

Zara's Printmaking Patterns: A Creative Challenge

Learning objective: To explore the techniques of block printing and understand how repeating patterns are created through relief printmaking.

Zara the zebra is designing a new collection of patterned stationery! Using the techniques of relief printmaking, follow these steps to design your own stamp. First, consider how a carved block transfers ink onto paper. Look at the patterns in the word bank and think about how they translate into positive and negative space. Answer the questions below to test your knowledge of printmaking, then follow the drawing prompt to design your own repeating pattern block.

Word bank: Relief · Brayer · Matrix · Negative space · Repeat pattern · Ink · Impression

1. In relief printmaking, the artist carves away parts of the block. Explain why the parts that are carved away appear as white (or the colour of the paper) in the final print. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast a 'brayer' with a paintbrush. Which tool do you think provides a more even distribution of ink, and why? (2 marks)

3. Justify your answer: If you were creating a two-colour print, why must you wait for the first layer of ink to dry completely before applying the second block? (2 marks)

4. What might happen if you used too much ink on your block before pressing it onto your paper? Describe the visual effect on the final print. (2 marks)

5. If a printing block costs £2.45 to manufacture and you sell each hand-printed card for £4.00, calculate the profit made on 10 cards. (2 marks)

6. Explain the importance of 'registration' when lining up your block to create a perfectly aligned repeat pattern on a long piece of paper. (2 marks)

Draw: Design a square block for a 'Zara-inspired' pattern. Draw a simple, bold shape (like a leaf, a geometric star, or a stripe) in the centre. Remember: the parts you shade in with your pencil will be the parts that hold the ink. Use clear, thick lines to show where the 'high' surface of your stamp would be.



Extension challenge: Design a 'tessellating' print. Create a motif that fits perfectly against itself when rotated or flipped. Write a short paragraph explaining the mathematical symmetry you used to ensure the pattern repeats without leaving any gaps.