Capturing the Industrial Spirit: The Art of L.S. Lowry

1. Lowry likely used 'matchstick men' to show the anonymity of industrial life, where individuals were part of a larger, busy crowd rather than being the main focus. (2 marks)

Working: Evidence: Lowry focused on the industrial landscape and the collective movement of people rather than individual portraits.

Award 1 mark for identifying the focus on the crowd/anonymity and 1 mark for linking it to the industrial setting.

2. Slate Grey, Cream, Ochre, Black. (1 mark)

Working: Lowry's palette was muted and earthy to reflect the smoke and stone of industrial towns.

1 mark for circling all four correct colours and no incorrect ones.

3. Lowry often flattened the scene. This makes the painting feel like a stage set, which highlights the patterns of the buildings and the movement of the people across the space. (2 marks)

Working: Observation of Lowry's technique: he often ignored strict vanishing points to create a 'tapestry' effect.

1 mark for identifying the flattened perspective and 1 mark for describing the 'stage-like' or 'patterned' effect.

4. 1. Tall chimneys emitting smoke. 2. Rows of terraced housing or brick factories. (2 marks)

Working: Industrial features are defined by manufacturing and dense, uniform housing.

1 mark for each valid industrial feature listed.

5. A student might choose a 'quiet and still' mood to reflect the early morning, or 'busy and loud' to reflect the rush hour, justifying it through the placement of figures. (2 marks)

Look for: The student must link their chosen mood to a visual element (e.g., the number of figures or the use of light/shadow).

Good: I would make it busy because there are lots of people walking to work.

Better: I would make it busy and loud because I would draw many matchstick men moving in different directions to show the energy of the high street.

Best: I would create a quiet and still mood by using a very muted palette of greys and ochres, painting only a few solitary figures to emphasise the vastness of the empty street.

What moves an answer up: Moving from good to best requires linking the emotional 'mood' to specific artistic choices like colour, composition, or figure placement.

What a secure answer looks like

A secure answer demonstrates an understanding that Lowry's style was a deliberate choice to capture the rhythm of industrial life rather than a lack of technical skill. Students should focus on the relationship between the environment and the people within it.

If your child is stuck

Ask the child to look at a photo of their own street and imagine it in black and white. Ask: 'What shapes do you see first? Are they tall, wide, or repetitive?'

Common mistakes to watch for

Students often assume Lowry painted 'matchstick men' because he couldn't draw people well, rather than understanding it as a stylistic choice. They may also try to use bright colours, forgetting that his 'industrial' style relies on a muted, limited palette.