

# Vocabulary Workshop® Tools for Excellence

**Differentiated Passages**

**Grade 12**

## PASSAGE 1

## UNIT 5

Read the following passage, taking note of the **boldface** words and their contexts. These words are among those you will be studying in Unit 5. As you complete the exercises in this unit, it may help to refer to the way the words are used below.

## What Is Pop Art?

&lt; Essay &gt;



Roy Lichtenstein's *In the Car*, 1963, looks like a comic strip but measures 30 x 40 in.

**W**hat is pop art? The simple answer: Art based on popular culture. Beginning in the mid-1950s and continuing for more than a decade, pop artists borrowed images directly from everyday popular culture. Drawing upon this seemingly **mundane** content, pop artists created bold, overpowering images. With great **acuity**, their canvases detailed such familiar things as comic strips, American flags, race cars, popular movie stars, and even boxes of laundry detergent.

In many ways, pop art was a reaction to abstract expressionism, the dominant style of painting during the 1940s and 1950s. Abstract expressionist paintings were nonrepresentational; they did not **delineate** objects directly. Instead, artists used abstract shapes and **nuances** in

color to express personal ideas and feelings. Pop artists viewed abstract expressionism as elitist—too **esoteric** to be appreciated by most museum goers. In response, they returned to representational art. This was a time when consumerism was booming in the United States and advertising had become **ubiquitous**. So the world around the pop artists became a **fecund** source of images.

At first, pop art **garnered** much negative criticism. Some critics complained that pop art's **penchant** for reproducing existing images—such as painting a portrait of a can of soup—was too easy. Others claimed the pop artist's love of commercial images **enervated** traditional artistic values. A few critics even implied that pop art was **depraved**, or at least was

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Warhol, Andy (1928–1987); *Vegetarian Vegetable from Campbell's Soup II*, 1969. Screenprint, 35 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 23 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. Gift of Mr and Mrs Peter Eider-Orley, 1972 (1972.724.3). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. ©2021 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

devoid of aesthetic principles. Pop artists dismissed these arguments as so much **sophistry**. Why should traditional art be **hallowed** and commercial art be dismissed as vulgar? Was it a declaration of truth or a mere **fiat** when a critic pronounced one piece art and another trash?

No doubt reminding themselves that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, pop artists ignored the critics and continued to explore the relationship between the two types of art, playing around with commercial images and presenting them as works of art. Roy Lichtenstein, for example, chose comic strips as his main subject. Reproducing all the **idiosyncrasies** of this format, including voice balloons and printing dots, he chose frames that showed violent action or sentimental romance. The images, enlarged to monumental size and completely out of context, took on a new significance.

Andy Warhol is **reputed** to have eaten soup for lunch every day for twenty years. Perhaps that explains why he, the best-known of the pop artists, first became famous for his images of soup cans and other consumer products. Later, glamour and fame became a central theme of his work, and he produced **sumptuous** silkscreens of celebrities, such as Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley. Thanks to an **overweening** desire for publicity, Andy Warhol helped make pop art a household term, and he became one of the wealthiest artists of all time.

Pop art sculptors were also active, again taking consumer products as their starting point. Claes Oldenburg stuffed and painted cloth to produce giant hamburgers, toothpaste tubes, and ice cream bars. Like so much pop art,



Oldenburg's "soft sculptures" remind us that, in pop art, the ordinary things of life become strange and things that we take for granted are seen anew, as if for the first time.

Pop art outlived its critics, and today, a half century later, its seriousness is not in doubt. As a movement, pop art ended, but not before greatly expanding the range of subjects, attitudes, and techniques available to all artists. Thanks to the pop artists, younger generations of painters, sculptors, and photographers now explore the world in more imaginative and thought-provoking ways.



## PASSAGE 2

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Pop art was a reaction to abstract expressionism. Abstract expressionist paintings were nonrepresentational. They did not **delineate** objects directly. Instead, artists used shapes and **nuances** in color

to express ideas. Pop artists viewed abstract expressionism as elitist. It was too **esoteric** to be appreciated by most museum goers. So, they returned to representational art. Consumerism was booming in the United States. Advertising had become **ubiquitous**. The world around the pop artists became a **fecund** source of images.

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values. A few critics even implied that pop art was **depraved**, or was lacking aesthetic principles. Pop artists dismissed these arguments as so much **sophistry**. Why should traditional art be **hallowed** and commercial art be dismissed as vulgar? Was it a declaration of truth or a mere **fiat** when a critic pronounced one piece art and another trash?

No doubt reminding themselves that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, pop artists ignored the critics. They continued to explore the relationship between the two types of art. Roy Lichtenstein chose comic strips as his main subject. Reproducing all the **idiosyncrasies** of this format, such as voice balloons, he chose frames that showed violent action or sentimental romance. The images, enlarged to monumental size, took on a new significance.

Andy Warhol is **reputed** to have eaten soup every day for twenty years. Perhaps that explains why he became famous for his images of soup cans. Later, fame became a central theme of his work. He produced **sumptuous** silkscreens of celebrities. Thanks to an **overweening** desire for publicity, Andy Warhol helped make pop art a household term.

Pop art sculptors were also active. Claes Oldenburg stuffed and painted cloth to produce giant hamburgers, toothpaste



tubes, and ice cream bars. Oldenburg's "soft sculptures" remind us that, in pop art, the ordinary things of life become strange. Things that we take for granted are seen as if for the first time.

Pop art outlived its critics. Today, its seriousness is not in doubt. Now, younger generations of artists can explore the world in more imaginative and thought-provoking ways.

Unit 5