



4 ELEMENTS
in arts



Teaching foreign languages through art: a guide





“I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artists. Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit.”

- John Steinbeck -

**“Art is a language, an instrument of knowledge,
an instrument of communication.”**

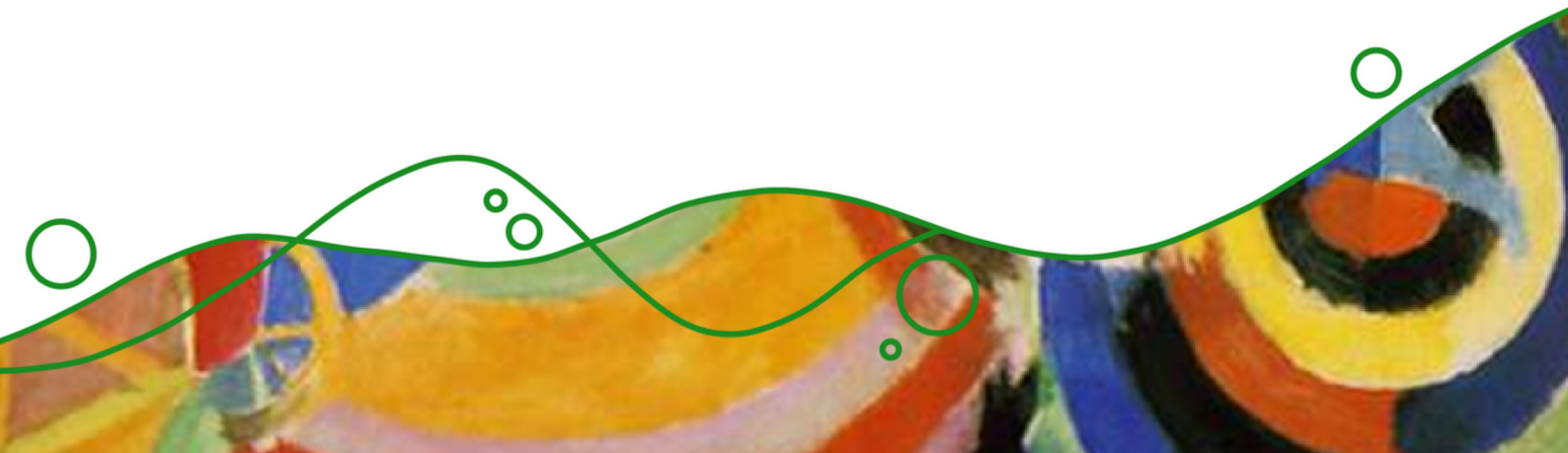
- Jean Dubuffet -

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Introduction



4 Elements in Arts is an European project designed to help educators working with adults with disadvantaged backgrounds or (specific) learning difficulties. The idea is to provide tools that allow teachers to develop students' cultural knowledge through different artworks and strengthen their language skills by offering targeted exercises. This guide aims to help educators in the creation of their own lessons by listing resources and giving useful information about copyright issues.



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1. Why art should be used in foreign language teaching

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1.1 Benefits of using visual arts to teach a second language

Art in the foreign language classroom not only engages multiple senses, but also provides a nuanced platform for cultural immersion. It allows learners to experience the language in its cultural context, making abstract concepts tangible. Studying a Spanish painting while learning the language, for example, can provide insights into the emotions, history and social values of Spanish-speaking countries, enriching the learning experience far beyond vocabulary and grammar.



1.2 Developed strengths

The inclusion of art fosters an environment where learners are encouraged to observe closely, think critically and articulate their thoughts and feelings. This process not only helps with language development, but also promotes emotional intelligence.

