Meet the artist!
Vincent van Gogh was born in the Netherlands, but he spent much of his life in France. Van Gogh didn’t start his career as an artist until the age of 27, but then he completed over 2,000 drawings and paintings in just 10 years! Like the Impressionists before him, van Gogh liked to paint nearby places as well as portraits of friends, family members, and even himself.

What’s a portrait?
A portrait is a picture of a specific person. It could be a painting, sculpture, or photograph.

Who was Alexander Reid?
Although the man in this painting looks a lot like van Gogh, it’s actually a friend named Alexander Reid. Reid is shown in the artist’s Paris apartment, sitting in a comfy chair, surrounded by art.

How might a photograph of the same person and place be different than this painting?

Do you think an artist might paint a portrait of a friend differently than someone they don’t know well?

If you were making a picture of your best friend, how and where would you pose them? What setting would you choose for a portrait of yourself?
DO
Don’t try this at home!

Sketch a portrait of a family member, a friend, or yourself.

Things you will need:
- Something to draw with (colored pencils, crayons, markers, pastels, or even a regular pencil)
- Something to draw on (regular printer paper is fine)

Things to think about as you get started:
- Will you show the person wearing a certain outfit, participating in a favorite activity, or in a special location? These details can give a viewer more clues about your subject.
- Would you rather zoom in on just the face or show part or all of the body?
- Do you want to include the surroundings or just use a solid color for the background?

Van Gogh gave his finished portrait to Alexander Reid as a gift. Your drawing might make a nice present for a friend or family member, too!