Weighing Coins*
6. *View of Delft*
7. a special box with a peephole

#### Worksheet 4

Answers to table: Mechelen, St. Luke's Guild, Maria Thin, Oude Kerk

- 1 a) Reynier Jansz. Vos; b) 2,500 guilders (200 guilders in cash plus two mortgages with the total value of 2,500 guilders); c) six
- 2 a) 18 October 1662; b) 1661; c) Voldersgracht
- 3 a) sometime between 1653 and 1660; b) Papist's Corner; c) about 25%
- 4 a) 1200; b) it's leaning; c) two

#### Worksheet 5

The turban	The turban depicted in the painting is of Turkish origin. It is made of ultramarine blue material which highlights the oval shape of the girl's head. Scholars believe that the material is some kind of reflective cloth such as silk or caffa.
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The signature	Vermeer was baptized Johannes Vermeer. Some books call him Jan Vermeer but the painter never used that name. The surname is a contraction of Van der Meer which means 'from the sea'. The signature of <i>Girl with a Pearl Earring</i> is located in the upper left corner. It is larger than signatures in other paintings by Vermeer. Sometimes Vermeer's signature is light in tone placed against a dark background. Sometimes Vermeer's signature is hidden in a corner of the painting. Other times it jumps immediately to the viewer's eye.
The young girl	The identity of the young girl in the painting is unknown. There are four possible candidates: Maria, Vermeer's twelve-year-old daughter, Magdalena Van Riujven, the daughter of Vermeer's principle patron, the girl from <i>The Art of Painting</i> and a maid called Griet – although there is no evidence to support this.
The pearl	In the seventeenth-century pearls were an extremely important status symbol. They are linked with vanity and virginity. The pearl earring in this Vermeer painting is in the shape of a drop or tear.
The background	The dark background contributes to the expressive effect of the painting. It was originally greenish in colour, a combination of two pigments: indigo and weld.
The dress	The girl is wearing a yellow dress with heavy folds and a white collar.

### Worksheet 6

1. dark room
2. the Chinese
3. in the 1500s
4. outside
5. a lens like in a pair of spectacles

### Worksheet 7

1. molluscs
2. 1 in 1,000 oysters
3. because some sand or dirt gets in
4. nacre
5. calcium carbonate
6. microscopic crystals

### Worksheet 8

1. 3000
2. 80
3. Romans
4. Greeks

### Worksheet 9

1. Griet
2. 16
3. Catharina
4. Cornelia
5. a maid
6. angry
7. Yes, she loved the book. She thought it was technically better than Chevalier's *The Virgin Blue*. She also thought it was a good example of the fascinating genre of art-inspired literature.
8. The book didn't speak to her in the same way that *The Virgin Blue* did. She was also troubled by the negative portrayal of Vermeer and his wife Catharina.
9. The reviewer thinks that Chevalier missed out the fact that the Vermeer family were deeply in debt. She also missed out the fact that the Vermeer family's debt with their baker was settled because the baker was willing to take Vermeer's artwork as payment.
10. She liked the character of Griet a great deal. She had sympathy for her as a peasant woman living in a time when her life was dedicated to serving the Vermeers and her husband.
11. Quiet.

### Worksheet 10

1. chopping vegetables
2. untidy
3. relaxed
4. the colours look better like that
5. to give her a job
6. her father had had an accident

### Worksheet 11

1. superior
2. anyone who likes serious, intelligent drama and gentle erotic tension
3. excellent
4. 2003
5. 3
6. Scarlett Johansson
7. Colin Firth
8. unfriendly
9. the clouds
10. white