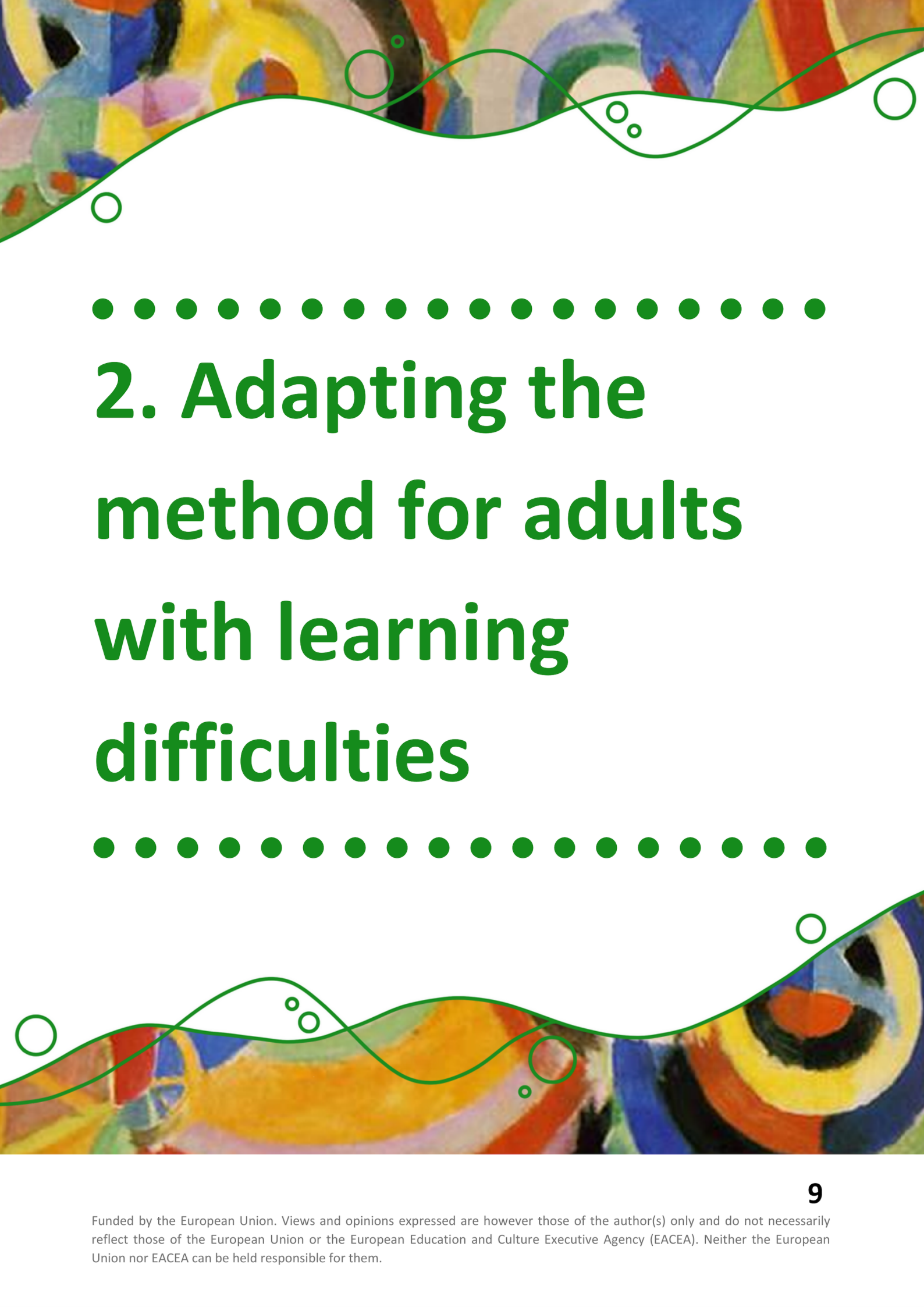
Through engagement with art, learners become more adept at recognizing and expressing complex emotions - a skill that transcends language barriers and fosters deeper human relationships.



1.3 Advanced techniques, suggestions and tools

- **Visual storytelling:** Create a story around a work of art and ask students to continue or reinterpret the story in the target language. This activity can be adapted to any language level by adjusting the complexity of the story and the language used.
- **Cultural Role-Playing:** Immerse students in the cultural context of a work of art. Assign roles based on the historical period or the scene depicted in the artwork and conduct a role play. This can include debates, re-enactments or creating a modern version of the scene in the target language.

- ***Art Creation as Response:*** Encourage students to create their own artwork in response to a prompt related to the language lesson. This can be a great way to internalize new vocabulary and concepts. For example, after learning about family vocabulary, students could create a portrait of their family using elements from the target language culture.



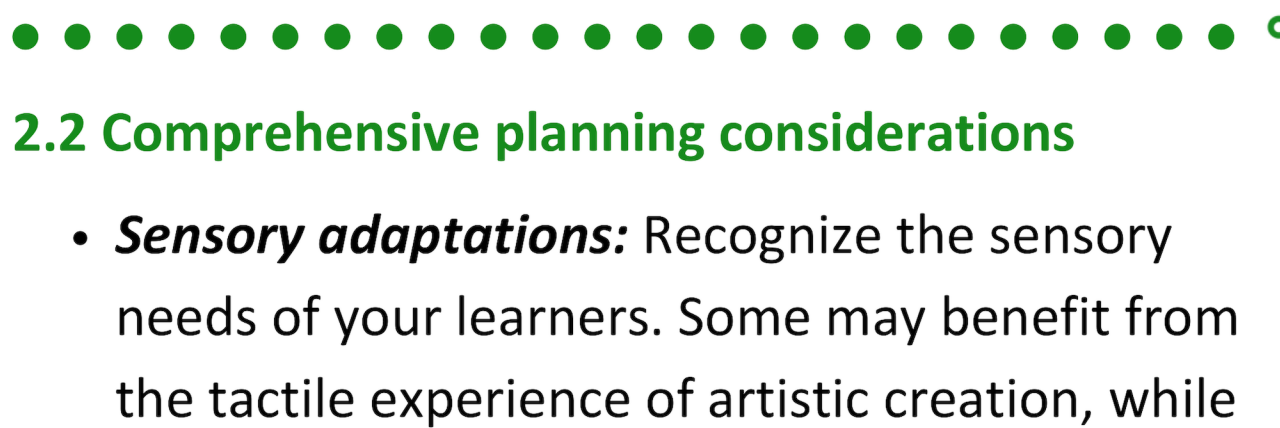
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2. Adapting the method for adults with learning difficulties

