

Zara's Sketching Studio: Master the Art of Observation

Learning objective: To develop sketching techniques by using tonal shading, varied line weight, and precise observation to create depth and texture.

Zara the zebra notices patterns and textures everywhere! To become a master sketcher, you must look beyond the outline of an object. Follow these steps to complete your observational study. First, use your pencil to lightly map out the basic shapes. Then, experiment with 'hatching' (parallel lines) and 'cross-hatching' to show where the light hits your object and where the shadows fall. Finally, use the 'pressure technique'—press harder for dark, bold shadows and lighter for highlights.

Word bank: Tonal value · Hatching · Cross-hatching · Line weight · Composition · Perspective · Highlights · Texture

1. Explain why an artist might choose to use 'cross-hatching' rather than just a flat grey pencil smudge when trying to show the texture of a rough tree trunk. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast 'light line weight' and 'heavy line weight'. In what part of your sketch would you use each and why? (2 marks)

3. Justify your answer: If you are sketching an apple, why is it important to identify where the light source is before you begin your shading? (2 marks)

4. What might happen to the 'perspective' of your drawing if you only focus on the object itself and ignore the space surrounding it? (2 marks)

5. If a set of professional drawing pencils costs £8.99 and you have a budget of £20.00, calculate how much change you would receive. If you bought two sets, would you have enough money? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

6. Critique your own work: Look at your sketch. Which area shows the best contrast between light and dark? How could you improve the tonal transition in the darker areas? (2 marks)

Draw: Find a natural object (a leaf, a stone, or a piece of fruit). Place it under a single lamp to create a strong shadow. Sketch the object, focusing on at least three different 'tonal values' from pitch black to brilliant white.



Extension challenge: Design a 'Texture Map' in your sketchbook. Create six squares and fill each with a different pattern using only your pencil (e.g., prickly, fluffy, metallic, slimy, stony, and wooden). Use your knowledge of line weight and pressure to make each texture look convincing.