

How to Create a Short Biography: A text-based demo task for language teaching using the model text “Tintoretto” by *Encyclopædia Britannica*


Task created in 2023 by
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TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS



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Tintoretto Sample Task

Instructor Guide and Student Handouts

TASK PROFILE

- Topic: Art history, Italian art, Renaissance
- Genre: Short biography
- Learner proficiency range: Novice High to Intermediate Low (ACTFL Guidelines, 2024)
- Piloted with: An Italian version of this task is routinely employed in the third-semester class of Italian Language & Culture at University of Pittsburgh, as part of a module on Italian art.

MODEL TEXT

- Title: *Tintoretto*
- Link to text: [Kids Britannica Tintoretto](#) (with minor editing)

Overall Learning Objectives

After completing the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC), learners will be able to:

- Convey the following both orally and in writing, at a proficiency level from Novice Low to Intermediate Mid:
 - Information about main events in the life of the Venetian painters Tintoretto and Marietta Robusti.
 - Information about the Italian and Venetian Renaissance.
 - Information about paintings and other works of art using topic-specific vocabulary (Steps 1 and 2).
- Recognize and apply strategies for understanding a written text (Steps 1, 2, and 3).
- Recognize features of a *short biography* (Steps 3, 4, and 5) with specific focus on:
 - Description, using different kinds of descriptors.
 - Being able to recognize and summarize main events.
 - Using circumstances to convey information (the parts of the clause that answer the questions “where?” and “when?”, i.e., “in Venice” or “in 1518”)
- Apply new topic-related and genre-related resources to the writing of a *short biography* (Steps 4 and 5).



The Teaching and Learning Cycle





Suggested Timeline

Days and Steps	Homework due before class	Classwork Activities	Pages
Day 1 Step 1 Building Knowledge of the Topic	Homework Step 1: New vocabulary (optional)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vocabulary activity 2. Renaissance activity 3. Renaissance art activity 4. Tintoretto's work. <i>The Miracle of the Slave</i> main information activity 5. Tintoretto's work. <i>The Miracle of the Slave</i> analysis activity 6. Pronunciation activity 7. Self-assessment 	4-12
Day 2 Step 2 Guided Reading	Homework Step 2: Reading the model text and answering comprehension questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Influences 2. Tintoretto's style 3. Main events in Tintoretto's biography 4. Tying the main concepts together using conceptual maps 5. Self-assessment 	13-26
Day 3 Step 3 Deconstruction		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm-up questions on genre 2. The stages of the short biography genre 3. Textual features 4. Shared rubric 	27-34
Day 4 Step 4 Joint Construction	Homework for Step 4: Bring to class two facts about the painter Paolo Veronese for every stage identified in the Tintoretto's short biography	Collaborative writing	35-38
Day 5 Step 5 Independent Construction	Write a short biography on Marietta Robusti independently		39-42



Step 1 | Building Knowledge of the Topic

Step 1 | Learning Objectives

After completing this step, learners will be able to:

- Use vocabulary specific to the field of painting.
- Use sentence-level discourse to:
 - Convey basic technical characteristics of a painting, both orally and in writing.
 - Explain key characteristics of the Italian Renaissance.
 - Describe one of the most relevant paintings by Tintoretto.

Step 1 | Before Class

Homework for Step 1 (optional). [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 1": vocabulary activities from slides 3 to 8](#). Assign the new vocabulary in slides 3-8 for homework in order to use class time to work on the content.

Step 1 | During Class

Overview. Since the *short biography's* topic is related to Italian Renaissance art, the first day of this two-week project focuses on introducing learners to this topic and/or expanding their knowledge about it. Use a variety of activities to familiarize learners with the vocabulary specific to art: materials, techniques, etc.; with basic concepts related to art and art history, such as painting subjects, periods, movements, and fundamental information about the Italian Renaissance.

Step 1 | Activities and Materials

1. Activity 1, vocabulary lesson. [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 1"](#): Guide learners to review the vocabulary from slides 3 to 8 by taking out their responses to this homework assignment (above). For more specific directions, see notes at the bottom of the slides.
2. Activity 2, Renaissance activity. [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 1"](#): Using slides 9-11, introduce the Renaissance starting with the timeline and then moving to its main characteristics with Activity 3 - Renaissance art (in Step 1 of Student's Handout A).
3. Activity 3, Renaissance art lesson (in Step 1 of Student Handout A; Answer Key below).



Answer Key | Step 1 Activity 3

- a. Painting A. Andrea Mantegna, *Court Scene*. Answer: Renaissance.
Representational forms, events from contemporary life, human figures are often rendered in dynamic poses, showing expression, using gestures, and interacting with one another, suggest mass, and they often occupy a realistic landscape, emphasized precise detail.
- b. Painting B. Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Rucellai Madonna*. Answer: Middle Age
abstract forms, mostly biblical scenes, flat, stand against a gold background.

Student Handout A on next page.



STUDENT HANDOUT A
 STEP 1 | BUILDING KNOWLEDGE OF THE TOPIC
 Activity 3, Renaissance art activity

Renaissance art. What are the characteristics of Renaissance art, and how does it differ from the art of the Middle Ages?

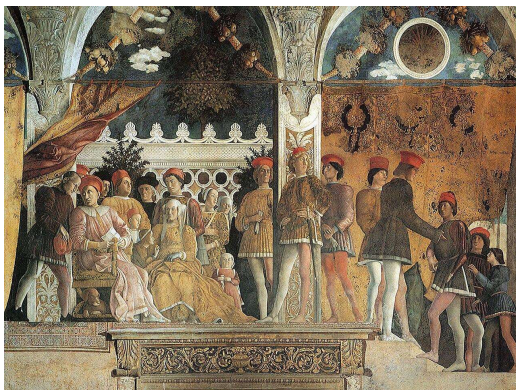
Reading

Read the short article (below and linked here at [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)) about the main differences between art from the Middle Ages and art from the Renaissance, and then complete the activity below in pairs.

