Zara's Abstract Art Adventure

1. A realistic painting looks like a real object or photograph, while abstract art focuses on colour, shape, and feeling instead of showing a real-life object. (2 marks)

Working: The passage states abstract art 'does not need to look like a real photograph'.

1 mark for identifying realistic art looks like real life/photos; 1 mark for identifying abstract art focuses on feelings/shapes/colours.

2. Jagged lines and curved lines. (2 marks)

Working: The passage mentions 'jagged red lines' and the example mentions 'curved' lines.

1 mark for each correct type of line (e.g., jagged, wavy, straight, spiral, zigzag).

3. Sharp, dark shapes might make someone feel serious or worried, while soft, light shapes might make someone feel calm or happy. (4 marks)

Look for: The student must link the shape/colour to a specific feeling and provide a reason.

Good: Sharp shapes feel scary and round shapes feel nice.

Better: Sharp, dark shapes feel serious because they look like spikes, but round, light shapes feel happy like a sunny day.

Best: Sharp, dark shapes might make someone feel tense or serious because they look jagged, whereas soft, light shapes feel calm and gentle, like the yellow blobs Zara saw.

What moves an answer up: Moving up requires linking the visual description to an emotional response and referencing the text or real-world logic.

4. I would choose bright red and yellow because they are bold and energetic colours that remind me of fireworks or a fast race. (5 marks)

Look for: The student must name specific colours and explain the link to the emotion of 'excitement'.

Good: I would use red and orange because they are bright.

Better: I would use bright red and yellow because they look very energetic and make me think of excitement.

Best: I would choose bright red and yellow because these colours are very bold and vibrant, which makes me feel full of energy and excitement, just like a party.

What moves an answer up: Moving up requires using descriptive vocabulary and explaining the personal connection to the chosen colours.

5. A sculptor could twist, fold, or squash the clay into an unusual, non-human shape that focuses on texture and form rather than trying to look like a person's face or body. (4 marks)

Look for: The student must explain that abstract sculpture focuses on form/texture rather than realistic representation.

Good: They could make a weird shape instead of a person.

Better: They could twist the clay into a swirly shape to show how they feel, instead of making it look like a real person.

Best: A sculptor might use the clay to create a unique, twisted form that focuses on interesting textures and curves, rather than trying to copy the exact shape of a human body.

What moves an answer up: Moving up requires explaining the 'how' (manipulating the material) and the 'why' (focusing on abstract qualities).

6. Student drawing must contain at least three shapes (e.g., circles, triangles, squares) and two colours. (8 marks)

Working: Check the box for the presence of 3+ shapes and 2+ colours.

4 marks for 3+ shapes; 4 marks for 2+ colours.

What a secure answer looks like

A secure answer demonstrates an understanding that abstract art is subjective and prioritises emotional expression over realism. Students should use descriptive vocabulary like 'vibrant', 'jagged', or 'fluid'.

If your child is stuck

Ask the child: 'If you were a colour, what would you be and why?' or 'If this music were a shape, would it be spiky or smooth?'

Common mistakes to watch for

Children often try to draw a 'hidden' object (like a house) and call it abstract. Remind them that abstract art does not need to represent a physical object at all.