

Exploring the World of Vincent van Gogh with Zara

Learning objective: To understand the artistic techniques, use of colour, and emotional expression in the work of Vincent van Gogh.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of Post-Impressionism to provide detailed answers. Remember to think like an artist!

Zara the zebra loves to observe how artists use patterns and colours to tell stories. Today, she is looking at the famous paintings of Vincent van Gogh. Van Gogh was known for his thick, swirling paint application and his bold choice of colours. He didn't just paint what he saw; he painted how he felt about the world around him.

Word bank: Impasto · Brushstrokes · Vibrant · Expression · Perspective · Texture · Complementary · Emotion

1. Van Gogh is famous for a technique called 'impasto'. Explain what this technique is and how it changes the look of a painting. (2 marks)

2. Look at Van Gogh's use of colour. Why might an artist choose to use 'complementary' colours (colours opposite each other on the colour wheel) in a portrait? (2 marks)

3. Zara notices that Van Gogh's brushstrokes are often short and thick. How do these visible, directional brushstrokes help the viewer understand the 'mood' of the painting? (2 marks)

4. Van Gogh often painted sunflowers or starry nights. If you were painting your own garden in his style, which specific colours would you use to show that it is a bright, sunny day? (1 mark)

5. What is the main difference between painting a realistic photograph and painting an 'expressionist' piece like those created by Van Gogh? (2 marks)

Draw: Using a pencil, create a sketch of a local park or your own garden. Once finished, use oil pastels or felt-tip pens to add 'swirling' lines and thick, dashed marks to represent the sky or the trees, mimicking Van Gogh's energetic style.



Extension challenge: Research one painting by Van Gogh that features a bedroom or a chair. Write a short paragraph explaining why you think he chose those specific objects to paint and what they might tell us about his daily life.