“Renaissance art is marked by a gradual shift from the abstract forms of the medieval period to the representational forms of the 15th century. Subjects grew from mostly biblical scenes to include portraits, episodes from Classical religion, and events from contemporary life. Human figures are often rendered in dynamic poses, showing expression, using gestures, and interacting with one another. They are not flat but suggest mass, and they often occupy a realistic landscape, rather than stand against a gold background as some figures do in the art of the Middle Ages. Renaissance art from Northern Europe emphasized precise detail as a means of achieving a realistic work.”

Activity

Observe the two paintings. According to what you just read, which one is from the Middle Ages and which from the Renaissance? Write down the characteristics listed in the article.



Painting A
 Andrea Mantegna, *Court Scene*



Painting B
 Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Rucellai Madonna*



4. Activity 4, lesson on *The Miracle of the Slave* painting by Tintoretto. Introduce the painting ([on slide 12](#)) with this activity, which asks learners to fill a catalog entry with basic information about the artwork. The prompt for students is in Student Handout B, below.

Answer Key for Activity 4, *The Miracle of the Slave* painting by Tintoretto (on Step 1, Student Handout B).

Who painted it?	Tintoretto
When?	in 1548
Is the painting known by another name? If so, what?	<i>The Miracle of St Mark Freeing the Slave</i>
With what technique?	Oil on canvas
What are the dimensions? (cm. or inches)	415x541 cm.
For what place was it commissioned?	Scuola Grande di San Marco
Where is it now?	Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

**STUDENT HANDOUT B****STEP 1 | BUILDING KNOWLEDGE OF THE TOPIC**Activity 4, lesson on *The Miracle of the Slave* painting by Tintoretto

Complete the table about *The Miracle of the Slave*, using information from this webpage (wga.hu/html_m/t/tintoret)

Who painted it?	
When?	
Is the painting known by another name? If so, what?	
With what technique?	
What are the dimensions? (cm. or inches)	
For what place was it commissioned?	
Where is it now?	



5. Step 1, Activity 5, Analysis of the painting *The Miracle of the Slave*. Using slides 12-14 in the [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 1"](#), lead learners through an analysis of *The Miracle of the Slave*.
6. Step 1, Activity 6, Pronunciation. For this last activity, read aloud the *short biography* model text with learners following along. Then, focus on pronunciation by asking, for instance, "Is there any word that seems difficult to pronounce? Any word that you didn't expect to be pronounced the way it did?" You can also ask learners to read the text or specific parts out loud in pairs, etc.
7. Step 1, Activity 7, self-assessment (Step 1 in Student Handout C, below). The self-assessment is presented as a can-do statement ([ACTFL](#)) paired with true/false or multiple-choice questions. Assign this activity as homework, or complete as a wrap-up activity at the end of the class.



Answer Key | Step 1 Self-Assessment (Student Handout C).

<p>I can recognize the main materials necessary to create a painting (select all that apply).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ charcoal <input type="checkbox"/> religious subject <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Ages ✓ canvas <input type="checkbox"/> background ✓ brush ✓ egg tempera
<p>I can recognize the subject of a painting.</p>	<p>Is this painting a <input type="checkbox"/> religious subject, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> mythological subject, or a <input type="checkbox"/> historical subject?</p>
<p>I can place the Renaissance chronologically in relationship to other artistic movements.</p>	<p>The Renaissance comes chronologically after the Neoclassicism. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>The Renaissance comes chronologically before the Baroque. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>The Renaissance comes chronologically after the Middle Ages. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p>
<p>I can list the main characteristics of Renaissance art (select all that apply).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Representational form <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract form <input type="checkbox"/> The subjects are mostly limited to religious scenes ✓ A wide variety of subjects ✓ Dynamism, flowy fabrics, characters realistically interacting with each other. <input type="checkbox"/> Static poses, very little to no interaction among characters
<p>I can describe <i>The Miracle of the Slave</i> by Tintoretto.</p>	<p>Select three main characters you can find in the painting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ St. Mark <input type="checkbox"/> The king ✓ The executioner ✓ The judge <input type="checkbox"/> A Roman goddess



STUDENT HANDOUT C
STEP 1, BUILDING KNOWLEDGE OF THE TOPIC
 Activity 7, Self-Assessment

Step 1 Self-Assessment

<p>I can recognize the main materials necessary to create a painting (select all that apply).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> charcoal <input type="checkbox"/> religious subject <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Ages <input type="checkbox"/> canvas <input type="checkbox"/> background <input type="checkbox"/> brush <input type="checkbox"/> egg tempera</p>
<p>I can recognize the subject of paintings.</p>	<p>Is this painting a <input type="checkbox"/> religious subject, <input type="checkbox"/> mythological subject, or a <input type="checkbox"/> historical subject?</p>
<p>I can place the Renaissance chronologically in relationship to other artistic movements.</p>	<p>The Renaissance comes chronologically after the Neoclassicism. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False The Renaissance comes chronologically before the Baroque. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False The Renaissance comes chronologically after the Middle Ages. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p>
<p>I can list the main characteristics of Renaissance art (select all that apply).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Representational form <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract form <input type="checkbox"/> The subjects are mostly limited to religious scenes <input type="checkbox"/> A wide variety of subjects <input type="checkbox"/> Dynamism, flowy fabrics, characters realistically interacting with each other <input type="checkbox"/> Static poses, very little to no interaction among characters</p>
<p>I can describe <i>The Miracle of the Slave</i> by Tintoretto.</p>	<p>Select three main characters you can find in the painting: <input type="checkbox"/> St. Mark <input type="checkbox"/> The king <input type="checkbox"/> The executioner <input type="checkbox"/> The judge <input type="checkbox"/> A Roman goddess</p>



END OF STEP 1



Step 2 | Guided Reading

Step 2 | Learning Objectives

At the end of this step, learners will be able to:

- Convey information about influences, style, and main events of Tintoretto's life and work, both orally and in writing.
- Apply strategies to read a *short biography*.

Step 2 | Before Class

To prepare for this step, assign the *short biography* of Tintoretto (the model text) to learners as homework with a list of comprehension questions (see Student Handout D, next page).