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2.1 Usefulness for people with learning difficulties

Art can serve as a universal language, bridging gaps where words may not suffice. For adults with learning difficulties, this visual and tactile approach can demystify language learning. Art-based methods can help to reduce anxiety around language acquisition and make the learning process more accessible and enjoyable.



2.2 Comprehensive planning considerations

- ***Sensory adaptations:*** Recognize the sensory needs of your learners. Some may benefit from the tactile experience of artistic creation, while others may find visual or auditory stimuli particularly appealing. Tailor your lessons to these preferences.
- ***Flexible engagement:*** Incorporate technology to offer different methods of engagement. For example, digital art-making tools or interactive museum tours can cater to different learning styles and physical abilities.



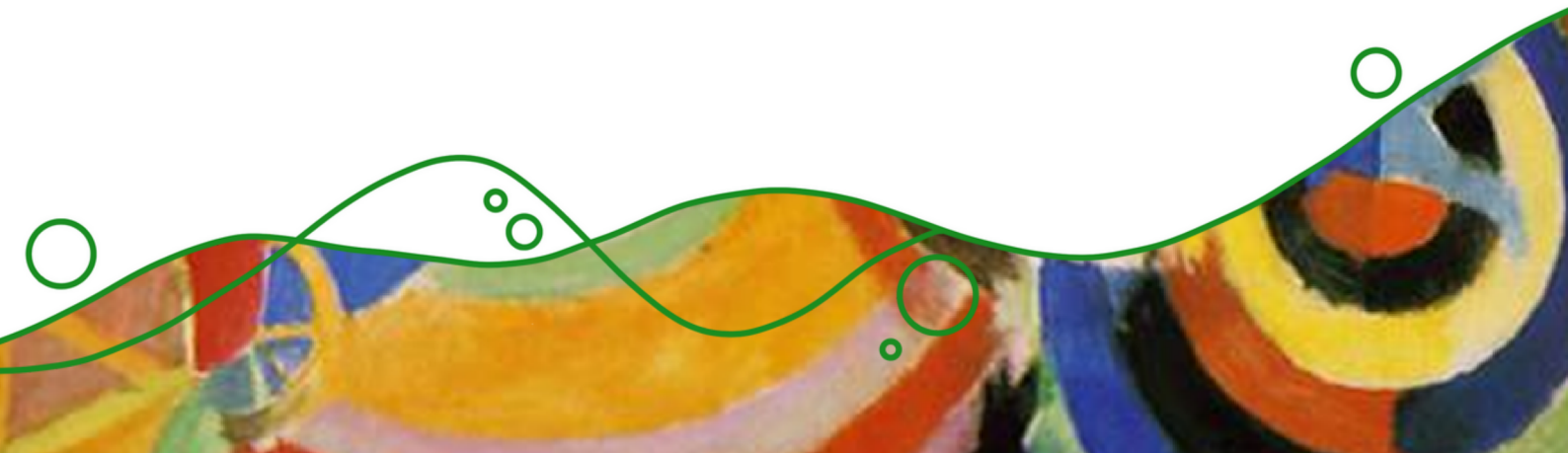
2.3 Making learning through art inclusive

- ***Accessibility of artworks:*** Choose artworks that are not only visually accessible, but also connect culturally and emotionally with learners. Artwork that reflects the diversity of the classroom can create an inclusive and engaging learning environment.
- ***Adaptive techniques:*** Use adaptive tools and methods to create art. This may include using software that enables voice commands or adapting traditional art tools to make them more accessible for those with physical disabilities.
- ***Supportive guidance:*** Create a supportive, error-friendly environment. Encourage exploration and expression without fear of correction. Use art as a means of celebrating every small linguistic achievement to build confidence and motivation.





3. Tools & resources



3.1 Where to find them

Image databases (general):

- Photos for Class is a search engine safe for school that pulls images from Pixabay, Flickr, the Library of Congress and the British National Archives. The image is automatically cited when you download it and you can see if the image allows Creative Commons use.
- Pics4Learning is an image library safe and free for use in education. Images are indexed and archived in categories, making it easy for students and teachers to browse the catalogue.
- Artstor: a non-profit association that has developed an image database for educational and scholarly use. It offers more than two and a half million images from top museums, archives, scholars and artists (all rights-cleared for education and research) from different cultures and periods, and provides tools for teaching and learning with visual materials.

