This is a self portrait by Vincent Van Gogh. He was born in the Brabant area of Holland in 1853. Look carefully at his painting. Can you see all his brush strokes? They look like he has painted with thick lines.

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This was one of the last paintings that Vincent Van Gogh painted before he died. It is called "wheat field with crows." In each of his paintings, the colour of the haystacks is different because the light shining on the haystacks is different. Monet tried to paint his impression of what he saw as the light changed.

Claude Monet was a French painter who was born in France in 1840. In a field next to Monet's house there were some haystacks. The haystacks were kept until the cut crop could be threshed to separate the grains from the stalks.

In October 1890 Monet wrote a letter about his haystacks paintings. He said, "I'm hard at it, working stubbornly on a series of different effects, but at this time of year the sun sets so fast that it's impossible to keep up with it! I want to paint what I can see at the very moment I see it."

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They both painted haystacks but they painted in different ways. They had different styles of painting.

Which painting is by Monet and which is by Van Gogh?

TEACHERS' NOTES:

Van Gogh used bright bold strokes and sharp colours using a wider palette and worked to paint rather than paint outlines and filling in the rest with paint. His strokes were done with a palette knife and the end of the brush. In some cases he sawed the tube of paint directly onto the canvas. Line and texture are predominant art elements apparent in many of his paintings. His style of art is called "impressionism" - what you see is the artist's impression of what he is looking at.

Monet studied his subjects closely, planned his paintings and worked hard to achieve his results. He often changed a series of the same subject (eg. haystacks) to capture the changing effects of light, sweeping clouds or the dip in sunlight or the setting sun. He used a limited palette of colours, eventually banishing browns and greens and by 1886, black had disappeared. The colours he liked to use were: yellow, cadmium red and blues and viridian. He often painted his paintings in one go, using his palette to mix the paint directly on the canvas and then built up texture using brush strokes which varied from thick to thin with tiny dabs of colour from light to dark.

Monet continued:

Monet tried to create both light and atmosphere in his paintings in an effective way. This later became an important aspect of the style of impressionism. In order to create the effect of light Monet developed the technique of using dabs of colour. This technique then created a feeling of atmosphere in the scene being portrayed. This means that if you look closely at a painting by Monet you can see the brush strokes of colour.