

Vincent van Gogh

1853 - 1890



Vincent van Gogh as
he painted himself
in 1887.

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Vincent Willem van Gogh (van-GOH) was born on March 30, 1853, in Groot Zundert, the [Netherlands](#). His father, Theodorus, was a minister. His mother, Anna, took care of a family of five children. Vincent was the oldest child. He attended boarding schools from a young age until he was 15 years old.



[Netherlands](#)

In 1869 16-year-old Vincent went to work. He worked for a large company of art dealers, people who buy and sell art. For a few years van Gogh was a successful art dealer. He learned a lot about art in the galleries where he worked. He learned even more when the company moved him to its offices in London, England, and Paris, France. Eventually, van Gogh's personal feelings about what art should be got in the way of his job as a dealer. He left the company in 1876. Van Gogh tried several other careers. He taught school, preached, and worked with poor people. He moved often, living in towns in Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

Finally, Vincent van Gogh decided that he wanted to be an artist. He went to art school but felt that he learned best by drawing and painting on his own. He practiced his art and learned from other artists, but he did not live in any one place for very long. Few people at this time knew about his work.

Van Gogh was almost always very poor. The only money he had was what [his brother Theo](#) sent him. One of van Gogh's few friends was the painter [Paul Gauguin](#) (goh-GAN). For a short time, van Gogh and Gauguin shared a house and studio in Arles, France. However, van Gogh became


[his brother](#)
[Theo](#)


[Paul](#)
[Gauguin](#)

ill and had to go into a hospital.

Vincent van Gogh was in and out of hospitals for the rest of his life, but he created a huge number of artworks. In ten years he made more than 800 paintings and 700 drawings. He painted some of his most famous paintings while he was in the hospital. Many of his paintings show ordinary people at work. Some show the beautiful country where he lived. Van Gogh liked bright splashes of color, especially yellow. He painted with wide, swirling brush strokes that show movement.

By May 1890 van Gogh's health had improved. He was out of the hospital, working again, and living near Theo's family in Paris. Then suddenly, on Sunday, July 27, van Gogh became ill. Two days later, he died in his brother Theo's arms. Vincent van Gogh was 37 years old.

Vincent van Gogh sold only one painting while he was alive. After he died, his work became well known and very expensive. Today his [Sunflowers](#) (1888) and [Starry Night](#) (1889) are among the most recognized paintings in the world. In 1990 van Gogh's painting [Portrait of Dr. Gachet](#) sold for \$82,500,000. It was the most anyone had ever paid for a painting in history.



[Sunflowers](#)



[Starry Night](#)



[Portrait of Dr. Gachet](#)