It also includes “Open Access collections” from partner museums freely available to all. The images are accompanied by high quality metadata from the collection’s cataloguers, curators, institutions, and artists themselves. If you log in with an institutional account (e.g. university, school, library) you have access to a wider range of downloadable resources.

- Flickr Commons: a program designed to support cultural institutions in sharing their photography collections with the public. The aim is to improve accessibility to the photographic collections of public archives.
- Europeana: this website provides digital access to materials relating to European cultural heritage. Users can find works of art, books, music and videos on archaeology, newspapers, fashion, science, sport and so on. The contents are classified by theme, topic, feature and century. You can filter the results by accessibility (“Can I use this?” “Yes”/“Yes with conditions”/“Maybe, seek permission”).

There's also a specific section "for teachers", where they can find useful resources such as a catalogue of learning scenarios created by teachers from across Europe. You can search by language, topic, level of education, type of activity and other filters.

Finally, in the "Stories" section users can explore European cultural heritage stories in online exhibitions and blogs.

Other sites where you can find royalty-free images:

- Pexels
- Unsplash
- Pixabay
- Kaboompics

Museums and Institutions' websites:

- **New York Public Library Digital Collections**

(public domain pictures)

<https://www.nypl.org/blog/2016/01/20/public-domain-in-the-classroom>

- **The British Museum Images**
- **Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture Known in the Renaissance**: the Census database connects antique monuments known during the Renaissance (1400–1600) with the Renaissance media which represent or respond to them
- **The Met collection**
(with a “Learn with us” section)
- **Musée du Louvre**
- **Museo del Prado**
- **Museum of Fine Arts Boston**
- **Library of Congress**
- **Tate Modern database**
- **Mom**
- **National Portrait Gallery**
- **Guggenheim** (free teaching materials)
- **Hermitage museum**

Some of these websites contain resources that are not downloadable due to copyright protection. However, they offer interesting interactive tools for teaching, such as essays, timelines, virtual tours, lesson plans and so on.

Other interesting websites and tools

Artsy: a site for art collecting. It's designed for users to discover, buy or sell artworks and stay updated on the art market. Artsy can also be used as a tool for educational purposes (Artsy Education). You can also use **The Art Genome Project**, a classification system that allows users to find artworks based on different parameters such as subject matters, styles and movements, medium and techniques etc.

Google Arts & Culture:

<https://artsandculture.google.com/?hl=en>.

It contains an “Explore” section, where users can find high-resolution images of works of art classified by different features, and a “Play” section with several interactive games designed for students.

NYU Institute of Fine Arts online resources list:

<https://ifa.nyu.edu/research/online-image-resources.htm>

Pearson's Italian website:

<https://it.pearson.com/kilometro-zero/secondaria-1-grado/arte-immagine.html#risorse>



3.2 Copyright on images: everything you need to know

What is copyright?

Copyright is the right held by the author of an intellectual work (artistic, scientific or literary). No one, except the author, can publish or reproduce the work.

In EU countries, copyright protects intellectual property for up to **70 years after the author's death**, or 70 years after the death of the last survivor in case of works created collectively.

Outside the EU, in individual countries that have signed the Bern Convention, the duration of protection may vary, but is for at least 50 years after the author's death.

Copyright guarantees these exclusive rights:

- **economical rights**, which guarantee the control over the work and a remuneration in case of use through sale or licence;
- **moral rights**, which usually protect the rights to claim authorship of the work (right of attribution) and to reject any changes (right of integrity).

Anyone who creates a literary, scientific or artistic work is automatically protected by copyright, which begins from the moment of the creation of the work, so there is no need to follow any particular procedure.

However, you may need to let other people know that you are the author of such a work. To do this, you may **place a copyright notice on your work**, such as the text “All rights reserved”, **or the © symbol** followed by the year the work was created.

On 15 April 2019, the EU Council approved the **“Directive on Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market”**. This Directive intended to make EU copyright rules fit for the digital age. The aim was creating a fairer marketplace for online content ensuring more transparency for the remuneration of authors.

In particular, Article 5 “Use of works and other materials in digital and cross-border educational activities” provides for a mandatory exception to allow the digital use of works and other materials, exclusively for illustrative purposes for educational use, justified by the purpose being not commercial. The article, once implemented, clarified that **educational institutions can make non-commercial use of works protected by copyright for illustrative purposes, as long as the source is indicated.**

N.B: If you are a teacher in a EU country and you want to know more about educational use of intellectual works protected by copyright, you can check the [FAQ](#) on the EUIPO website.

