

Zara's Perspective: Mastering the Landscape

Learning objective: To understand and apply techniques of atmospheric perspective, composition, and colour theory to create depth in landscape art.

Zara the zebra is busy painting the rolling hills of the countryside. To give her painting depth, she uses 'atmospheric perspective'. Your task is to analyse how we can make a flat piece of paper look like a vast, three-dimensional landscape. Complete the questions below to test your knowledge of composition and colour usage, then use the drawing prompt to apply these artistic principles.

Word bank: Atmospheric perspective · Foreground · Background · Horizon line · Desaturated · Overlapping · Vibrant · Scale

1. Zara notices that trees in the distance look smaller and less vibrant than the flowers at her feet. Explain why artists use 'atmospheric perspective' to achieve this effect. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the colours you would choose for the foreground versus the background of a mountain scene. Justify your choices based on how light travels through the air. (3 marks)

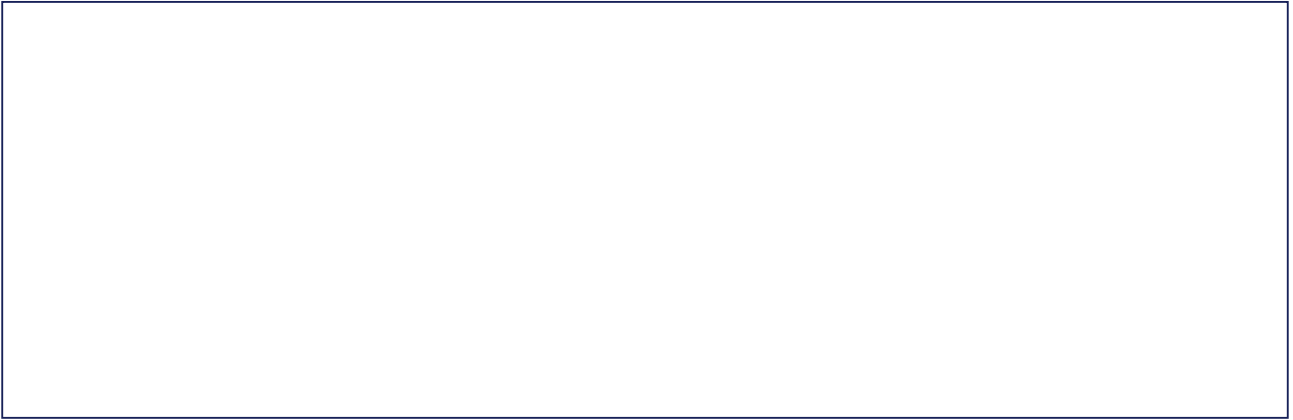
3. If you were to place a large oak tree in the foreground and a tiny house in the distance, how does this use of 'scale' influence the viewer's perception of distance? (2 marks)

4. What might happen to the sense of depth in your artwork if every object was painted with the exact same level of detail and brightness? (2 marks)

5. Justify why the 'horizon line' is considered the most important starting point for a balanced landscape composition. (2 marks)

6. Describe the technique of 'overlapping'. Why does this simple act make a drawing look more realistic? (2 marks)

Draw: Create a landscape sketch that demonstrates depth. Include: 1) A clear foreground with bold, dark colours and high detail. 2) A mid-ground featuring overlapping objects. 3) A background using cooler, paler colours (like light blues or greys) to simulate distance. Ensure your horizon line is positioned to create a realistic sense of scale.



Extension challenge: Research the 'Rule of Thirds' in photography and painting. Create a second, thumbnail-sized sketch of your landscape, but shift the focal point from the centre to one of the intersections of the 'Rule of Thirds' grid. Write a short paragraph explaining why this new composition feels more dynamic and professional than a centred image.