Zara’s Colourful World of Abstract Art

1. Excitement: bright colours like red, orange, or yellow. Sleepy: cool, soft colours like blue, purple, or grey. (2 marks)

Working: Excitement is associated with 'loud' colours; sleepy is associated with 'quiet' or calming colours.

1 mark for appropriate colour choices for each mood; 1 mark for a logical explanation linking colour to the mood.

2. Jagged lines (sharp, zig-zag) for a storm; curved lines (wavy, smooth) for a stream. (2 marks)

Working: Jagged lines represent the chaotic energy of a storm; curved lines represent the fluid, gentle movement of water.

1 mark for a jagged line; 1 mark for a curved line.

3. A pattern makes the shape look more complex, busy, or interesting compared to a blank shape. (2 marks)

Look for: The child identifies that patterns add detail, movement, or visual interest.

Good: It looks better with a pattern.

Better: It looks more interesting because the triangles fill up the space.

Best: The pattern makes the hexagon look busy and full of movement, whereas a blank shape looks empty and plain.

What moves an answer up: Moving from 'good' to 'best' requires using descriptive vocabulary and comparing the two states.

4. Use many small, overlapping rectangles and grey or yellow colours to show the busy, mechanical feel of a city. (3 marks)

Look for: The child links shapes and colours to the concept of 'busy' or 'city'.

Good: I would use lots of squares and grey colours.

Better: I would use many small rectangles and grey colours because cities are full of buildings and look busy.

Best: I would use many overlapping rectangles in grey and yellow to show the busy, crowded feeling of a city street without drawing the cars themselves.

What moves an answer up: Moving from 'good' to 'best' requires explaining the 'why' behind the artistic choice.

5. Answers will vary based on the object chosen (e.g., a circle for a robin's head, or a triangle for an oak leaf). (2 marks)

Working: The child must identify a geometric shape hidden within a natural object.

1 mark for drawing shapes found in the object; 1 mark for identifying the most important shape.

What a secure answer looks like

A secure answer shows the child understands that abstract art uses visual elements to represent feelings or concepts rather than realistic details. Encourage them to explain their reasoning clearly.

If your child is stuck

Ask your child: 'If this feeling were a sound, would it be loud or quiet?' or 'If this shape were a person, how would they move?'

Common mistakes to watch for

Children often try to draw realistic objects (e.g., drawing a literal car for the street question) rather than using abstract shapes. Remind them that abstract art is about the 'feeling' of the subject.