Mastering the Art of Portraits with Zara the Zebra

Learning objective: To understand the techniques of portraiture, including facial proportions, expression, and the use of shading to create depth.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of art techniques to explain how you would create a successful portrait. Refer to the word bank if you need help with artistic terms.

Word bank: proportions · shading · expression · features · perspective · composition · highlights · symmetry

1. When drawing a face, artists often use 'proportions' to place the eyes correctly. If you were drawing a human head, where should the eyes be positioned in relation to the vertical centre of the head? (2 marks)

2. Zara the Zebra wants to show a 'joyful' mood in her portrait. Describe two facial features you would change to show a character is smiling. (2 marks)

3. Explain why 'shading' is an important technique when drawing a nose or a chin. What does it help the viewer see? (2 marks)

4. Imagine you are drawing a portrait of a friend. What is the difference between a 'profile' view and a 'full-face' view? (2 marks)

5. If you wanted to draw a portrait that looks like it is glowing from a lamp on one side, where would you place your 'highlights' and why? (2 marks)

Draw: Using the techniques discussed, draw a portrait of a person (or a BookFlik character) showing a specific emotion, such as surprise, determination, or calmness. Remember to sketch the light source first to help you plan your shading.

Extension challenge: Research a famous portrait artist. Identify one 'composition' choice they made—such as the background colour or the way the subject is looking—and explain how that choice changes the 'mood' of the painting.