

Zara's Landscape Layers: Exploring Depth in Art

Learning objective: To understand how artists use foreground, middle ground, and background to create the illusion of depth in a landscape painting.

Zara the Zebra is painting a beautiful view of a rolling British countryside. She has divided her canvas into three distinct sections to create perspective. Look at the list of features below and sort them into the correct 'layer' of the landscape. Then, use these ideas to plan your own masterpiece.

Word bank: Large, detailed flowers · Tiny, faint hills in the distance · A fence nearby · A blurred forest line · Brightly colored butterflies · A pale blue sky · A winding river · A tall, sharp-edged oak tree

1. Which items from the word bank should Zara paint in the 'Foreground' to make them look closest to the viewer? Explain why they need to be large and detailed. (2 marks)

2. Which items from the word bank belong in the 'Middle Ground'? How does this area bridge the gap between the front and the back of the painting? (2 marks)

3. Which items from the word bank belong in the 'Background'? Why should these be painted with less detail and lighter colors? (2 marks)

4. If Zara wanted to add a small cottage to her painting, in which layer would it look smallest? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

5. Why do artists use a 'horizon line' when drawing a landscape? Where should it be placed if you want to show more of the ground? (2 marks)

Draw: Using the techniques discussed, sketch a landscape that includes a foreground, a middle ground, and a background. Label each layer clearly on your drawing.



Extension challenge: Research how 'atmospheric perspective' works. How do artists change the color of distant mountains to make them look further away? Write two sentences explaining this.