STUDENT HANDOUT D

STEP 2, GUIDED READING

Homework in preparation for Step 2. Read Tintoretto's *short biography* (adapted from [Britannica Kids](#)) and answer the assigned comprehension questions.

Tintoretto

(1518?–94). The energy and excitement of the Renaissance radiate from the paintings of the Italian master Tintoretto. Dramatic composition and the bold use of changing light make his work unique.

Little is known of Tintoretto's life. He was born Jacopo Robusti in Venice in about 1518. His father worked as a tintore, or dyer of cloth, so Jacopo became known as Tintoretto, "little tintore." Tradition says his heroes were the painters Michelangelo and Titian, but Tintoretto developed a distinctive style early on.

His treatment of light and shade was as vivid as lightning flashing amid storm clouds. His skill in composition created images of vast space crossed with strong curves and angles with subjects arranged in ways unusual for the period. For example, in *The Last Supper*, Jesus, the apostles, and angels are all present; however, the figures that are prominent in the foreground are humble serving people and domestic animals who seem unaware of the religious significance of the event.

At first Tintoretto had difficulty finding work, but gradually his reputation grew. In 1547 he was commissioned to paint scenes from the life of St. Mark, the patron saint of Venice, for the "School of St. Mark". The first of these is the exuberant *St. Mark Freeing the Slave*, which made him a center of attention. By 1555 he was famous and quite popular. He began a decade of work in the decoration of the church of the Madonna dell'Orto.

In order to compete for work in the "school of St. Roch", Tintoretto secretly mounted his sample on a ceiling of the school and unveiled it as if it were a finished product. He won the competition and began two decades of work in the school.

Tintoretto painted not only religious subjects but also portraits and scenes from myth and fable. Among his finest works are *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* (1552), *Cana Wedding* (1561), and *Crucifixion* (1565). Tintoretto died in Venice on May 31, 1594.

Comprehension Questions

- When and where was Tintoretto born?
- What was his actual name?
- Why was he called "Tintoretto"?
- Tintoretto, early in his career, was inspired by two major artists. Who are they?
- What is his first major work?
- Name one of his famous long-lasting commissions.
- When and where did he die?



Step 2 | During Class

First, review with learners the answers to the comprehension questions assigned as homework to ensure general comprehension of the model text, then move on to a more detailed reading and deeper comprehension of the text, exploring three key topics: Tintoretto's artistic influences, personal style, and his life's main events.



Step 2 | Activities and Materials

1. Activity 1, lesson on Tintoretto's influences. See [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 2"](#) slides 3-6. Start deepening the learners' comprehension and content knowledge by focusing on comprehension questions ("Tintoretto, early in his early career, was inspired by two major artists. Who are they?"). The goal is to help learners familiarize themselves with the features Tintoretto drew from Titian and Michelangelo.
2. Activity 2, lesson on Tintoretto's style (Student Handout E). See [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 2"](#) slide 8 and this Activity 2, Tintoretto's style. Focusing on the first and third paragraphs of the short biography and using Student Handout E, guide learners in understanding how Tintoretto used composition, light, and color in his paintings, especially in contrast with masters from the previous period (the Middle Ages).

Answer Key for Activity 3, Tintoretto's style (Student Handout E) on next page.





Answer Key for Activity 3, Tintoretto's style

 <p>A dynamic and dramatic painting of the Last Supper by Tintoretto. The scene is set in a dark, cavernous room with a high, vaulted ceiling. The figures are arranged in a complex, swirling composition. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of movement and intensity. The figures are dressed in rich, detailed clothing, and the overall atmosphere is one of chaos and emotional turmoil.</p>	 <p>A more static and orderly painting of the Last Supper by Giotto. The scene is set in a simple, brightly lit room with a flat, white wall and a simple wooden table. The figures are arranged in a linear, symmetrical composition. The lighting is flat and even, and the colors are soft and uniform. The figures are dressed in simple, unadorned clothing, and the overall atmosphere is one of calm and order.</p>
<p>Tintoretto, <i>The Last Supper</i>, 1592-94, Venice.</p>	<p>Giotto, <i>The Last Supper</i>, circa 1303-1305, Padua.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Realistic setting ● Moving and naturalistic draperies ● Vivid use of light and shade ● Characters dramatically interacting ● Colors with high contrasts ● Dynamic composition with strong curves and angles ● Presence of many other secondary characters that add realism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Artificial setting ● Vertical, rigid draperies ● Use of flat diffused light ● Characters not or barely interacting ● Soft and uniform colors ● Static, linear composition ● Space limited to the minimum number of necessary characters



STUDENT HANDOUT E
STEP 2, GUIDED READING
 Activity 2, lesson on Tintoretto's style

Tintoretto's style. Assign style descriptions to each work of art, either Tintoretto's or Giotto's.

Style Descriptions			
Realistic setting / Artificial setting	Moving and natural draperies / Vertical, rigid draperies	Presence of many other secondary characters that add realism / Space limited to the minimum number of necessary characters	
Characters dramatically interacting / Characters not or barely interacting	Soft and uniform colors / Colors with high contrasts	Use of diffused light / Vivid use of light and shade	Static, linear composition / Dynamic composition with strong curves and angles
			
<p>Tintoretto, <i>The Last Supper</i>, 1592-94, Venice.</p>		<p>Giotto, <i>The Last Supper</i>, circa 1303-1305, Padua.</p>	



3. Activity 3, Main events in Tintoretto's life. See [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 2"](#) slide 8 and Step 3 in Student Handout F. This activity is intended to build up learners' familiarity with the most important dates and events in Tintoretto's life and career. Ask learners to name the main event connected to each date using information from the model text, and to then paraphrase the information using their own words.

Step 2 | Answer Key | Activity 3 (Student Handout F). Answers may vary.

