

Post-Impressionist Portraits with Zara

Learning objective: To explore the techniques of Vincent van Gogh, focusing on bold brushstrokes and expressive use of colour.

Follow the steps below to create your own portrait in the style of Van Gogh. Think about how you can use colour to show mood rather than just reality.

Draw: Create a portrait of a person or a favourite landscape using Van Gogh's style. Use short, thick, dash-like strokes of colour. Do not blend the colours perfectly; let them sit side-by-side to create a vibrant effect. Include a swirling sky or a patterned background that reflects a specific emotion, such as joy or calmness.



Label words: Impasto · Brushstrokes · Vibrant · Contrast · Complementary colours · Expression

Steps:

1. Why did Van Gogh use thick, visible brushstrokes in his paintings? Describe the effect this has on the viewer.
2. Name two complementary colour pairs that you might use in your drawing to create strong contrast.
3. Step 1: Sketch the outline of a face or a landscape. Keep your shapes simple, as Van Gogh often focused on bold forms.
4. Step 2: Add swirling lines in the background to show movement, just like in 'The Starry Night'.

5. Label the parts of your drawing where you have used 'impasto' technique and 'complementary colours'.