

Zara's Printmaking Masterclass

Learning objective: To understand the techniques of relief printmaking, explore texture, and apply knowledge of mirror-imaging in art.

Read the following questions carefully. Use your knowledge of patterns and textures to answer. Remember, when printmaking, your design will be reversed on the final print!

Zara the zebra loves finding patterns in nature. She is teaching us that printmaking is the process of creating an image by transferring ink from a matrix (a carved block) onto another surface. Because the block is pressed face-down, any text or directional patterns will appear flipped, creating a perfect mirror-image. By carving away 'negative space', artists can create bold, striking prints that highlight the textures of their surroundings.

Word bank: relief · brayer · ink · mirror-image · texture · negative space · brayer · matrix

1. If you carve the letter 'R' into your printing block, how will it appear on your final paper print? Explain the scientific term for this effect. (2 marks)

2. Why must an artist consider 'negative space' before they begin carving their block? Justify why removing too much or too little material changes the final outcome. (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast a relief print made from a potato stamp versus a print made from a finely carved wooden block. What are the advantages of each? (3 marks)

4. If Zara wants to print a symmetrical pattern of zebra stripes, explain the steps she must take to ensure the alignment is precise when pressing the block down. (2 marks)

5. What might happen if you apply too much ink to your brayer before rolling it onto the block? Describe the visual effect this would have on your print. (2 marks)

Draw: In the box below, design a simple geometric pattern you would like to carve for a block print. Remember to draw it as it would look on the block (if it contains letters, draw them backwards!).



Extension challenge: Design a series of three prints that tell a short, wordless story. How can you change the texture or the amount of ink to show the passage of time or a change in mood? Write a brief justification for your design choices.