The Mona Lisa

Below, you will find a video and a series of articles. Watch the video and read the articles. At the bottom, you will find several questions. Incorporate the information you have learned from these articles and videos and answer the questions provided. Make sure to cite information from where you found it. Your answers should be well constructed, show deeper thought, and show a level of understanding for what the question is asking. Make sure that you give enough evidence to provide an adequate response.

Video from CNN

Watch this video: Video Link

Article #1

Article from The Louvre (Museum) in France

(Note: The Louvre is the name of a famous art museum in Paris, France.)

Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco Giocondo

The history of the Mona Lisa is shrouded in mystery. Among the aspects which remain unclear are the exact identity of the sitter, who commissioned the portrait, how long Leonardo worked on the painting, how long he kept it, and how it came to be in the French royal collection. The portrait may have been painted to mark one of two events - either when Francesco del
Giocondo and his wife bought their own house in 1503, or when their second son, Andrea, was born in December 1502 after the death of a daughter in 1499. The delicate dark veil that covers Mona Lisa's hair is sometimes considered a mourning veil. In fact, such veils were commonly worn as a mark of virtue. Her clothing is unremarkable. Neither the yellow sleeves of her gown, nor her pleated gown, nor the scarf delicately draped round her shoulders are signs of aristocratic status.

A new artistic formula

*The Mona Lisa* is the earliest Italian portrait to focus so closely on the sitter in a half-length portrait. The painting is generous enough in its dimensions to include the arms and hands without them touching the frame. The portrait is painted to a realistic scale in the highly structured space where it has the fullness of volume of a sculpture in the round. The figure is shown in half-length, from the head to the waist, sitting in a chair whose arm is resting on balusters. She is resting her left arm on the arm of the chair, which is placed in front of a loggia, framing the figure and forming a "window" looking out over the landscape. The spacial coherence, the atmospheric illusionism, the monumentality, and the sheer equilibrium of the work were all new. In fact, these aspects were also new to Leonardo's work, as none of his earlier portraits display such controlled majesty.

The nature of the landscape also plays a role. The middle distance, on the same level as the sitter's chest, is in warm colors. Men live in this space: there is a winding road and a bridge. This space represents the transition between the space of the sitter and the far distance, where the landscape becomes a wild and uninhabited space of rocks and water which stretches to the horizon, which Leonardo has cleverly drawn at the level of the sitter's eyes.

**ARTICLE #2**

*The Mona Lisa* - PBS Treasures of the World

From: PBS

It was the art theft of the century. On August 21st, 1911, someone stole the most famous painting in the world from the Louvre. According to author Seymour Reit, "Someone walked into the Salon Carré, lifted it off the wall and went out with it! The painting was stolen Monday morning, but the interesting thing about it was that it wasn't 'til Tuesday at noon that they first realized it was gone."

The Section Chief of the Louvre makes a frantic call to the Captain of the Guards... who informs the Curator... who telephones the Paris Prefect of Police... who alerts La Sûreté, the National Criminal Investigation Department. By early afternoon, sixty inspectors and more than one hundred gendarmes rush to the museum. They bolt the doors and interrogate the visitors, then clear the galleries and station guards at the entrances. And for an entire week they search every closet and corner – room-by-room, floor-by-floor – all forty-nine acres of the Louvre.
The news shocks the world. "Of course it had worldwide repercussions. It was on the front page of every major newspaper," says Reit. Who could have done such a thing? Perhaps one of the countless cleaners and workmen who labor in the Louvre, or the underpaid security guards. Even the Louvre administrators themselves are suspected of staging the theft to boost attendance. "One of the head directors was fired. Another was suspended. Various maintenance people were fined and questioned and vilified."

The Paris Police blame the Louvre for its inadequate security. And the Louvre, in turn, ridicules investigators for failing to turn up even a shadow of a lead. To make matters worse, the various branches of French law enforcement bicker among themselves.

Now, create a Google Doc titled: Period- Mona Lisa- Last Name- First Name

Share this document with mmartin@kyrene.org

Answer the following questions. Remember to use evidence from the different texts to prove your answers. Each answer should be several sentences (possibly even paragraphs) long.

Cite your evidence this way:

(Video)

(Article 1- The Louvre, paragraph __ )

(Article 2- PBS, paragraph __ )

QUESTIONS

1. After reading these articles and watching the video, what is the central idea or underlying message about The Mona Lisa? In other words, what important ideas can be learned from these articles about The Mona Lisa?

2. What is the basic controversy (problem) in this video? Describe the evidence each side provides to make their point. Describe several other controversies surrounding The Mona Lisa based upon the video and the articles.
3. How was it possible that The Mona Lisa was stolen? What key details are provided to show the security measures after the Mona Lisa was stolen?

4. How can this painting be saved for future generations of people to see it?

5. Do you think The Mona Lisa will ever be stolen again? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text to prove your inference.

6. Read this sentence from the text: “The Section Chief of the Louvre makes a frantic call to the Captain of the Guards.” Based upon the context of this sentence and the context of the article, define the word ‘frantic.’ Then, use frantic in another sentence.

7. What are your thoughts about this painting now that you have a better understanding of its history?