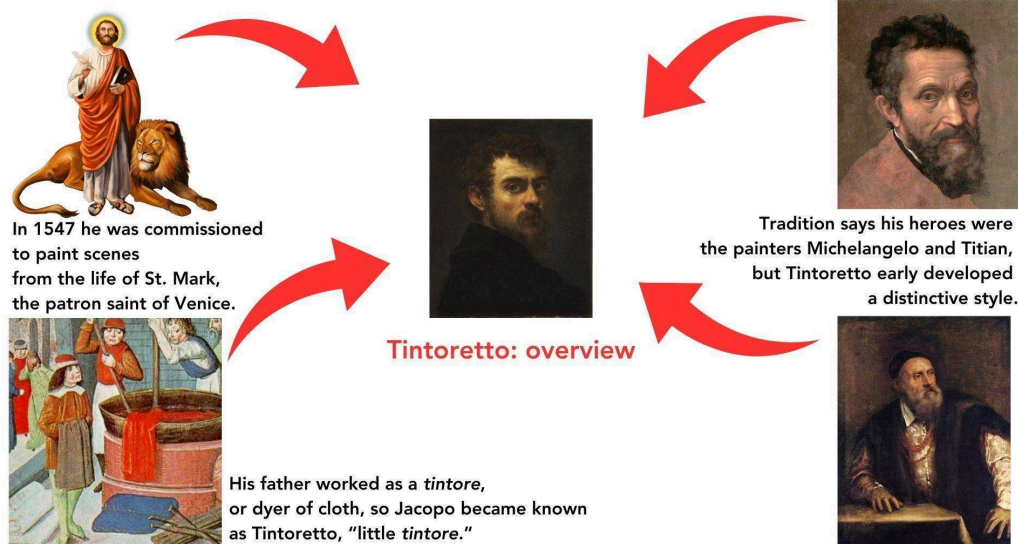
Date	Event from the text	Event in your own words
1518	He was born Jacopo Robusti in Venice about 1518	Tintoretto was born circa 1518, but his real name was Jacopo Robusti.
1547	In 1547 he was commissioned to paint scenes from the life of St. Mark, the patron saint of Venice, for the school of St. Mark.	Tintoretto received his first major commission in Venice.
1552	Among his finest works are <i>Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple</i> .	In 1552, Tintoretto painted one of his best works, <i>Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple</i> .
1555	By 1555 he was famous and quite popular. He began a decade of work in the decoration of the church of the Madonna dell'Orto.	He had reached fame by 1555. He worked for ten years to decorate the church Madonna dell'Orto.
1561	<i>Cana Wedding</i>	In 1561 Tintoretto painted one of his finest works, <i>Cana Wedding</i> .
1565	1565	<i>Crucifixion</i>
1594	May 31, 1594	Tintoretto died in Venice on May 31, 1594.



4. Step 2 | Activity 4, Tying the main concepts together using conceptual maps. See [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 2"](#) slides 9-11 and Step 2 in Student Handout G. Using conceptual maps and images, learners tie together everything they have learned. Provide spider diagrams with images from Student Handout G and ask learners to add to each image all the information related to it they can find in the model text.

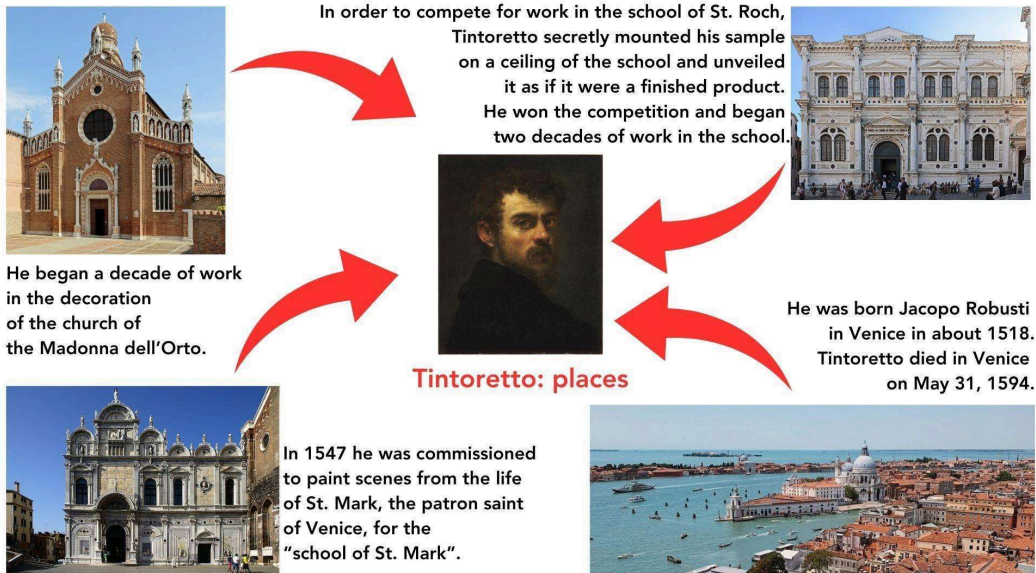
Answer Key for Activity 4, lesson on tying the main concepts together using conceptual maps (Student Handout G).

