

# Zara's Watercolour Wonders: Mastering Transparency and Tone

*Learning objective: To understand and apply watercolour techniques including 'wet-on-wet' and 'wet-on-dry' to create depth, tone, and texture.*

Zara the zebra is obsessed with the patterns in nature! Today, you are going to explore how water changes the intensity of pigment. Read the techniques below and complete the tasks to demonstrate your control over your brush and paint. You will need a palette, watercolour paints, a soft brush, and high-quality watercolour paper.

*Word bank: Pigment · Transparency · Wash · Wet-on-wet · Wet-on-dry · Saturation · Bleeding · Gradient*

**1. Explain why adding more water to your brush creates a different 'wash' compared to using paint straight from the pan. How does this affect the transparency of your work? (2 marks)**

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**2. Compare and contrast the 'wet-on-wet' technique with the 'wet-on-dry' technique. In what scenario would an artist choose one over the other? (2 marks)**

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**3. Justify your answer: Why is it important to wait for a layer to dry completely before painting a sharp, detailed edge on top of it? (2 marks)**

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**4. What might happen if you use too much water on thin, non-watercolour paper? Use your knowledge of paper absorption to explain. (2 marks)**

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**5. If you wanted to create a sunset gradient, describe the step-by-step process you would follow using the 'wet-on-wet' method. (3 marks)**

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6. Zara wants to paint a forest scene. How could she use 'saturation' to make the trees in the foreground look closer than the trees in the background? (2 marks)

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**Draw:** Create a 'Watercolour Test Grid' on your paper. Divide your page into six squares. In each square, try a different technique: 1. A light wash, 2. A dark, saturated colour, 3. Wet-on-wet bleeding colours, 4. Wet-on-dry sharp lines, 5. A colour gradient (fading from dark to light), and 6. A dry-brush texture effect.



*Extension challenge: Challenge: Compose a landscape scene using only two primary colours. You must demonstrate at least three different levels of 'wash' (transparency) to create depth without using black or white paint. Write a short paragraph justifying your choice of composition and how you achieved the illusion of distance.*