

Autumnal Aesthetics: Exploring Colour and Texture

Learning objective: To analyse the use of warm and cool colour palettes and texture in natural forms, and to apply these techniques to create an autumnal composition.

Zara the zebra has been observing the changing landscape of the forest. Use your knowledge of colour theory and artistic techniques to answer the following questions about autumnal art.

Zara the zebra is mesmerised by the changing leaves. As the chlorophyll fades, the hidden pigments of carotene and anthocyanin are revealed, turning the forest into a vibrant tapestry of crimson, amber, and gold. By studying these shifts, we can better understand how to use colour and texture to capture the essence of the season.

Word bank: complementary · hue · pigment · texture · warm palette · translucent · impasto · contrast

1. Zara uses a 'warm palette' to paint autumn leaves. Identify three colours that belong in a warm palette and explain how they affect the mood of an artwork. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the texture of a crisp, dried oak leaf with a smooth, green summer leaf. How might an artist use different drawing materials to represent these textures? (3 marks)

3. If you were to create a background that makes your bright orange leaves 'pop', which colour from the opposite side of the colour wheel would you choose? Justify your answer using the concept of complementary colours. (2 marks)

4. Explain why light might pass through a yellow leaf differently than a brown, decaying leaf. What artistic technique could you use to represent this translucency? (2 marks)

5. What might happen to the overall visual impact of your artwork if you used only cool colours like blues and purples to depict an autumn forest? Evaluate the effectiveness of this choice. (3 marks)

Draw: Create a detailed sketch of a single autumn leaf. Use a variety of mark-making techniques (such as cross-hatching, stippling, or layering) to show the difference between the brittle edges and the central veins of the leaf.



Extension challenge: Research the 'impasto' technique used by famous artists. Write a short paragraph explaining how you could use thick, layered paint to create a 3D effect on a canvas, making your autumn leaves look as though they are physically falling off the page.