

Capturing Light: An Impressionist Study with Zara

Learning objective: To explore the Impressionist style of Claude Monet, focusing on light, colour, and brushwork to create an atmospheric landscape.

Follow Zara the Zebra's artistic steps to create your own masterpiece. Remember, Impressionists used small, quick brushstrokes to capture a moment in time rather than perfect detail.

Draw: Create an Impressionist-style landscape using coloured pencils or pastels. Use quick, short, 'broken' strokes to represent leaves, water, and light. Do not use black outlines; instead, use complementary colours to define shapes. Focus on capturing the 'dappled light' filtering through trees or reflecting off a pond. Include a focal point, such as a garden bridge or a cluster of floating flowers, and ensure the colours appear vibrant and energetic.



Label words: Reflections · Atmosphere · Impressionism · Dappled light · Brushstrokes · Harmonious · Vibrant

Steps:

1. Step 1: Sketch a simple bridge or a pond scene. Lightly draw the horizon line. How does the placement of your horizon line change the viewer's focus on the sky versus the water?
2. Step 2: Instead of blending colours smoothly, use short, dash-like strokes to layer your colours. Explain why Monet chose to use these separate, visible brushstrokes rather than smooth gradients.

3. Step 3: Look at your water. How can you use lighter and darker tones to demonstrate the reflection of the sky on the surface of the pond?
4. Compare and contrast: How does the light in your drawing change if you use cool blues and purples versus warm yellows and oranges? Justify your choice of colour palette.
5. What might happen to the 'mood' of your painting if you replaced the soft, curved shapes of lily pads with sharp, geometric triangles? Explain the effect.
6. Creative Extension: Write a short descriptive poem to accompany your art, capturing the feeling of a calm morning by the water.