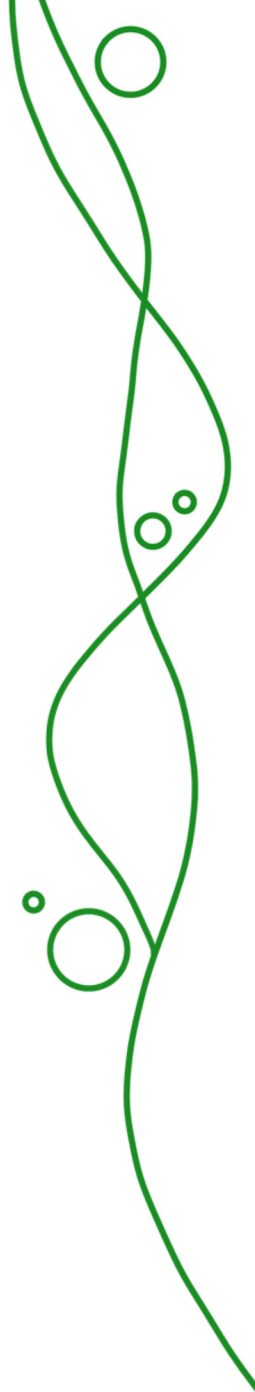
Creative Commons

Creative Commons (CC) is a non-profit association founded in 2001 by Lawrence Lessing with the aim of creating licences to expand the range of intellectual works legally available for sharing and public use. It represents a middle ground between copyright (all rights reserved) and the public domain (no rights reserved) and it is particularly used for internet content. It's not an alternative to copyright but works alongside it. Authors can choose from six different types of licences.

For example:

CC BY - NC - SA: Attribution Non Commercial
ShareAlike





You CAN	BUT
Share - copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. Adapt - remix, transform and build upon the material.	You MUST give <u>appropriate credit</u>, <u>provide a link to the licence</u> and <u>indicate if changes were made</u>. You may NOT USE the material for <u>commercial purposes</u>. If you remix, transform or build upon the material, you MUST <u>distribute</u> your contributions <u>under the same licence as the original</u>.

Creative Commons don't give up their rights but they grant their enjoyment to third parties under certain conditions. CC licences are based on the concept "some rights reserved". This means that the author can choose which rights they want to grant and which ones they want to reserve. It is also possible to attribute a work to the public domain: in this case the author can choose the CC0 instrument.

In order to have a preliminary indication as to whether a work is already in public domain or not, you can use [Public Domain Calculation](#) (for Europe) or [Copyright Term Calculator](#) (for the USA).

Glossary

Public domain: a work falls in the public domain if copyright on it has expired or if it is waived by, for example, a CC0 dedication.

Licence: a permit from an authority to own or use something, do a particular thing, or carry on a trade.

EUIPO: The European Union Intellectual Property Office is the EU agency responsible for managing EU trade marks and registered designs at EU level.