Conceptual Map A: Tintoretto overview

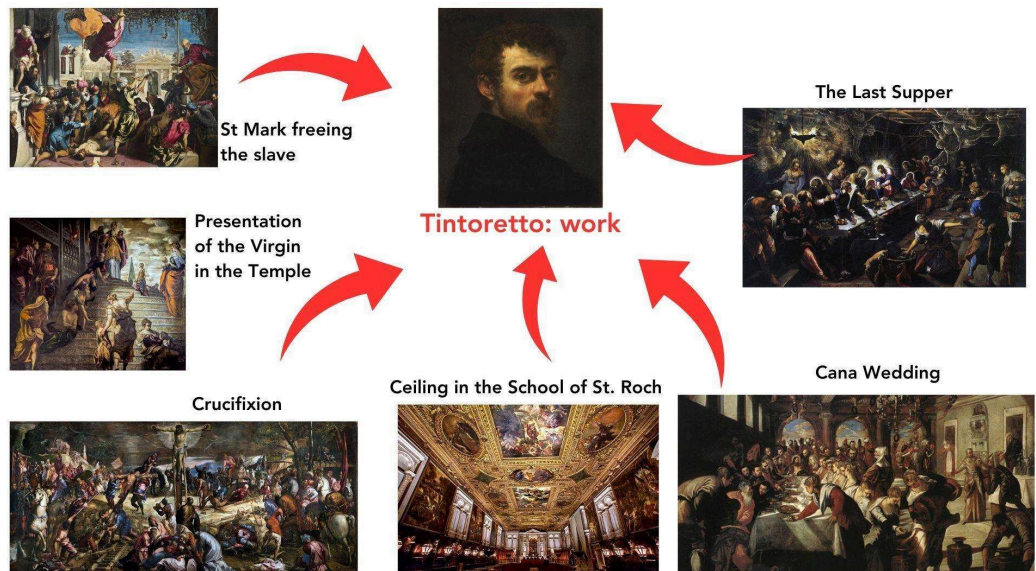




Conceptual Map B: Tintoretto places



Conceptual Map C: Tintoretto's work

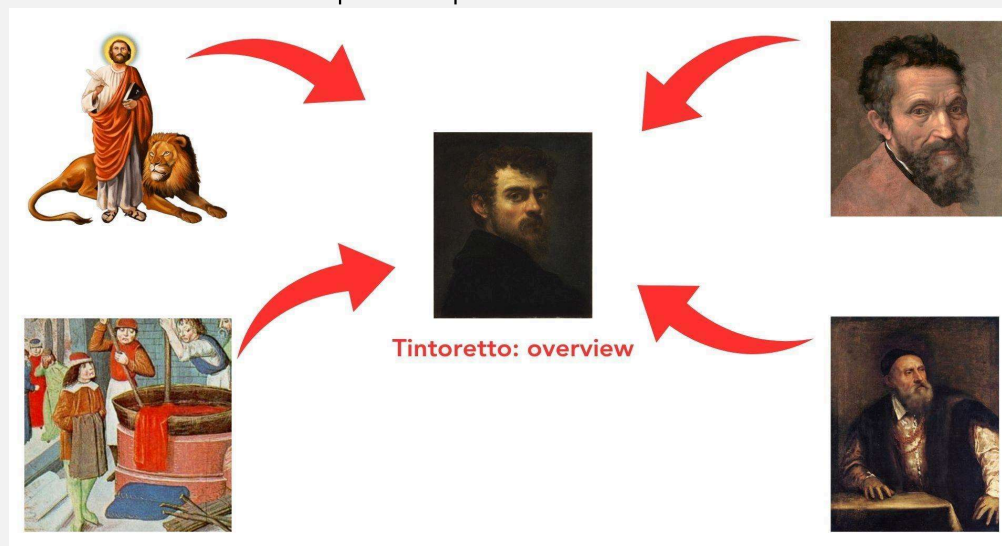




STUDENT HANDOUT G (front)
STEP 2, GUIDED READING
Activity 4

Tying the main concepts together using conceptual maps. In the model text, find sentences, expressions, names, etc. that connect to the pictures in each conceptual map. You can use a Google images search if you can't figure out on your own what an image is.

Conceptual map A: Tintoretto overview



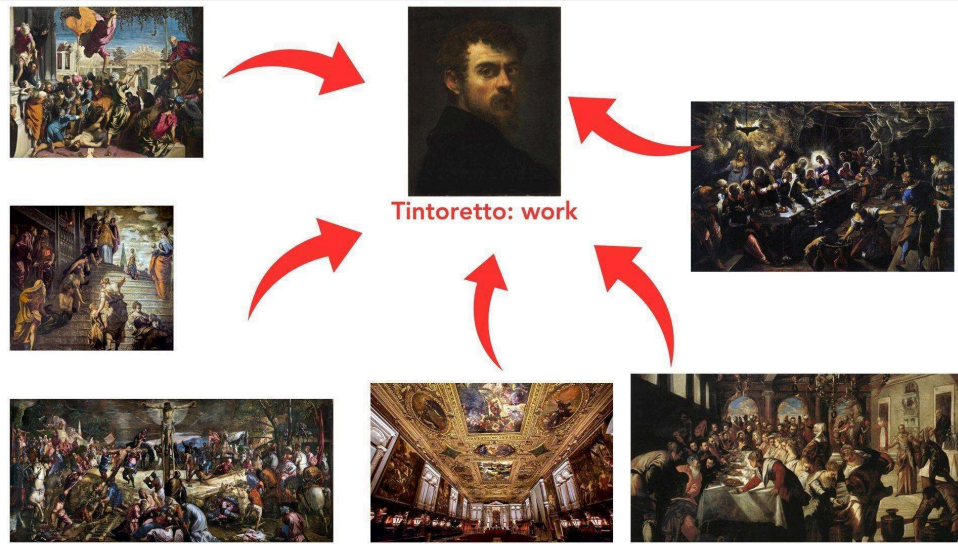
Conceptual map B: Tintoretto places





STUDENT HANDOUT G (back)
STEP 2, GUIDED READING
Activity 4

Conceptual map C: Tintoretto work





5. Step 2 | Activity 5, Self-Assessment (Student Handout H). The self-assessment is presented as a can-do statement ([ACTFL](#)) paired with true/false or multiple-choice questions. Assign this activity as homework, or complete as a wrap-up activity at the end of the class.

Answer Key. Self-Assessment (Student Handout H).

<p>I can name the painters who influenced Tintoretto's style (select all that apply).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Titian <input type="checkbox"/> Raphael <input type="checkbox"/> Veronese <input type="checkbox"/> Donatello ✓ Michelangelo
<p>I can explain the main information about Tintoretto's style.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What stylistic element did Tintoretto take from Michelangelo? <input type="checkbox"/> color ✓ design b. What stylistic element did Tintoretto take from Titian? ✓ color <input type="checkbox"/> design c. Which of the following describe elements of Tintoretto's style (select all that apply): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Soft light ✓ Dynamic composition ✓ Flowy draperies <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform colors <input type="checkbox"/> Linear composition <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial setting ✓ Vivid light and shade ✓ Colors with high contrast
<p>I can list some of the most important events in Tintoretto's life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tintoretto was born in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Florence ✓ Venice <input type="checkbox"/> Rome b. His father was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ a dyer of cloth <input type="checkbox"/> a painter c. Select the work that made Tintoretto famous: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>St. Mark Freeing the Slave</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cana Wedding</i> <input type="checkbox"/> The ceiling of the school of St. Roch d. In which Venetian church did he work for ten years? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The school of St. Roch ✓ Madonna dell'Orto



STUDENT HANDOUT H
STEP 2, GUIDED READING
 Activity 5, Step 2 Self-Assessment

Step 2, Self-Assessment. Check your knowledge of each can-do statement by completing the multiple-choice activities to the right of the statement.

