

Mastering Watercolours with Zara

Learning objective: To understand the techniques, vocabulary, and properties of watercolour painting, as aligned with Year 4 Art and Design objectives.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of watercolour techniques. Read the term or question on the front, think of the answer, and check your knowledge against the provided definitions.

What is a 'Wash' in watercolour painting?

A wash is a technique where a large area of the paper is covered with a thin, fluid layer of diluted paint to create a background or base colour.

Define 'Pigment'.

Pigment is the finely ground coloured powder that gives paint its hue. In watercolours, it is mixed with a binder to create the paint.

Explain the 'Wet-on-wet' technique.

This involves applying wet paint onto paper that has already been dampened with clear water, allowing colours to spread and blend softly.

What is the result of using the 'Wet-on-dry' technique?

Applying wet paint onto dry paper creates sharp, defined edges and allows for greater control and detail.

What does it mean if a watercolour paint has high 'Opacity'?

Opacity refers to how much light can pass through the paint. A paint with high opacity covers the paper more completely, while transparent paint allows the white of the paper to show through.

Define 'Bleeding' in the context of watercolour.

Bleeding occurs when wet paint spreads into an adjacent area of wet paint, causing the colours to mix or flow into one another.

What is a 'Gradient' wash?

A gradient is a smooth transition from a dark, saturated colour to a light, transparent wash by gradually adding more water to the brush.

What is the purpose of a 'Resist' technique?

A resist involves using a substance like wax (a wax crayon) or masking fluid to prevent paint from sticking to specific areas of the paper, keeping them white.

Explain why artists often use 'Cold-pressed' paper.

Cold-pressed paper has a slightly textured surface, which helps trap the pigment and water, making it ideal for various watercolour techniques.

Compare and contrast 'transparent' and 'opaque' watercolour effects.

Transparent effects allow light to reflect off the white paper through the paint layers, while opaque effects sit on top of the paper, masking the surface below.

Justify why an artist might choose to use a lot of water for a sky, but very little water for a tree trunk.

Using more water creates a soft, luminous quality perfect for the atmosphere of a sky, whereas using less water creates a thicker consistency for painting precise, detailed shapes like branches.

What might happen if you apply a dark colour over a light, wet wash too quickly?

The colours would likely mix uncontrollably, potentially turning into a muddy or 'muddying' effect rather than retaining the crisp detail you intended.