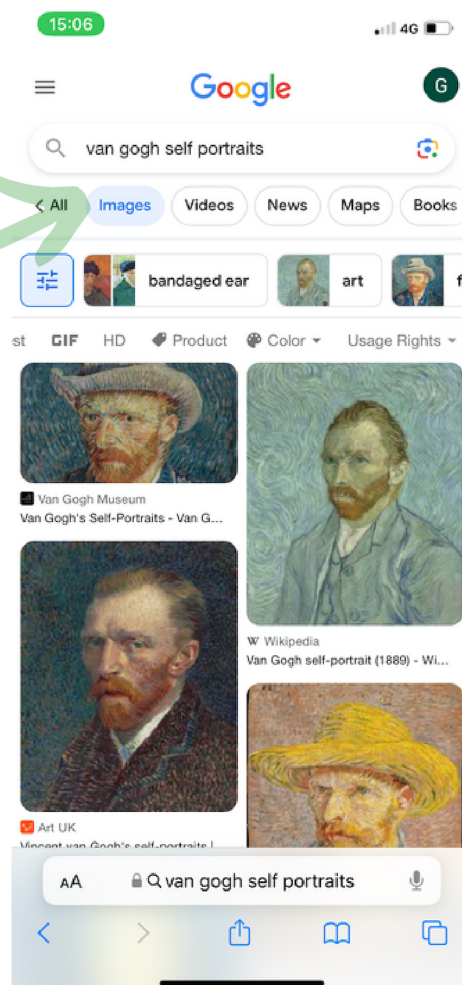


3.3 Practical example: How to use Google Images properly

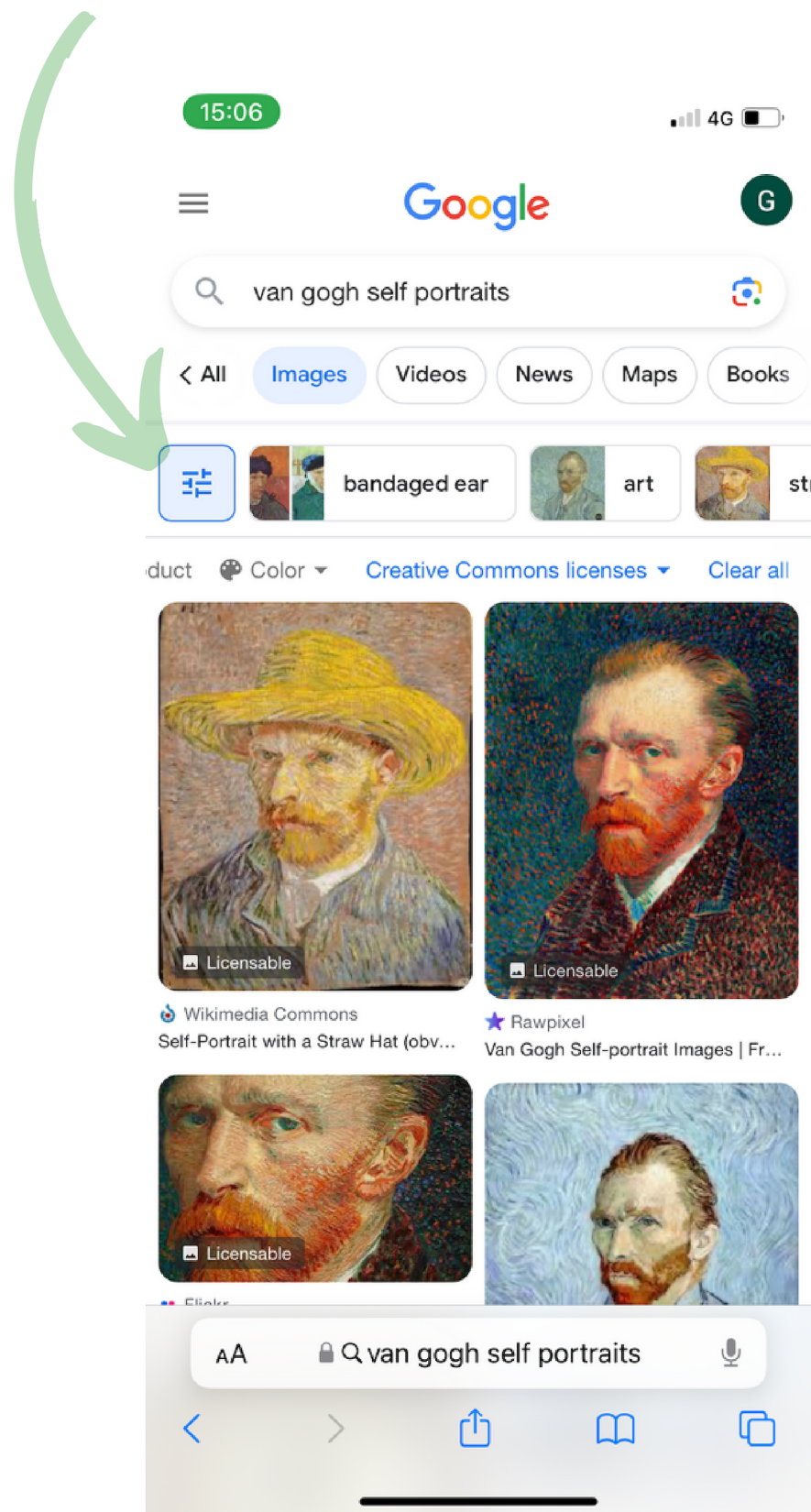
Google Images is one of the most used sites for searching images. However, not all images you find are in the public domain, and you may risk using an image incorrectly or illegally.

Here is what you have to do:

