

Abstract Expressions: The Art of Wassily Kandinsky

Learning objective: To understand how Wassily Kandinsky used colour, shape, and rhythm to create abstract art, and to apply these techniques to create an original composition.

Read the key concepts of Kandinsky's style below. Use your knowledge of his techniques to answer the questions and complete the artistic challenge. Remember to consider how your choices of colour and form affect the mood of your work.

Wassily Kandinsky was a pioneer of abstract art. He believed that colours and shapes could 'sing' like music. He often used circles, triangles, and lines to create a visual rhythm on the canvas. Instead of painting real-life objects, he focused on how different arrangements of colour and form could evoke feelings and emotions in the viewer.

Word bank: Abstract · Composition · Geometric · Synaesthesia · Rhythm · Primary colours · Harmony · Contrast

1. Kandinsky often linked his art to music. If you were to create an abstract painting inspired by a fast, energetic piece of music, which colours and shapes would you choose and why? (3 marks)

2. Explain why Kandinsky chose to paint abstract shapes instead of realistic objects like trees or houses. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast a circle and a triangle. How does the 'feel' or 'mood' of these two shapes differ when placed next to each other in a composition? (3 marks)

4. Zara the zebra loves using patterns. If you wanted to create a sense of 'visual rhythm' across your page, how would you arrange your shapes? (2 marks)

5. Justify your answer: Does a painting need to look like a real-world object to be considered 'good' art? Give a reason for your opinion. (3 marks)

6. What might happen if you painted a composition using only shades of blue and grey? How would the emotional impact of the piece change compared to using bright primary colours? (3 marks)

Draw: Using a blank sheet of paper, create an abstract composition inspired by Kandinsky. You must include at least three different geometric shapes, a variety of overlapping lines, and a deliberate colour palette. Think about how to balance your shapes to create harmony.



Extension challenge: Research the term 'Synaesthesia'. Write a short paragraph explaining how this neurological condition influenced Kandinsky's artistic process and how he 'heard' colours.