

Capturing Character: The Art of the Portrait

Learning objective: To understand how artists use facial features, expression, and media to convey personality and emotion in a portrait.

Read the questions carefully. Use your knowledge of facial proportions and artistic techniques to answer each one. Remember to think about how Zara the zebra uses patterns and colors to show how a character feels!

Word bank: proportion · expression · sketch · medium · shading · texture · composition · contrast

1. When drawing a human face, artists often use 'guidelines' to help with proportion. Where should the eyes be placed in relation to the vertical center of the head? Explain why this is important. (2 marks)

2. Look at a mirror and make a surprised face. Which facial features change the most? Describe how you would draw these changes to show the emotion clearly. (2 marks)

3. If you were using charcoal to create a portrait of Leo the Lion, how could you use 'shading' to show that his mane is soft and thick rather than apartment? (2 marks)

4. An artist is choosing between a wax crayon and a fine-liner pen to draw a portrait. Explain which one would be better for creating very fine, realistic detail and why. (2 marks)

5. Zara the zebra loves to use bright, contrasting colors in her art. If you wanted to show that a character in your portrait was feeling very happy and energetic, what colors would you choose and why? (2 marks)

Draw: Choose a friend or a family member. Draw a portrait of them that captures a specific emotion, such as joy, concentration, or curiosity. Focus on the shape of their eyes and mouth to show this feeling.



Extension challenge: Try creating a 'self-portrait' using a medium you have never used before, such as coffee-stain painting or collage using recycled paper. How does the medium change the way the portrait looks?