

Exploring the Industrial World: A Study of L.S. Lowry

Learning objective: To analyse the artistic techniques, themes, and historical context of L.S. Lowry's paintings and apply these skills to original composition.

Read each question carefully. Use your knowledge of L.S. Lowry's life and artistic style to provide detailed answers. Ensure your explanations use technical art vocabulary where appropriate.

L.S. Lowry (1887–1976) is best known for his paintings of industrial Northern England. He often painted crowded streets, tall chimneys, and terraced houses. His style is instantly recognisable due to his simplified human figures, often called 'matchstick men', and his unique use of colour. Lowry once said, 'I only paint what I see,' capturing the rhythm of working-class life during the early 20th century.

Word bank: Industrial · Matchstick men · Perspective · Foreground · Background · Atmospheric · Monochromatic · Urban landscape · Composition

1. Identify two distinct characteristics of L.S. Lowry's human figures. Why do you think he chose to paint them this way? (2 marks)

2. Lowry often used a limited colour palette. Explain the effect this has on the mood of his paintings. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast how Lowry depicts the 'foreground' versus the 'background' in his urban landscapes. (3 marks)

4. Justify why L.S. Lowry's work is considered a valuable historical record of 20th-century Britain. (3 marks)

5. What might happen to the 'atmosphere' of a Lowry painting if he chose to use vibrant, neon colours instead of his signature muted tones? Explain your reasoning. (4 marks)

6. Extended Response: Analyse the relationship between the architecture (factories, chimneys, terraced housing) and the people in Lowry's work. How does he use composition to suggest that the environment dominates the lives of the citizens? Refer to specific artistic techniques in your response. (5 marks)

7. Zara the Zebra is inspired by Lowry. She wants to paint her local town using his techniques. Suggest two specific 'Lowry-esque' changes she should make to a modern, colourful photograph of a high street. (3 marks)

8. Total: /25

Draw: Using a pencil, sketch a scene of your local area in the style of L.S. Lowry. Focus on 'matchstick' figures, industrial architecture, and a sense of depth through perspective.



Extension challenge: Research the term 'Industrial Revolution'. Write a persuasive paragraph explaining whether you believe art should be a realistic reflection of history or an imaginative escape from reality. Use evidence from Lowry's work to support your viewpoint.