

# UNIT **12** *Read and Write*

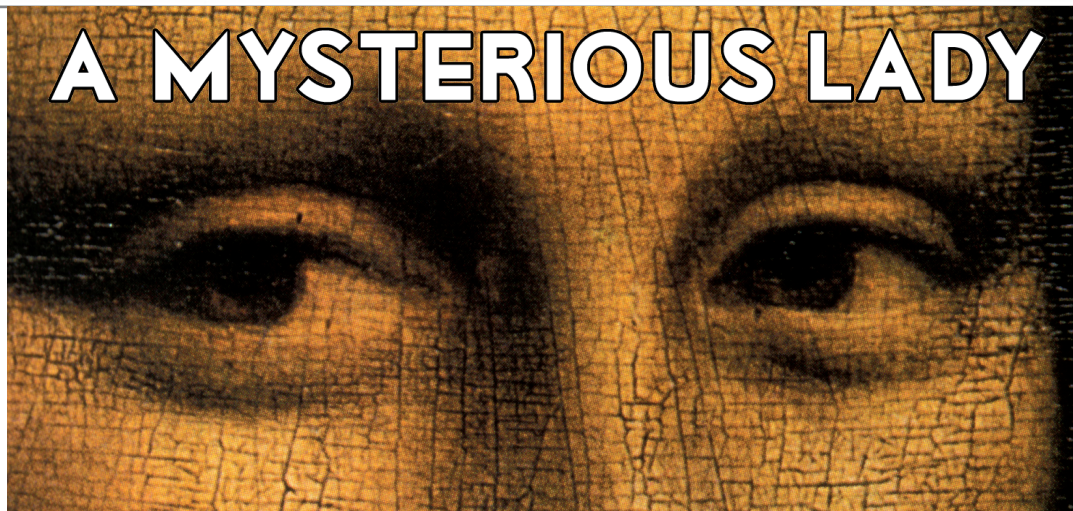


## **En esta unidad vas a:**

- leer un artículo sobre un cuadro famoso
- aprender a escribir en inglés utilizando estructuras en voz pasiva.



# A MYSTERIOUS LADY



It's known that six million people visit her every year. She lives in a bulletproof glass case in order to protect her. The temperature around her is kept between 18 and 21 °C so that she's comfortable. She shares her room in the Louvre Museum in Paris with about fifty other 16th century Italian paintings and, despite a routine that never changes, she's always got an enigmatic smile on her face. Are we talking about a top model or showbiz celebrity? No, we're talking about Leonardo da Vinci's priceless masterpiece, the *Mona Lisa*.

The painting is said to be the most famous in the world, but who was Mona Lisa? It's thought that she was Lisa Gherardini, the wife of a wealthy merchant, Francesco del Giocondo, who lived in Florence, Italy, at the start of the 16th century. The portrait is believed to have been commissioned to celebrate the birth of the couple's second son. In Italian the contracted form of *madonna* (my lady) is *monna*, hence *Monna Lisa*. Thanks to a spelling mistake in English, the painting is known as *Mona Lisa*. However, it also has another name: *La Gioconda*. Italian for happy, it's assumed that this was Leonardo da Vinci's nickname for Lisa whilst she was sitting for him because it was similar to her married name, Giocondo, and because of her happy disposition.

Leonardo da Vinci started painting the *Mona Lisa* in 1503 and worked on it for four years. However, when he came to leave Florence in 1507, the artist didn't sell the painting to the Giocondo family, but kept it for himself. No one knows the exact reason why. Some people believe that it was because

he hadn't actually finished the portrait whilst others believe that he couldn't sell the portrait because it meant so much to him. What is known, though, is that Leonardo da Vinci moved to France in 1516, where he sold the *Mona Lisa* to King François I. Apart from being shown at several exhibitions abroad in the 20th century, the painting has remained in France ever since.

