

Exploring Cubism with Zara the Zebra

Learning objective: To explore the artistic style of Cubism by representing objects from multiple viewpoints simultaneously, inspired by the work of Pablo Picasso.

Follow Zara the Zebra's guide to Cubism. Cubism is about breaking an object down into geometric shapes and rearranging them on the page. You do not need to draw what you see; draw what you know about the object!

Draw: Create an 'Abstract Portrait' in the style of Cubism. Divide your page into various angular shapes. Inside these shapes, draw features of a face, but place them in unexpected positions—for example, draw an eye in profile, but place it next to a front-facing nose. Use bold lines to define the edges and fill your shapes with different colours to create a vibrant, fragmented composition.



Label words: Geometric · Perspective · Abstract · Fragmented · Composition · Multiview

Steps:

1. Explain why a Cubist artist might choose to paint an object from the side and the front at the same time. How does this change the viewer's experience?
2. Step 1: Choose a simple object, such as a musical instrument or a piece of fruit. Lightly sketch its main outlines using only triangles, squares, and circles.

3. Step 2: Compare and contrast your drawing with a realistic photograph of the same object. Which features are still recognisable?
4. Step 3: Justify your choice of colours. In Cubism, artists often use bold, contrasting colours to emphasise the fragmented shapes. Explain your colour palette.
5. Step 4: Rotate your object in your mind. Add a second perspective (e.g., the base of the object or the view from above) into your existing composition.
6. What might happen if you used only curved lines instead of geometric shapes? Would it still be considered 'Cubism'? Explain your reasoning.