

Abstract Art with Zara the Zebra

Learning objective: To understand and apply the principles of Wassily Kandinsky's abstract art, focusing on the relationship between geometric shapes, primary colours, and emotion.

Zara the Zebra loves to see patterns in everything! She has been studying the works of Wassily Kandinsky, who believed that art could represent music and emotions through shapes and colours. Look at the word bank and the questions below. For the main activity, follow the instructions to create your own 'Kandinsky-inspired' masterpiece using the elements of art.

Word bank: Abstract · Geometric · Primary · Composition · Synaesthesia · Emotion · Contrast

1. Kandinsky often used 'primary colours' in his paintings. List the three primary colours and explain why an artist might choose to use them in a bold composition. (2 marks)

2. Define the term 'Abstract art'. How does it differ from a painting of a landscape or a portrait? (2 marks)

3. If you were to paint a feeling like 'joy' or 'excitement' using only geometric shapes, which shapes would you choose and why? (2 marks)

4. Kandinsky was fascinated by 'synaesthesia', where he 'heard' colours as musical notes. If the colour yellow was a musical instrument, what would it sound like to you? (2 marks)

5. Look at a piece of Kandinsky's work with many circles. Why might an artist repeat a shape throughout a piece of art? Think about balance and pattern. (2 marks)

Draw: Create an abstract composition in the style of Kandinsky. Use a variety of geometric shapes (circles, triangles, squares) and overlapping lines. Use bright primary colours for some shapes and contrasting secondary colours for others. Ensure your composition feels balanced but energetic.



Extension challenge: Research Kandinsky's 'Squares with Concentric Circles'. Try to create your own version using a different set of shapes, such as triangles within triangles, and experiment with how changing the colour combinations alters the 'mood' of your artwork.