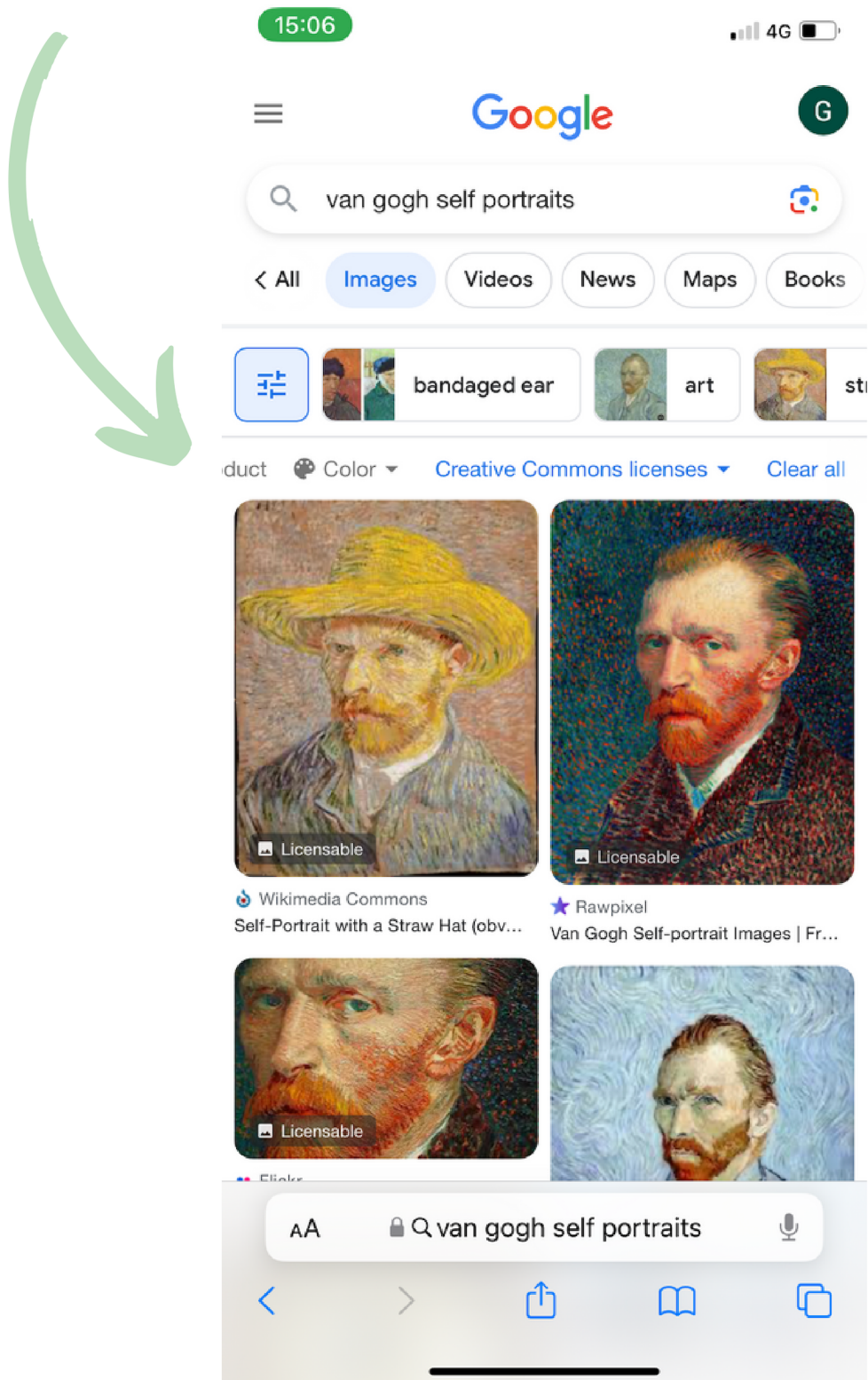
1. write the word of the item you are looking for in the search bar
2. click on “Images”



3. click on “Tools”



4. select “Creative Commons licences” to view only images protected by CC licences that can be reproduced





Conclusion



Integrating art into language learning is a transformative approach that uses the universal language of art to enhance language learning, particularly for adults with learning difficulties and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This guide, inspired by the European “4 Elements in Arts” project, outlines the myriad benefits of using the visual arts as a medium for language learning, the specific benefits for learners with learning difficulties and a wealth of resources and tools available to educators.

With its ability to engage the senses, evoke emotional responses and promote immersion in another culture, art is a powerful ally on the path to language learning. It goes beyond traditional methods by providing a rich, multi-sensory experience that can make learning a new language more accessible, enjoyable and meaningful. For people with disabilities, arts-based language learning can demystify the process of language acquisition, reduce anxiety and provide alternative pathways to understanding and communication.

Educators are encouraged to explore the wide range of resources listed, from image databases and museum collections to copyright information and Creative Commons licenses. These tools not only facilitate the practical aspects of integrating art into the language classroom, but also ensure that such integration complies with intellectual property laws and promotes the ethical use of artistic works.

Furthermore, the guide emphasizes the importance of taking into account the diverse needs and preferences of learners and advocates for an inclusive, supportive and adaptable learning environment. By adapting lessons to the specific needs of students with disabilities, educators can foster a sense of belonging, boost self-confidence and motivate learners through every small linguistic achievement.

In summary, teaching foreign languages through the arts is not just a pedagogical strategy, it celebrates human creativity and expression. It recognizes the deep connection between art and language as carriers of culture, history and human emotion. When educators take this holistic approach, they not only enrich their language teaching, but also empower their students to connect with others across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

This guide serves as a starting point, an invitation to educators to further explore the intersection of the arts and language teaching. As John Steinbeck so aptly put it, teaching is an art form that shapes the human mind and spirit. By integrating the visual arts into the language classroom, teachers become artists, and their classrooms become canvases on which students can paint their way to linguistic and cultural fluency.