<p>I can name the painters who influenced Tintoretto's style (select all that apply).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Titian <input type="checkbox"/> Raphael <input type="checkbox"/> Veronese <input type="checkbox"/> Donatello <input type="checkbox"/> Michelangelo</p>
<p>I can explain the main information about Tintoretto's style.</p>	<p>a. What stylistic elements did Tintoretto take from Michelangelo? <input type="checkbox"/> color <input type="checkbox"/> design b. What stylistic elements did Tintoretto take from Titian? <input type="checkbox"/> color <input type="checkbox"/> design c. Which of the following describe elements of Tintoretto's style (select all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Soft light <input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic composition <input type="checkbox"/> Flowy draperies <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform colors <input type="checkbox"/> Linear composition <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial setting <input type="checkbox"/> Vivid light and shade <input type="checkbox"/> Colors with high contrast</p>
<p>I can list some of the most important events in Tintoretto's life.</p>	<p>a. Tintoretto was born in <input type="checkbox"/> Florence <input type="checkbox"/> Venice <input type="checkbox"/> Rome b. His father was <input type="checkbox"/> a dyer of cloth <input type="checkbox"/> a painter c. Select the work that made Tintoretto famous: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>St. Mark Freeing the Slave</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cana Wedding</i> <input type="checkbox"/> The ceiling of the school of St. Roch d. In which Venetian church did he work for ten years? <input type="checkbox"/> The school of St. Roch <input type="checkbox"/> Madonna dell'Orto</p>



END OF STEP 2 | GUIDED READING



Step 3 | Deconstruction

Step 3 | Learning Objectives

After working on this step, learners will be able to identify:

- The purpose of the genre *short biography*.
- The organizational features of the model text.
- Selected textual features used by the author to realize the purpose of the genre.

Step 3 | During Class

During this lesson, guide learners in deconstructing the model text by conducting two main activities:

- Discovering stages and functions in a *short biography* using a color-coded model text: Each color is a stage of the genre, and each stage has a purpose in the economy of the genre.
- Discovering the textual features used in a *short biography* through a process of discovery led by guiding questions.

Step 3 | Activities and Materials

1. Step 3 | Activity 1, warm-up questions about genres. Guide learners to talk about textual genres (as opposed to literary, musical, etc.) using guiding questions such as: What is a genre? Can you provide an example of a genre? What if we are talking about a written text? What is a genre that is typically presented in writing? What is the difference between an autobiography and an email? What is the difference between an autobiography and a biography? If learners are struggling to answer questions you can try giving them multiple choice questions, Y/N questions, or other types of leading questions or show them texts in different genres (for example, a recipe, an email, and a short biography) and ask them how they differ from each other.
2. Step 3 | Activity 2, The stages of the *short biography* genre. See [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 3 and Step 4"](#) slides 3-5 and Step 3 in Student Handout I. Divide learners into small groups or pairs and tell them that each color in the text represents a stage, and that each stage fulfils a particular function in the text. Then ask learners to produce a name to identify each stage and to identify its function (what is this stage accomplishing?). From all the stage names and functions that learners produced, collaboratively choose the most fitting ones, and then write them in the blank GENRE TABLE (this table will be reused again during Step 4, Joint Construction).



Sample Answer Key for Activity 2, lesson on the stages of the *short biography* genre (Step 3 in Student Handout I). Answers may vary.

Stage name	Function
Title	It provides the main topic of the text. (It can simply be the name of the painter, as in this case).
Introduction	It identifies the characteristics of Tintoretto's painting style (<i>the energy and excitement of the Renaissance, dramatic composition, and bold use of changing light</i>).
Early life	It provides main information about family and origin.
Artistic inspiration	It names those who inspired him.
Style	It lists characteristics of his style, evidence of one of his works, relevance, and impact.
Early career	It identifies his first work or works that made him famous.
Successful period	It establishes when Tintoretto becomes an established artist.
Other works	It provides a list of other relevant works of art.
Death	It establishes when and where he died.



STUDENT HANDOUT I (front)

STEP 3, DECONSTRUCTION - Activity 2, lesson on the stages of the *short biography* genre

The stages of the genre *short biography*. Each color represents a stage, and every stage has a function. In the table below, find a name for each stage and find the function that the stage supplies to the genre.

Tintoretto

(1518? – 94). The energy and excitement of the Renaissance radiate from the paintings of the Italian master Tintoretto. Dramatic composition and the bold use of changing light make his work unique.

Little is known of Tintoretto's life. He was born Jacopo Robusti in Venice in about 1518. His father worked as a *tintore*, or dyer of cloth, so Jacopo became known as Tintoretto, "little *tintore*." Tradition says his heroes were the painters Michelangelo and Titian, but Tintoretto developed a distinctive style early on.

His treatment of light and shade was as vivid as lightning flashing amid storm clouds. His skill in composition created images of vast space crossed with strong curves and angles with subjects arranged in ways unusual for the period. For example, in *The Last Supper*, Jesus, the apostles, and angels are all present; however, the figures that are prominent in the foreground are humble serving people and domestic animals who seem unaware of the religious significance of the event.

At first Tintoretto had difficulty finding work, but gradually his reputation grew. In 1547 he was commissioned to paint scenes from the life of St. Mark, the patron saint of Venice, for the "school of St. Mark". The first of these is the exuberant *St. Mark Freeing the Slave*, which made him a center of attention. By 1555 he was famous and quite popular. He began a decade of work in the decoration of the church of the Madonna dell'Orto.

In order to compete for work in the "school of St. Roch", Tintoretto secretly mounted his sample on a ceiling of the school and unveiled it as if it were a finished product. He won the competition and began two decades of work in the school.

