

Zara's Landscape Layers: Exploring Distance and Perspective

Learning objective: To understand how artists use foreground, middle ground, and background to create the illusion of depth in a landscape painting.

Zara the zebra is painting a beautiful view of a meadow. She wants her painting to look like you could step right inside it! Look at the list of landscape elements below. Sort each item into the correct 'layer' of the landscape. Write the item in the correct column based on how close or far away it would appear to the viewer.

Word bank: Distant mountains · Large, detailed flowers · Tiny trees · A winding path leading to the centre · A bright, clear sun · A blades of grass close to your feet · A small cottage in the distance

1. Foreground: What objects go here? (Think about things closest to the viewer. They should look large and detailed.) (2 marks)

2. Middle Ground: What objects go here? (Think about things in the centre of the scene.) (2 marks)

3. Background: What objects go here? (Think about things very far away. They should look smaller and lighter in colour.) (2 marks)

4. Why do artists make objects in the foreground larger than objects in the background? (2 marks)

5. If you were painting a landscape, would you use brighter, bolder colours for the foreground or the background? Explain why. (2 marks)

Draw: Using a pencil, divide your sketchbook page into three horizontal sections. Draw a landscape of a forest. In the foreground, draw a large toadstool. In the middle ground, draw a stream. In the background, draw some rolling hills. Remember to make the toadstool look the largest!



Extension challenge: Research how artists use 'atmospheric perspective' to make distant objects look paler or bluer. Try adding a light blue wash over your background mountains to see how it changes the feeling of distance.