

## Solve the mystery

I'm old (about 500 years old, actually) but, according to many people, I'm still beautiful. I'm called a work of art, a masterpiece, although there's something about me that people still don't really understand.

About a hundred years ago, I was stolen from my home in France (which, incidentally, was not the country I was painted in), but fortunately I was returned within a couple of years. I certainly didn't enjoy being moved around during that time, but I wasn't damaged, thankfully.

My creator was a man far ahead of his time; he was a scientist, an artist, an engineer and even an architect. Believe it or not, he once designed (and named) a prototype for a form of air travel! He was a very busy man indeed – in fact, it took him a long time to create me. But it was all worth it in the end, I'm famous now and so is he.

I'm known by two names, the first is my first name and the other is my surname. You know me, don't you?

1. Answer these questions. Then read the text on Worksheet B and check your answers.

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1. Who, or what, am I?
2. Who was my creator?
3. Where (in France) is my home?
4. What are the two names I am known by?
5. What is it about me that people don't understand?
6. Where was I painted?
7. How long did it take to create me?
8. Who stole me?
9. After I was stolen, where was I found?
10. Which aircraft did my creator design and name?

Read the two newspaper extracts and check your answers to 1

London Times

23 August 1911

## Theft of masterpiece rocks art world

The unthinkable has happened. Someone has stolen the Mona Lisa, to the horror of Paris and the art world.

The thief slipped into the Louvre during the night and took off with Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece. Curator Albert Marceau, who heard news 1) \_\_\_\_\_ the theft this morning, is said to be worried 2) \_\_\_\_\_ what the world will think 3) \_\_\_\_\_ the Louvre's security arrangements. He said "Only a madman would take such a famous picture. A man capable 4) \_\_\_\_\_ this is capable 5) \_\_\_\_\_ anything. We are very proud 6) \_\_\_\_\_ our security here at the Louvre, but this man is obviously good 7) \_\_\_\_\_ his work and we are most concerned we were not able to prevent this crime 8) \_\_\_\_\_ happening. I cannot imagine, however, him selling this painting anywhere in the world."

Police investigating the theft agree 9) \_\_\_\_\_ M. Marceau that this is the work of an extremist. They are relying 10) \_\_\_\_\_ any information they can get from members of the public who might have been in the vicinity of the museum between midnight and five o'clock this morning.

Nobody at present, though, can explain how the museum's most keenly guarded attraction just vanished. This, like Mona Lisa's smile, remains a mystery.

London Times

31 December 1913

## Mona Lisa smiles once more

Today, 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Louvre in Paris welcomes back 2) \_\_\_\_\_ old friend more than two years after she went missing. Recovered less than three weeks ago in Florence, 3) \_\_\_\_\_ city in Italy where she was originally painted, 4) \_\_\_\_\_ Mona Lisa has been restored to her rightful home. 5) \_\_\_\_\_ man, named as Vincenzo Perugia, has been arrested in connection with 6) \_\_\_\_\_ theft.

Completed in 1506, 7) \_\_\_\_\_ portrait, which took four years to paint and is also known as *La Gioconda*, was 8) \_\_\_\_\_ work of artist Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). He employed a technique known as *sfumato*, in which light and shade interact, causing ambiguity in the picture, such as the exact time of day and the enigmatic expression of the subject herself. Among the other achievements of 9) \_\_\_\_\_ artist was the fresco of *The Last Supper* and the design for 10) \_\_\_\_\_ flying machine which he called a *helicopter*. Although his design was not used in the end, 11) \_\_\_\_\_ name he gave 12) \_\_\_\_\_ machine remains unchanged.

2. Complete the first extract with one a preposition.

3. Complete the second extract with *a*, *an* or *the*.