

Masterpieces and Movements: An Art History Exploration

Learning objective: To analyse the techniques, styles, and influences of renowned historical artists and apply these concepts to original creative work.

Study the artistic movements and techniques of famous historical painters. Answer the questions below, ensuring you use technical vocabulary to justify your artistic critiques.

Zara the zebra is visiting an art gallery to study how different artists capture the world. From the light-filled scenes of the Impressionists to the bold, geometric shapes of early 20th-century pioneers, she is learning that art is not just about copying what we see, but how we interpret it. Artists like Claude Monet used rapid brushstrokes to capture the fleeting quality of light, while others, such as Johannes Vermeer, used intricate light and shadow to create a sense of realism. By examining these historical styles, we can understand how artists communicate emotions and ideas without using a single word.

Word bank: Impressionism · Brushstrokes · Contrast · Perspective · Composition · Abstract · Primary colours · Texture · Portraiture · Landscape

1. Compare and contrast the painting styles of Impressionists and Realists. Focus specifically on their use of brushstrokes and the representation of light. (3 marks)

2. Explain why an artist might choose to use a warm colour palette rather than a cool colour palette when painting a sunset landscape. (2 marks)

3. Identify two elements of composition that help lead a viewer's eye across a canvas. Justify your selection. (3 marks)

4. If an artist decided to move from a realistic style to an abstract style, what might happen to the way they use shape and form? Provide a specific example. (2 marks)

5. Critique the role of shadows in a portrait. How do they influence the perceived mood of the subject? (2 marks)

Draw: Select an everyday object (such as a tea cup or a fruit). Draw it twice in two distinct artistic styles: one using the rapid, light-focused style of Impressionism, and one using a bold, geometric, abstract style.



Extension challenge: Research an artist from the 19th or 20th century. Write a brief justification explaining how their work challenged the social norms or artistic expectations of their time. If this artist were alive today, what modern technology or social theme do you think they would choose to document in their art, and why?