

Industrial Landscapes: The Art of L.S. Lowry

Learning objective: To analyse the artistic style of L.S. Lowry, focusing on industrial perspective, composition, and the depiction of the human figure.

Study the artistic techniques used by L.S. Lowry to capture industrial life in Northern England. Use your knowledge of his specific colour palette, character style, and use of space to complete the following exercises.

L.S. Lowry is renowned for his paintings of industrial settings, often featuring tall chimneys, terraced houses, and a vast, pale sky. He famously used a limited colour palette, primarily white, ochre, vermilion, Prussian blue, and ivory black. His figures, often described as 'matchstick men', were used to populate his landscapes, showing the rhythm of daily life in working-class communities. Lowry often ignored traditional vanishing points, instead creating a sense of distance through overlapping shapes and varying the size of his figures.

Word bank: Matchstick men · Industrial · Perspective · Atmosphere · Foreground · Background · Monochromatic · Urban

1. Identify three colours from Lowry's limited palette and explain how using such a restricted range of colours affects the overall mood of his paintings. (3 marks)

2. Compare and contrast how Lowry draws his human figures compared to a realistic portrait. Why do you think he chose this simplified style? (3 marks)

3. Zara the zebra notices that Lowry often paints his buildings with dark, smoky colours but his skies with light, pale colours. Explain why this contrast is important for the composition. (2 marks)

4. Lowry often ignored standard linear perspective. Justify why this might make his paintings feel more like a 'snapshot' of a busy street rather than a formal photograph. (3 marks)

5. What might happen to the atmosphere of a Lowry painting if you replaced his pale, empty skies with bright, colourful sunset colours? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

Draw: Using Zara's love for patterns, create a sketch of your local high street in the style of L.S. Lowry. Include 'matchstick' figures, industrial chimneys or terraced houses, and use a limited colour palette of no more than five colours.



Extension challenge: Research the term 'Industrial Revolution'. Write a paragraph explaining how the landscape of Britain changed during this time and why Lowry felt it was important to record these scenes for future generations.