Exploring the World of Abstract Art with Zara

1. Answers will vary. Example: I would choose vibrant yellows and deep greys. The contrast between the bright yellow lights and the dark grey buildings shows the busy, clashing energy of a city centre. (2 marks)

Working: Must include a colour choice and the word 'contrast' to explain the mood.

1 mark for choosing colours relevant to a city; 1 mark for using 'contrast' to explain the mood.

2. Geometric shapes are man-made (like the hexagon), while organic shapes are flowing (like a leaf). An artist might combine them to show the balance between nature and the built environment. (2 marks)

Look for: The student identifies that combining shapes creates visual interest or balance between nature and structure.

Good: An artist might use both to make the picture look more interesting.

Better: An artist combines them to show the difference between natural things and man-made things like buildings.

Best: Combining geometric and organic shapes creates a visual tension that balances the precision of man-made structures with the fluid, unpredictable nature of the natural world.

What moves an answer up: Moving from simple observation to explaining the artistic purpose of the contrast.

3. For steady rain, Zara could use thin, vertical lines. For a thunderstorm, she could use thick, jagged, dark lines to show the sudden energy and chaos. (2 marks)

Working: Must link line type (thick/thin/jagged/curved) to the specific weather condition.

1 mark for steady rain description; 1 mark for thunderstorm description.

4. I would add a smaller, lighter shape or a group of smaller shapes on the right. This creates balance because the weight of the large dark circle is offset by the visual interest on the other side. (2 marks)

Working: Must mention balance or visual weight.

1 mark for suggesting an element; 1 mark for explaining the reason regarding balance.

5. Example: 1. Bright orange (joy of sunshine). 2. Wavy blue lines (the feeling of the sea). 3. Rough, sandy texture (the feeling of the beach). (3 marks)

Working: Must list three elements and explain the feeling for each.

1 mark for each element/feeling pair (up to 3 marks).

What a secure answer looks like

A secure answer demonstrates an understanding that abstract art uses visual elements to communicate emotions rather than literal representations. Students should use the provided vocabulary correctly.

If your child is stuck

Ask the child to close their eyes and think about the 'feeling' of the place or event before they think about what it looks like. Encourage them to describe the 'mood' using colours.

Common mistakes to watch for

Students often try to draw literal objects (e.g., drawing a car for a city) instead of using abstract shapes. Remind them that abstract art is about the 'feeling' of the subject.