

Mastering the Masterpiece: Vincent van Gogh

Learning objective: To analyse the artistic techniques of Vincent van Gogh, focusing on impasto texture, expressive brushwork, and the use of complementary colours.

Use your knowledge of Zara the Zebra's favourite artistic movements to examine Van Gogh's style. Answer the questions below with detail and precision, considering how his choices affect the viewer.

Vincent van Gogh was a Post-Impressionist painter who used art to express his inner emotions rather than just recording what he saw. He is famous for his thick 'impasto' technique, where paint is applied so heavily that it stands out from the canvas. By using bold, swirling brushstrokes and clashing complementary colours, he created images that feel alive and full of movement.

Word bank: Impasto · Complementary · Expression · Texture · Vibrant · Canvas · Contrast · Brushwork

1. Explain why Van Gogh chose to apply paint using the 'impasto' technique. How does this affect the physical surface of the painting? (2 marks)

2. Identify two complementary colours often found in Van Gogh's work. How does placing these colours side-by-side change the way the viewer perceives the image? (2 marks)

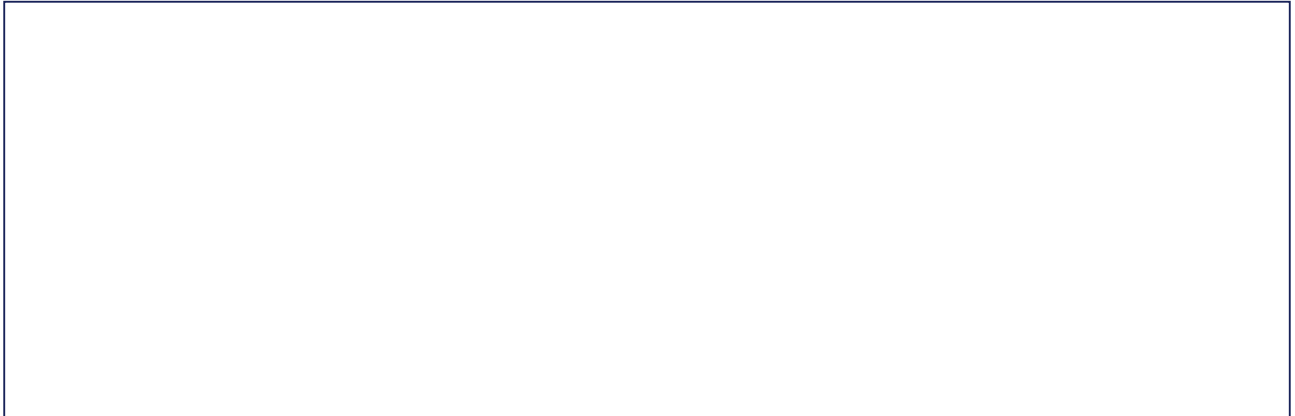
3. Compare and contrast Van Gogh's swirling, expressive brushwork with a realistic photograph. Which style do you think conveys more emotion, and why? (2 marks)

4. Justify your answer: If Van Gogh had used thin, smooth, and blended brushstrokes, how would the 'mood' of his paintings have changed? (2 marks)

5. What might happen if a painter intentionally avoided using any contrast in their work? Use your understanding of colour theory to explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

6. Evaluate the artist's choice to use non-naturalistic colours (e.g., painting a sky yellow instead of blue). What was he trying to communicate to the audience? (2 marks)

Draw: Choose a local landscape, such as a park or a street scene. Re-imagine it in the style of Van Gogh. Use thick, swirling lines to represent the wind or clouds, and choose a bold, complementary colour scheme to make your work pop.



Extension challenge: Research a 'Self-Portrait' by Van Gogh. Write a short poem, in the style of Leo the Lion, describing the emotions you think the artist was feeling while he painted it, focusing specifically on his use of line and colour.