

VAN GOGH PAINTS THE NIGHT SKY

Vincent Can't Sleep

by **BARB ROSENSTOCK** illustrated by **MARY GRANDPRÉ**

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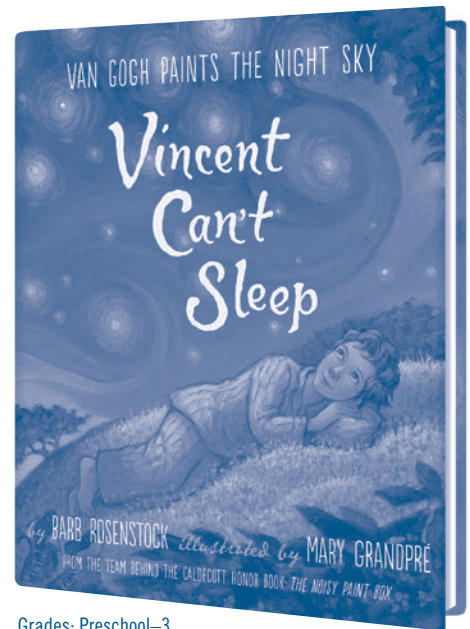
VAN GOGH PAINTS THE NIGHT SKY CLASSROOM ACTIVITY GUIDE



About the Book

From the time he was a little boy, Vincent van Gogh often lay awake at night. He used that time to imagine swirls of color and starlight shapes, to draw—and to explore the rich, dark life of midnight outdoors. He grew into a young man who wandered cities and country villages, painting the world as he saw it—even when no one else saw it the same way.

Van Gogh never achieved success in his lifetime, but he also never veered from his passion for art. He became one of the most beloved painters of all time. *Vincent Can't Sleep* is a celebration of creativity, individuality, and the power of sticking with something that you love.



Grades: Preschool–3
HC: 9781101937105
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EL: 9781101937129

About the Author and Illustrator

BARB ROSENSTOCK is the author of the Caldecott Honor Book *The Noisy Paint Box*, which was also illustrated by Mary GrandPré, as well as *The Camping Trip That Changed America*, illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein, and *Fearless: The Story of Racing Legend Louise Smith*, illustrated by Scott Dawson. She lives outside Chicago with her husband, sons, and two big poodles. Visit her at BarbRosenstock.com or follow her on Twitter at [@barbrosenstock](https://twitter.com/@barbrosenstock).

MARY GRANDPRÉ is best known as the illustrator of the Harry Potter books. She also illustrated the Caldecott Honor Book *The Noisy Paint Box*, as well as Camille Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals*, written by Jack Prelutsky, and *Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat* by Jennifer Armstrong, among many others. Visit her at marygrandpre.com.

Common Core Standards Correlations

The following informational text standards are addressed in this guide. These are for the second-grade level, and you can find a coordinating standard in the same strand if you teach a different grade.

Key Ideas and Details:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.1: Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.2: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

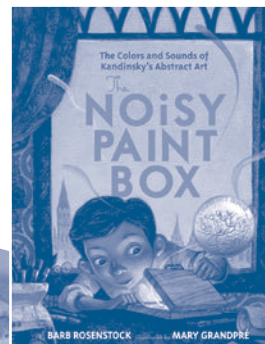
Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.6: Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.8: Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.

Also by Barb Rosenstock and Mary GrandPré



Grades: Preschool–3
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Go to RHTeachersLibrarians.com for
The Noisy Paint Box Educators' Guide



Pre-Reading Activities

Project Van Gogh's *The Starry Night* onto a whiteboard or bring in a poster of the famous painting. Choose one or more of the following activities to do before reading *Vincent Can't Sleep: Van Gogh Paints the Night Sky*.

- Write a story about an animal or person who is under that sky.
- Describe the painting in your own words in a writer's notebook or journal.
- Predict/brainstorm what the artist of this painting was like.
- Paint a picture of the same scene in the daytime.

Discussion Questions

- Explain why Vincent must tiptoe out of his house.
- Where does Vincent like to go? Why do you think he does this? Would you? Why or why not?
- What is a boarding school? How is Vincent different from his classmates? Is it OK to be different?
- As an adult, what job did Vincent take with a family member? Why did he lose this position?
- How did Vincent support himself as he traveled?
- Do you think it's important that he started to call himself an artist? What does this tell us about him?
- What outlet did Vincent find to capture the way he saw the world? What help did he get and from whom?
- What does Vincent realize about the colors of the night?
- While in the hospital, forced to be quiet, what does he imagine? What do you imagine when you're forced to be quiet?
- Rosenstock describes Vincent as "A sensitive boy. A hidden genius. A brilliant artist." Do you think he is more one of these things than the others? Why?
- What do you see as the defining element of Vincent's life story?
- Have you ever seen any of Vincent's paintings? Why do you think they became so famous?
- How can we help artists today? What do you think an artist needs as a child, student, and adult to find success and happiness? Are they different?
- List everything you learned about Vincent van Gogh from reading this story.

From the Author's Note:

- What is insomnia? What does it mean to be "plagued" with something?
- What wild event took place one night when Vincent was only nine or ten? How is this reflected in the art of *Vincent Can't Sleep*?
- Why did Vincent's insomnia not matter as much once he was a grown-up?
- What is the most interesting thing that you learned in this part of the book?

Word Knowledge

It is important that students are able to identify real-life connections between words and their multiple uses. As a class, brainstorm connections between these words from the story and other meanings they can have in different contexts. Ask if students can use each word correctly in a sentence or make a connection to something in their own lives. Examples have been provided to help lead the discussion.

New words:

FUSS

FLICKER

SHIMMER

DULL

SCATTERED

EXPLOSIVE

Real-life connections:

Babies for food, grandparents over children they haven't seen in a while, someone losing a game, or a toddler not getting their way

Candles, streetlights when they come on, fluorescent bulbs, the lights between railway cars

Sunlight on water, glitter, diamonds, chandeliers, sparkly jewelry

Waiting in line, waiting for a doctor, being grounded or in time-out, stuck listening to adults talk

Legos spilled, glitter dropped, glass/cup broken, kaleidoscope (fractured colors), dirty clothes

Cheers after scoring in a big game, voices during arguments, science experiments, fireworks

Correlates to Common Core Standard ELA-LITERACY.L.2.5.A.

Prepared by Tracie Vaughn, author and teacher

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Name _____

Be a Word Sleuth!

Read the following sentences from *Vincent Can't Sleep* and try to figure out what each bolded word means by the way it is used in context.



Word in context:	What I think it means:	I came to this conclusion because:	The actual definition:
“Vincent can’t sleep . . . so while the sturdy Dutch village of Zundert slumbers . . .”			
“He drifts—hundreds of miles in a tattered hat and cloak . . .”			
“After scattered lessons from proper artists, he takes off . . .”			
“Flashing brushstrokes capture country cottages at dusk, city cafés at midnight . . .”			
“Is the night sky at rest? Or do eleven stars pulse like a beating heart?”			

This activity correlates to Common Core Standard ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4.A.

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Name _____



Write a Book Review

A book review is a piece of writing in which a reader gives their opinion about a story they have read. Use this graphic organizer to pull together your thoughts, and then write out your whole review in a paragraph.

Parts of a Review:	Your Own Words in a Complete Sentence
INTRODUCTION: The title, author, and type of book	
OPINION: Say what you liked about the book (or what you would change)	
REASON: Explain why you felt like this (use one of these words: because, and, also)	
CONCLUSION: Do you think others should read this book? Why?	

This activity correlates to Common Core Standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1

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