

Art or prank?

1. Discuss the quotes below. What did these people mean?

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

Pablo Picasso

"Art, freedom and creativity will change society faster than politics."

Victor Pinchuk

"I'd been painting rats for three years before someone said, 'That's clever. It's an anagram of art,' and I had to pretend I'd known that all along."

Banksy

2. Read the sentences below and match the underlined words and phrases to their meanings.

- a) I can't believe that he destroyed his work by shredding it.
- b) Todd flew over the city in a hot-air balloon as a publicity stunt.
- c) His photographs have become iconic images of war.
- d) It costs a staggering amount of money, that is \$50,000 per week, to keep the museum open to the public.
- e) As dead plants decay, they release mineral salts into the soil.
- f) Our car has depreciated to nearly 50% of its original value.
- g) When I was at school we played a lot of pranks on our teachers.
- h) The employees mocked the company's recovery plan as it seemed ridiculous.

MEANINGS

- 1) to make someone or something look stupid by laughing at them
- 2) to become less valuable than before
- 3) to cut or tear something into long thin pieces
- 4) to do something to someone as a joke or trick
- 5) very shocking and surprising
- 6) something silly or unusual that is done to get public attention
- 7) to be gradually destroyed by the natural process of change
- 8) very famous and well known, and believed to represent a particular idea

3. Watch two [videos](https://youtu.be/OQ_fIALWqpU) [https://youtu.be/OQ_fIALWqpU, https://youtu.be/E-d1Hozj6-s], make notes and summarize them afterwards. When speaking, use the vocabulary in the box.

decay	depreciate	iconic	play a prank on sb
shred	staggering	stunt	mock

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4. Discuss the questions.

- Will Banksy's Girl with Balloon depreciate in value after the stunt or not?
- Maurizio Cattelan's Banana was sold for a staggering \$120,000. Was it worth it in your opinion?
- Do you consider what you've seen in the videos to be art or maybe just pranks played on the wealthy?
- Do you know any other artworks that are controversial when it comes to their artistic value?



5. Read the sentence from one of the videos and choose the correct meaning of the word in bold.

*"Maybe we're missing something with the banana and duct tape like an **unfathomable** metaphor about the banana that decays and the tape (...) that pretty much lasts forever."*

- a) creepy
- b) impossible to understand
- c) convincing

6. Read the sentences below. Then, find two synonyms in the box for each underlined word.

astonishing	astounding	bewildering
incomprehensible	outrageously	scandalously

- a) I must say that it is shockingly expensive.
- b) It's unfathomable to me why people invest in contemporary art.
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- c) It cost a staggering amount of money and I don't even know who the buyer was.

7. What do you think about the cases below? Use the words from the previous exercise to discuss your thoughts.

- A 1986 sculpture "Rabbit" by Jeff Koons was sold for \$91.1 million. It's the most expensive work sold by a living artist. See it [here](#).
- An artist Marcel Duchamp changed art history forever. He turned a urinal upside down, hung it on the wall and claimed it was art. See the piece [here](#).
- Two teenagers pranked visitors at a museum in San Francisco. They left a pair of eyeglasses on the floor so that people might think it was a work of art. Visitors started gathering around the glasses, analyzing them and thinking that they were an element of the exhibition. See what it looked like [here](#).
- The 82-year-old Cecilia Giménez had the best of intentions when she worked on the restoration of a religious painting of Jesus (from 1930), but her skills didn't quite allow her to pull it off. Judge it for yourself! See the restoration effect [here](#).

8. Discuss the questions below.

- Overall, how do you feel about modern art? Do you prefer it to more traditional art or vice versa?
- Do you ever go to see art installations, exhibitions or look for graffiti in the streets?
- Can you describe any other thought-provoking forms of art you have seen?