

The Weaver of Wonders: A Portrait of Clara Higgins

Learning objective: To identify and explain the features of a biography and retrieve information from a non-fiction text.

Read the biography about Clara Higgins carefully, then answer the questions below. Use evidence from the text to support your answers where required.

Clara Higgins was a pioneer of textile design in the early 1900s. Born in a small village in 1895, she spent her childhood observing the intricate patterns found in forest ferns and riverbeds. Whilst other children played with dolls, Clara was busy sketching the symmetry of leaves. In 1915, she moved to London to study at an art college, despite many people telling her that women should not pursue such a career. Undeterred, she worked part-time at a local bakery to pay her tuition fees, often earning only £1 per week. Her breakthrough came in 1922, when her unique 'Forest Floor' fabric collection won a prestigious national competition. Her designs were revolutionary because they brought the beauty of the natural world into ordinary homes. Clara's work influenced many modern artists, and her original sketches are now kept safely in a national archive. She proved that with patience and a sharp eye, one can turn simple observations into art that lasts for generations. Clara passed away in 1974, leaving behind a legacy of creativity that continues to inspire young designers today.

Word bank: biography · chronological · achievement · contribution · legacy · determined

1. In what year did Clara Higgins move to London to study at art college? (1 mark)

2. What job did Clara do to help pay for her art college tuition fees? (1 mark)

3. Why do you think the author describes Clara as 'undeterred' when discussing her move to London? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, how did Clara's childhood interest in nature influence her future career? (2 marks)

5. Do you think Clara Higgins should be remembered as a successful person? Give one reason for your opinion using evidence from the text. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a pattern that you think Clara Higgins might have created for her 'Forest Floor' collection, inspired by leaves, ferns, or other shapes found in nature.



Extension challenge: Choose a family member or a famous person you admire. Write a short paragraph (50 words) about one significant event in their life, ensuring you write in chronological order.