

Zara's Still Life Masterclass

Learning objective: To understand the principles of composition, lighting, and texture when creating a still life drawing.

Zara the zebra has set up a beautiful collection of objects in her art studio. To create a successful still life, you must look closely at how the light hits the objects and how they are arranged. Follow the numbered steps below to analyse and create your own composition.

Word bank: composition · highlight · shadow · texture · perspective · foreground · background · form

1. Zara has placed a shiny apple in the foreground and a dull, woolly scarf in the background. Explain why using different drawing techniques for these two textures is important for your final piece. (2 marks)

2. If the light source is coming from the left-hand side of your objects, where should you place the darkest shadows? Justify your reasoning. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast a 'symmetrical' arrangement of objects with an 'asymmetrical' one. Which do you think creates more visual interest and why? (3 marks)

4. Look at a piece of fruit. How would you use a 'highlight' to make it look three-dimensional rather than flat? (2 marks)

5. What might happen to the mood of your drawing if you used only dark, heavy charcoal lines versus light, sketchy pencil marks? (2 marks)

6. If you were to add an object that represents your own personality to Zara's collection, what would you choose and where would you place it to ensure it remains the focal point? (2 marks)

Draw: Arrange three objects from your classroom or home (e.g., a mug, a piece of fruit, and a book) into a composition. Using a pencil, sketch the objects, ensuring you include a clear light source, a cast shadow, and at least two different textures.



Extension challenge: Challenge: Research the work of 17th-century Dutch still-life painters. Create a written 'artist statement' explaining how you used 'negative space' in your drawing to guide the viewer's eye across the page.