The reason why the Giocondo family never possessed the painting isn't the only mystery surrounding the *Mona Lisa*. People have often wondered why the subject doesn't have any eyebrows or eyelashes. It's understood that respectable ladies at that time had them removed because they were considered unattractive. However, in 2007, research by an engineer in France revealed that eyebrows and eyelashes had actually been painted. It's thought that they have disappeared over the passage of time or after a bad attempt at cleaning. Whatever the reason, the mystery that surrounds the *Mona Lisa* only adds to its appeal. ■

**1 Relaciona las dos partes de las frases.**


- 1 The painting
  - 2 Lisa Gherardini was
  - 3 The Giocondo family lived in
  - 4 La Gioconda was a
  - 5 The Giocondo family didn't
  - 6 King François I bought
  - 7 People in Florence in the 16th century
  - 8 Eyelashes and eyebrows
- 
- a the painting of Lisa Gherardini.
  - b has to be kept behind protective glass.
  - c Florence at the beginning of the 1500s.
  - d nickname invented by Leonardo da Vinci.
  - e thought eyebrows and eyelashes weren't attractive.
  - f have the chance to buy the painting.
  - g were discovered on the painting in 2007.
  - h the wife of a wealthy merchant.
- 1 b   2 \_\_\_\_   3 \_\_\_\_   4 \_\_\_\_   5 \_\_\_\_   6 \_\_\_\_   7 \_\_\_\_   8 \_\_\_\_**

**2 Responde a las preguntas.**

How many people visit the *Mona Lisa* every year?  
**Six million people visit the *Mona Lisa* every year.**

- 1 What temperature is the *Mona Lisa* kept at?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Why was the painting commissioned?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Why is the painting known as the *Mona Lisa* in English?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 How long did it take Leonardo da Vinci to paint the *Mona Lisa*?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Where is the painting kept now?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Words to remember**

- 3 Completa las expresiones con la preposición correcta del texto. Después busca en el texto un ejemplo de cada expresión.**



to share something **with** someone  
**She shares her room in the Louvre Museum in Paris with fifty other 16th century Italian paintings.**

- 1 to talk \_\_\_\_\_ someone or something  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 the wife or husband \_\_\_\_\_ someone  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 the birth \_\_\_\_\_ a child  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 thanks \_\_\_\_\_ someone or something  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 similar \_\_\_\_\_ someone or something  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 to keep something \_\_\_\_\_ yourself  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 to move \_\_\_\_\_ somewhere  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Reporting with a passive verb

La voz pasiva se utiliza mucho en inglés escrito formal para relatar hechos. Para indicar lo que la gente cree, sabe o dice, se emplea esta estructura: pronombre personal *it* + verbo en voz pasiva + *that* + resto de la frase. Se construye con los verbos *think*, *know* y *say* en pasiva. Otros verbos que se emplean habitualmente en este tipo de estructuras son *believe*, *assume* y *understand*.

**It's known that six million people visit her every year.**

Se sabe que cada año la visitan seis millones de personas.

**It's thought that she was Lisa Gherardini.**

Se piensa que era Lisa Gherardini.

Otra manera de indicar lo que la gente cree, sabe o dice es: sujeto + verbo en voz pasiva (*know*, *think* o *say*) + infinitivo con *to* del verbo principal. Observa y compara las siguientes frases:

**The painting is said to be the most famous in the world.**

De esta pintura se dice que es la más famosa del mundo.

**It's said that it's the most famous painting in the world.**

Se dice que es la pintura más famosa del mundo.

**Six million people are known to visit her every year.**

Se sabe que seis millones de personas la visitan cada año.

**It's known that six million people visit her every year.**

Se sabe que seis millones de personas la visitan cada año.

Cuando se quiere indicar esto mismo en pasiva pero haciendo referencia a un hecho del pasado, se emplea esta estructura: sujeto + verbo en voz pasiva (*know*, *think* o *say*) + infinitivo compuesto (*to have* + participio) del verbo principal.

**Mona Lisa is thought to have been Lisa Gherardini.**

Se piensa que Mona Lisa era Lisa Gherardini.

**The portrait is believed to have been commissioned by him.**

Se cree que fue él quien encargó el retrato.

### 1 Completa el texto con la voz pasiva de los verbos entre paréntesis.

The portrait of Juan de Pareja was painted by Diego Velázquez in about 1650 when he was in Rome. It **is known** (know) that Juan de Pareja was Velázquez's assistant and that he had accompanied the painter to Rome to buy paintings. However, Velázquez was also asked to paint a portrait of Pope Innocent X and it **1** \_\_\_\_\_ (assume) that he did the portrait of de Pareja as preparation for the painting of the Pope. It **2** \_\_\_\_\_ (believe) that Velázquez also did the painting to show the Romans his skill as a painter. He was unknown in Italy and the portrait is believed to **3** \_\_\_\_\_ (take) by de Pareja to the houses of potential buyers. The Romans **4** \_\_\_\_\_ (say) to **5** \_\_\_\_\_ (impress) by the painter's skills. Today the painting is in the Metropolitan Museum of New York.

