

Name: _____

CSI English 12
A Portrait of the Artist?

Art has many qualifications, definitions, iterations, mediums, audiences, opportunities, movements, genres, and explorations. **Art** is often considered the process or product of deliberately arranging elements in a way that appeals to the senses or emotions. It encompasses a diverse range of human activities, creations and ways of expression, including music, literature, film, sculpture and paintings. With this in mind, consider the following questions:

1. What standards are appropriate for evaluating a work of art? (in other words, how do we, or maybe how *should* we, measure the relative greatness, or lack of greatness, of a work of art?)

2. Likewise, what standards are *not* appropriate for evaluating a work of art? (in other words, how should we *not* measure its greatness, or lack thereof...?)

3. In evaluating a work of art, what is the relevance of the artist's intention?

4. Is there other knowledge, external to our knowledge of the work itself, which is relevant to evaluating and appreciating a work? Explain.

5. Do we need to know biographical data about the artist to appreciate a work of art?
Could we fully appreciate a work without this background knowledge?

6. What is the role of morality in art? Is morality an appropriate standard in evaluating a work of art?

There is a story about Churchill and the arts that often gets told. A story about what Churchill said during the darkest days of World War II when he was being asked to cut arts funding and to sell major works from museums to raise funds for the struggling war effort. When he was asked to cut arts funding to support the war effort, Churchill replied, “Then what are we fighting for?”

Powerful story. But according to the Winston Churchill Society, protector of Churchill’s legacy, it’s false. Darn it.

In 1938, before the ugly horror of World War II, Winston Churchill *did* utter the following:
“The arts are essential to any complete national life. The State owes it to itself to sustain and encourage them... Ill fares the race which fails to salute the arts with the reverence and delight which are their due.”