

Zara's Gallery of Greats: An Art History Challenge

Learning objective: To identify key artistic movements and techniques used by famous historical artists and apply these principles to original compositions.

Zara the Zebra has curated an exhibition of masterpieces, but the labels have fallen off! Read the descriptions of the artists' styles below and match them to the correct artistic movement. Then, use your knowledge to justify why these artists chose their specific techniques.

Word bank: Impressionism · Post-Impressionism · Surrealism · Renaissance · Pointillism · Abstract

1. Artist A uses tiny dots of pure colour to create a larger image, which the viewer's eye blends together. Which movement is this, and why might an artist choose this technique over using long brushstrokes? (3 marks)

2. Artist B focuses on capturing the fleeting effects of light and the changing seasons outdoors. Compare this to the style of the Renaissance, which focused on realistic perspective and human anatomy. What are the key differences? (4 marks)

3. Artist C paints dream-like scenes where ordinary objects are placed in impossible, bizarre settings. Justify why this movement is often called 'Surrealism'. (2 marks)

4. Explain why an artist might choose to use 'Abstract' techniques instead of painting a realistic portrait of a person. What is the artist trying to express? (2 marks)

5. If you were to curate your own gallery, which two movements would you display side-by-side to create the most interesting contrast for the visitors? Justify your choice. (3 marks)

6. What might happen to the viewer's experience of a painting if the artist decided to use only primary colours instead of a full, complex palette? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Choose your favourite artistic movement from the list. Create a self-portrait or a landscape using the specific techniques of that movement (e.g., if choosing Pointillism, use only dots; if choosing Surrealism, include an object that doesn't belong in the scene).



Extension challenge: Research a famous artist not mentioned today. Write a short 'curator's note' (50-80 words) describing their primary technique, the era they lived in, and the emotional response they hoped to spark in their audience.