

Exploring the World of Abstract Art with Zara

Learning objective: To understand the principles of abstract art by exploring shape, colour, and composition, and to create an original piece that conveys emotion without using realistic imagery.

Read the definitions of the key art terms and apply your knowledge to the questions below. Use your creative flair to complete the drawing task at the end.

Abstract art is a style that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of visual reality. Instead, it uses shapes, colours, forms, and gestural marks to achieve its effect. Zara the zebra often says that art is not about what you see with your eyes, but how you feel in your heart. Abstract artists focus on the arrangement of elements—the composition—to guide the viewer's eye across the canvas. By focusing on the 'language' of art rather than copying objects, the artist invites the viewer to interpret the meaning for themselves.

Word bank: Abstract · Composition · Geometric · Organic · Hue · Contrast · Texture · Expressionism

1. Explain why an artist might choose to use abstract shapes instead of drawing a realistic portrait of a person. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast 'geometric' shapes and 'organic' shapes. Provide one example of each in your description. (2 marks)

3. Justify your answer: Does a painting need to look like a real-world object to be considered 'successful' art? Why or why not? (3 marks)

4. If you wanted to express the emotion of 'joy' using only colours and lines, which colours would you select and why? (2 marks)

5. What might happen if an artist removed all the 'contrast' from their painting? How would it change the viewer's experience? (2 marks)

6. Look at the word 'Composition'. How can the placement of a single, small, bright circle on a large, dark canvas change the 'mood' of the piece? (2 marks)

Draw: Using a piece of plain paper, create an abstract piece titled 'The Sound of Music'. Do not draw instruments. Instead, use lines, swirls, and blocks of colour to represent the rhythm, volume, and mood of a piece of music you enjoy.



Extension challenge: Write a short artist's statement (no more than 100 words) describing the choices you made in your abstract piece. Explain why you chose your specific colour palette and how you used composition to direct the viewer's focus.