

This painting is a self-portrait by the Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh. van Gogh was born in the Netherlands on 30th March 1853. His parents weren't poor – his father was a church minister, and his mother was an artist. van Gogh's first job was in his uncle's company, selling paintings, but later he was a teacher in England, and finally a painter. We only really know what he looked like because of his many selfportraits. Only three photographs of him exist, and they are all from when he was young. This portrait is from his time in Arles in the South of France, in 1888, when he was 35. He was very poor, but he was happy, because of the beautiful light and colours there. This portrait was a present for his friend, the painter Paul Gauguin. Gauguin and van Gogh were together in Arles for a month. van Gogh was not strong mentally, and the relationship between them was difficult. After a big fight, van Gogh cut off his ear, and was in a mental hospital for some time. He died on 29th July 1890. He was only 37 years old. His paintings weren't popular during his lifetime and he was never rich or famous. But today people think that Vincent van Gogh is one of the greatest painters in the world, and his paintings, like Sunflowers, and The Starry Night, sell for millions of pounds.