Tintoretto painted not only religious subjects but also portraits and scenes from myth and fable. Among his finest works are *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* (1552), *Cana Wedding* (1561), and *Crucifixion* (1565). Tintoretto died in Venice on May 31, 1594.



STUDENT HANDOUT I (back)

STEP 3, DECONSTRUCTION - Activity 2, lesson on the stages of the *short biography* genre

GENRE TABLE

Stage name	Function



3. **Step 3 | Activity 3, lesson on textual features.** Finally, using guiding questions, help learners discover the textual features that are used in this *short biography*. Sample guiding question followed by anticipated answers are provided below, but feel free to adapt them to your own selection of textual features. Always ask learners to provide evidence from the text when answering, and write the information on the blank TEXTUAL FEATURES table provided in the [PPT](#), slide 6.
- Sample guiding questions and answers for selected textual features:
- a. (Warm-up) Which do you think are some characteristics of a biography? Several possible answers.
 - b. (Length) Do you think the biography of Tintoretto contains all of the events in Tintoretto's life? Anticipated answer: no. Follow-up: So, this is a specific kind of biography, a *short biography*.
 - c. (Main events) Which type of events do you think are included in this *short biography*? Anticipated answer: the most important events related to Tintoretto as a painter.
 - d. (Chronological recollection of events) And these important events, in which order are they recounted? Anticipated answer: chronologically.
 - e. (Time) How do we know they are chronological? Anticipated answer: there are dates.
 - f. (Places) Besides time, what are other important pieces of information in a biography? Anticipated answer: the places where the events happen.
 - g. (Vocabulary specific to the topic) How do we know that this is the biography of a painter, and not, let's say, a writer? Can you give me evidence from the text? Anticipated answers: the author uses words like "painter," "paint," "portrait."
 - h. (Descriptive words and expressions) How does the author describe the style and the artworks of Tintoretto? Anticipated answer: using descriptive words and expressions.
 - i. (Past tense and present tense) We haven't talked a lot about grammar so far. What is the first thing you notice in terms of verb tenses? What tenses are used here? Anticipated answer: there are both present and past tenses.
 - j. (Past tense and present tense) When does the author use past tense? And present tense? Why? Can you give me some examples? Anticipated answer: Past tense for the painter's life events, present tense for the description of his works of art.
 - k. (Relevance) How do we know that this painter is relevant in art history? Why do you think the authors of the Encyclopedia Britannica included him? Anticipated answer: he painted in many important places, important works etc.



Example of a completed TEXTUAL FEATURES table

Feature	Evidence from the text
Length	Short, roughly 300 words or less
Important elements	Birth, origin of the nickname, important works, commissions, death...
Chronological events	Chronological sequence of significant events.
Dates	1519?, in about 1518, in 1547, (1552), by 1555, (1561), (1594)
Places	in Venice, Church Madonna dell'Orto, School of Saint Roch, School of St. Mark
Specific vocabulary	painter, Renaissance, composition, shade, portraits, foreground, scenes, religious subjects, decoration...
Descriptive words and expressions	energy and excitement, bold, changing, unique, distinctive...
Tenses	Past tense for the painter's life events, present tense for the description of his works of art.

4. **Step 3 | Activity 4, shared rubric/checklist.** Using the information collectively gathered and recorded on the GENRE TABLE and the TEXTUAL FEATURES TABLE, and elaborating further when needed, create with students at least the first column of a shared rubric/checklist which will be used for the next two steps, Joint Construction and Independent Construction. You can prepare the other columns and share them with learners, so they understand what the expectations are for high-quality work. An example of a possible SHARED RUBRIC/CHECKLIST provided on next page.



Criteria	Meets the Criteria	Partially Meets the Criteria	Barely Meets the Criteria	Does not Meet the Criteria
Stages and functions (See GENRE and FEATURES tables)	The biography develops according to all the stages and their related functions found in the model text.	The biography is organized according to most of the stages and related functions discussed in class.	The biography is organized according to some of the stages and related functions discussed in class.	The biography is organized according to only few of the stages and related functions discussed in class, or the stages order makes the text difficult to understand.
Vocabulary (Word choices specific to the topic)	Words and expressions are topic specific.	Most words and expressions are topic specific.	Some words and expressions are topic specific.	Words and expressions are not topic specific.
Tenses: Use of past tense for the painter's life, present tense for the description of his works of art	Accurate use of past and present tenses, for the two desired functions.	Mostly accurate use of past and present tenses, when appropriate.	Some inaccuracies in the use of past and present tenses.	Mostly inaccurate use of tenses. Most to all text in a tense that does not convey the desired meaning.
Places and dates; chronological sequence of main events	The text is organized according to the chronological sequence of main events, and all necessary dates and places are explicitly and correctly expressed.	The text is mostly organized according to the chronological sequence of main events, and many dates and places are explicitly expressed.	The text is partially organized according to the chronological sequence of main events, and few dates and places are explicitly expressed. Some secondary events are also present.	The text is not organized according to the chronological sequence of events, with few to no dates and places explicitly expressed. No distinction between main and secondary events.
Descriptive phrases	Uses a variety of descriptive phrases to convey the painter's style and works.	Uses some descriptive phrases to convey the painter's style and works.	Uses few descriptive phrases to convey the painter's style and works.	Uses few to no descriptive phrases to convey the painter's style and works.



5. Step 3 | Activity 5, assessment. The assessment for Step 3, Deconstruction, takes place during Step 4, Joint Constructions. During Step 4, learners check if they can apply what they learned to create, with the help of the instructor, a *short biography*.

END OF STEP 3 – DECONSTRUCTION



Step 4 | Joint Construction

Step 4 | Learning Objectives

At the end of this step, learners will be able to:

- Collaboratively produce a short biography of a renaissance painter using
 - stages and purposes
 - targeted textual features

Step 4 | Before Class

Give learners Student Handout J, which asks them to bring two facts about the painter Paolo Veronese for each stage identified in Tintoretto's *short biography* (with the exception of the title stage): Introduction, early life, artistic inspiration, style, early career, successful period, other works, death).



