

Zara's Abstract Art Adventure: A Kandinsky Quiz

Learning objective: To understand the artistic style of Wassily Kandinsky, exploring his use of geometric shapes, colour theory, and the concept of synaesthesia in abstract art.

Join Zara the Zebra as she explores the colourful world of Wassily Kandinsky. Read the passage carefully, then answer the ten questions below to test your knowledge of abstract expressionism.

Wassily Kandinsky was a pioneering Russian artist who is often called the father of abstract art. Unlike artists who painted realistic portraits or landscapes, Kandinsky believed that art should express inner feelings rather than just show what the eye sees in the physical world. He was fascinated by 'synaesthesia'—a condition where a person might experience colours as sounds, or music as shapes. His famous works, such as 'Composition VIII', feature circles, triangles, and lines that float across the canvas. He carefully selected colours to evoke specific moods, believing that yellow was sharp and aggressive, while blue was calm and deep. Kandinsky moved away from drawing objects to creating 'non-representational' art, where the viewer must use their imagination to interpret the meaning behind the patterns.

Word bank: Abstract · Composition · Synaesthesia · Geometric · Primary colours · Emotion · Non-representational

1. 1. What is the name of the art movement Kandinsky is famous for founding? A) Realism B) Abstract* C) Impressionism D) Minimalism (1 mark)

2. 2. True or False: Kandinsky's paintings always featured realistic portraits of famous people. (1 mark)

3. 3. What is the sensory condition where someone perceives colours as sounds? (1-word answer) (1 mark)

4. 4. Which shapes did Kandinsky frequently use in his work? A) Only squares B) Only stars C) Geometric shapes* D) Animal shapes (1 mark)

5. 5. True or False: Kandinsky believed that colours could represent different emotions or moods. (1 mark)

6. 6. What is the term for art that does not look like a recognisable object? (1-word answer) (1 mark)

7. 7. According to the text, how did Kandinsky describe the colour blue? A) Sharp B) Aggressive C) Calm* D) Boring (1 mark)

8. 8. True or False: Kandinsky was a Russian artist. (1 mark)

9. 9. How did Kandinsky believe viewers should interpret his abstract art? A) By asking the artist B) By using their imagination* C) By reading a manual D) By looking at the title (1 mark)

10. 10. Does the term 'non-representational' mean the art looks exactly like a photograph? (Yes/No) (1 mark)

Draw: Zara the Zebra wants you to create your own 'Composition'. Use a ruler and a compass to draw a collection of overlapping geometric shapes. Choose three colours and explain why you think those colours create a specific mood.



Extension challenge: 1. Explain why Kandinsky chose to move away from painting realistic landscapes. 2. Compare and contrast the work of a realistic portrait painter with Kandinsky's abstract style. 3. Justify your answer: Does music change the way you see colours? 4. What might happen if you painted a picture using only sharp, jagged lines and aggressive colours? 5. If you were to paint a 'portrait' of your favourite song, which shapes and colours would you use? 6. Critically evaluate the statement: 'Abstract art is easier to create than realistic art because it doesn't need to look like anything specific.'