

Zara's Watercolour Wonders: Exploring Transparency and Texture

Learning objective: To experiment with watercolour techniques including wet-on-wet, colour blending, and controlling water-to-pigment ratios to create atmospheric effects.

Follow Zara the Zebra's techniques to create your masterpiece. First, prepare your workspace with a palette, two jars of water, and high-quality watercolour paper. Experiment with 'wet-on-wet' by dampening your paper with clean water before adding colour to watch the paint bloom and spread. Remember, in watercolour, we work from light to dark, preserving the white of the paper for our brightest highlights.

Draw: Create an atmospheric landscape inspired by Zara's favourite meadow. Use a 'wet-on-wet' wash for the sky to show a soft colour transition. In the foreground, use a 'dry brush' technique to add texture to tall grasses or rocky outcrops. Include at least three distinct layers of depth (foreground, mid-ground, and background) to demonstrate your understanding of perspective. Ensure you leave areas of white paper visible to act as highlights on clouds or water.



Label words: Wash · Pigment · Gradient · Wet-on-wet · Opacity · Transparency · Bleed · Highlight

Steps:

1. Explain why it is essential to paint the lightest colours before the darkest colours when using watercolours.

2. Compare and contrast the effect of applying paint to dry paper versus 'wet-on-wet' paper.
3. Justify your choice of brush size when creating a large, smooth background wash.
4. Label the area of your painting that represents the 'highlight'.
5. Describe the technique you used to create a soft gradient in your sky or landscape.
6. What might happen if you added too much water to your brush before applying paint to a detailed area?