STUDENT HANDOUT J

STEP 4, JOINT CONSTRUCTION

Homework in preparation for joint construction: Facts on Veronese

Homework in preparation for joint construction: Facts on Veronese

From the sources provided below, collect two facts about the painter Paolo Veronese for each of the stages we identified in Tintoretto's *short biography* (with the exception of the title stage): Introduction, early life, artistic inspiration, style, early career, successful period, other works, death.

Sources:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paolo_Veronese

artuk.org/discover/artworks/search/actor:veronese-paolo-15281588

wga.hu/frames-e.html?bio/v/veronese/biograph.html

nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/paolo-veronese

britannica.com/biography/Paolo-Veronese

Stage	Facts (include years)
Introduction	
Early life	
Artistic inspiration	
Style	
Early career	
Successful period	
Other works	
Death	



Step 4 | During Class

Learners will come to class with facts about painter Paolo Veronese that they will use to actively participate in collaborative writing. Lead a collaborative writing activity, using the *short biography* stages and their functions as a guide. As you go, support learners in employing textual features appropriately.

Step 4 | Activities and Materials

1. Step 4 | Activity 1, collaborative writing: See [PPT "CILC Tintoretto Step 3 and Step 4"](#) slide 10

Here is a brief example of how the collaborative writing could unfold:

Instructor: OK, everybody. Let's keep our GENRE TABLE handy. Let's start with the core stages of Veronese's life and career: "Early life." Do you have any info about his early life?

Learners: He is born in 1528.

I: Ah, excellent info. Do you remember what tense we need to use for the facts of the painter's life?

L: Past tense.

I: So, how do we phrase this sentence?

L: Paolo Veronese was born in 1528. [instructor writes on the board/table as the learners propose phrases]

I: Good. We also said that in addition to time, there was another important element in a biography; what was it?

L: Places! Paolo Veronese was born in Verona. [Instructor writes "Paolo Veronese was born in Verona in 1528].

etc....

2. Step 4 | Activity 2, assessment: As the Joint Construction activity evolves, assess the ability of your learners to create a text collaboratively. If you notice learners seem to struggle with any aspect of the activity, review those aspects with them. Sample checklist of abilities to observe on next page.



		Can do	Can do, with some effort	Can't do
Understand the purpose of each stage				
Select pertinent information for each stage				
Organize the text chronologically				
Deploy textual features to achieve different purposes.	Organize the text chronologically.			
	Incorporate places where different life events occurred.			
	Use vocabulary specific to the topic.			
	Use of the past tense for the painter's life, and the present tense for the description of his works of art.			
	Use descriptive words and phrases to talk about the painter's work.			

END OF STEP 4 – JOINT CONSTRUCTION



Step 5 | Independent Construction

Step 5 | Learning Objectives

At the end of this step, learners will be able to:

- Independently produce a short biography of a renaissance painter using
 - Stages and purposes.
 - Targeted textual features.

Step 5 | Before Class

Assign the prompt found in Student Handout K. After testing their new knowledge in class together with their instructor during the Joint Construction, learners are now ready to write independently about a different painter of the same period. In this case, Marietta Robusti, Tintoretto's daughter. Guided by the SHARED RUBRIC/CHECKLIST that learners collaboratively created during Deconstruction (Step 3), they will write Robusti's *short biography* independently for homework. This activity is the summative assessment for this text-based task. Assess the learners' short biography of Robusti employing the same SHARED RUBRIC/CHECKLIST that learners will use for creating their text.



STUDENT HANDOUT K (front)
STEP 4, INDEPENDENT CONSTRUCTION
Prompt for writing Marietta Robusti's *short biography*

Prompt for writing Marietta Robusti's *short biography*

Prompt

Write a *short biography* (roughly 300 words) about Marietta Robusti, Tintoretto's daughter.

- To gather the facts you need, consult the reliable resources provided and feel free to find additional ones.
- To create the text,
 - consult the SHARED RUBRIC/CHECKLIST (stages, functions, textual features) that we created together in class (included below).
 - consult the GENRE TABLE and TEXTUAL FEATURES table we used during Step 3, Deconstruction and the process we used during Step 4, Joint Construction.

Your text will be assessed using the SHARED RUBRIC/CHECKLIST.

Sources:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marietta_Robusti
wga.hu/bio/r/robusti/marietta/biograph.html
nationalgallery.org.uk/stories/four-women-who-helped-shape-art-history
museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/artist/tintoretta-marietta-robusti/a069ec14-4164-4a4a-aff8-f18cf031a750



STUDENT HANDOUT K (back)
 STEP 4, INDEPENDENT CONSTRUCTION
 Prompt for writing Marietta Robusti's *short biography*

SHARED RUBRIC/CHECKLIST

Criteria	Meets the Criteria	Partially Meets the Criteria	Barely Meets the Criteria
Stages/ functions (See GENRE and FEATURES tables)	The biography develops according to <u>all</u> stages and related functions found in the model text.	The biography is organized according to <u>most</u> of the stages and related functions discussed in class.	The biography is organized according to <u>some</u> of the stages and related functions discussed in class.
Vocabulary (Word choices specific to the topic)	Words and expressions are topic specific.	Most words and expressions are topic specific.	Some words and expressions are topic specific.
Tenses: Use of past tense for the painter's life, present tense for the description of his works of art	Accurate use of past and present tenses, for the two desired functions.	Mostly accurate use of past and present tenses, when appropriate.	Some inaccuracies in the use of past and present tenses.
Places and dates; chronological sequence of main events	The text is organized according to the chronological sequence of main events, and all necessary dates and places are explicitly and correctly expressed.	The text is mostly organized according to the chronological sequence of main events, and many dates and places are explicitly expressed.	The text is partially organized according to the chronological sequence of main events, and few dates and places are explicitly expressed. Some secondary events are also present.
Descriptive phrases	Uses a variety of descriptive phrases to convey the painter's style and works.	Uses some descriptive phrases to convey the painter's style and works.	Uses few descriptive phrases to convey the painter's style and works.



END OF STEP 5 – INDEPENDENT CONSTRUCTION

END OF TINTORETTO TEXT-BASED TASK