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Part 1:

A news feature from CNA (Channel News Asia) about a young Malaysian indigenous artist who teaches English to children by using his art:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIvpWRn9o9w&list=WL&index=2>

“Every Picture Tells a Thousands Words: Teaching Language Through the Visual Arts” by Amy E. Lingenfelter, English Language Fellow (Quito, Ecuador): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9RrBuOhELg&list=WL&index=1>

American English website:

<https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/create-communicate-art-activities-efl-classroom>

Book “Create to Communicate. Art activities for the English as a foreign language classroom” (PDF):

https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/create_to_communicate_0.pdf

“The Arts and Language Development”

<https://www.aps.edu/fine-arts/advocacy/ArtsLanguage%20Dev.pdf>

“Language Teaching through Art”, article by Kátia Brunetti (“Medium”, 2020)

<https://katiabrunetti2.medium.com/language-teaching-through-art-1e3e7a077d37>

“Learning through art” workshops developed by the Museum of Fine Arts in Huston

<https://www.mfah.org/research/kinder-foundation-education-center/kinder-foundation-learning-through-art>

“Teaching a Second Language Through Art” by Doris Vazquez (Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, 1981):

<file:///Users/giulia.castelli/Downloads/81.04.12.pdf>

“How Should I use art to Effectively Teach Language Concepts?”, article by Emily Smith

<https://www.listenandlearn.org/the-teachers-handbook/how-should-i-use-art-to-effectively-teach-language-concepts/>

“Art in the classroom”, article on the British Council website:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/inclusive-practices/articles/art-classroom>

“Language learning with a Side of Art to Go”, article by Nile Stanley on “Language Magazine” (22 Oct 2020)

<https://www.languagemagazine.com/2020/10/22/language-learning-with-a-side-of-art-to-go/>

Ingram, C. (2017). “82 Questions to Ask about Art.” Art Class Curator. artclasscurator.com/82-questions-to-ask-about-a-work-of-art (interesting tool for classroom discussions)

Eftekhari, A. (2020), “Integrating Visual Art and Music to Help Adult Students Learn English in Canada”, University of Windsor.
<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1138&context=major-papers>

“Language and literary learning through Art. Methodological and theoretical background and curriculum” (Lali project <http://www.lali-project.eu/>)
http://www.lali-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/LALI_en_Methodological-and-theoretical-background_prefinal.pdf

U. Thulasivanthana (2020) “Incorporating Visual Arts into English Language Teaching”, Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies (SVIAS), Eastern University, Kalladi, Sri Lanka:
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/428f/a1cb30d4a7c55dc7ac62b53a044d9db9a309.pdf>

Becker, P. A. (2020). "Teaching Language and Literacy through the Visual Arts: An interdisciplinary, literature-based approach." *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 52(3).

(text can be requested from the author here:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338419718_Teaching_Language_and_Literacy_Through_the_Visual_Arts_An_Interdisciplinary_Literature-Based_Approach)

Verner, S., "More than words. 10 ways to promote language learning through art":

<https://busyteacher.org/24204-promote-language-learning-through-art-10-ways.html>

"Creativity for teachers of Foreign Language" - A course for school teachers, language teachers and educators promoted by the European Cultural Academy:

<https://europeanculturalacademy.com/courses/educators/teaching-language-through-art>

Visual Thinking Strategies (2019):

<http://joanvinyoli.cat/portal/noticies/254-la-ciutat-de-reus-ja-llueix-l-escultura-constel-lacio-vinyoli?showall=&start=1>

“Using the Arts to Support English Language Learners. Why and How to engage English Language Learners through the arts”, on the Kennedy Center Website : <http://joanvinyoli.cat/portal/noticies/254-la-ciutat-de-reus-ja-llueix-l-escultura-constel-lacio-vinyoli?showall=&start=1>



Part 2:

“The importance of creativity for people with learning disabilities and/or autism” (with a list of 10 tips for developing access to arts and creativity for people with learning disabilities and/or autism)

<https://www.thornburycommunityservices.co.uk/news/the-importance-of-creativity-for-people-with-learn/56/>

“How art therapy helps people with ADHD, LD and Autism” (for a general overview)

<https://www.ldrfa.org/how-art-therapy-helps-people-with-adhd-learning-disabilities-and-autism/>

“Case Study: Art Therapy for a Client with Learning Difficulties”

<https://arttherapyresources.com.au/learning-difficulties/>

“How to Teach English to Adults: Effective Tips and Activities for ESL Teachers”

<https://grade-university.com/blog/how-to-teach-english-to-adults-effective-tips-and-activities-for-esl-teachers>

“A Guide to Learning Disabilities for the ESL Classroom Practitioner”

<https://www.ldonline.org/ld-topics/english-language-learners-ld/guide-learning-disabilities-esl-classroom-practitioner>





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4 ELEMENTS in arts



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