

Zara's Gallery of Expression: Mastering the Portrait

Learning objective: To understand how artists use facial proportions, line, and shading to convey character and emotion in a portrait.

Zara the zebra has been studying the great portrait painters. She has noticed that every face follows a specific pattern of proportions. Using the grid provided by your teacher, follow these steps to create a portrait of a partner. 1. Lightly sketch an oval for the head. 2. Draw a horizontal line halfway down for the eyes. 3. Use your knowledge of facial features to place the nose, mouth, and ears. 4. Choose one emotion from the word bank to convey through the positioning of the eyebrows and the shape of the mouth.

Word bank: Proportion · Symmetry · Shading · Expression · Composition · Contour · Perspective · Tone

1. Explain why artists often draw a horizontal line halfway down an oval head shape before adding facial features. What does this tell us about human proportion? (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast how the positioning of eyebrows can change the 'mood' of a portrait. Provide two specific examples. (2 marks)

3. Justify your choice of shading technique. How does adding darker tones under the chin and nose create a sense of three-dimensional form? (2 marks)

4. What might happen if an artist intentionally exaggerated the size of the eyes in a portrait? How would this affect the viewer's perception of the subject? (2 marks)

5. If you were to create a 'self-portrait' using only geometric shapes, which shapes would you choose to represent your personality and why? (2 marks)

6. Evaluate the importance of 'negative space' in a portrait composition. How does the area surrounding the head influence the viewer's focus? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a portrait of a friend or family member. Focus on capturing one specific emotion (e.g., joy, surprise, or contemplation) by using varied line weights and subtle shading to define the contours of the face.



Extension challenge: Research a historical portrait artist. Write a short critique justifying why their specific use of light and shadow (chiaroscuro) makes their subject appear lifelike. Can you recreate a small section of their work using only a graphite pencil?