Zara’s Printmaking Masterclass

1. A potato or an oak leaf. (1 mark)

Working: The passage states: 'Zara is using a potato cut in half and a leaf from an oak tree'.

Accept either 'potato' or 'leaf'.

2. A brayer. (1 mark)

Working: The word bank and the clue 'rhymes with layer' identify the tool.

Must be 'brayer'.

3. Zara needs to press firmly to make sure the ink or paint transfers from the object onto the paper. (2 marks)

Working: Applying pressure ensures the texture or shape is fully 'impressed' onto the surface.

1 mark for mentioning ink transfer, 1 mark for mentioning pressure/contact.

4. She should arrange them in a regular, repeating sequence. This creates a pattern because the eye can follow the rhythm of the shapes. (3 marks)

Look for: Mention of regular spacing or a sequence.

Good: She should put them in a line or a grid.

Better: She should space them out evenly so the pattern looks neat and tidy.

Best: She should arrange them in a repeating sequence, like a grid, so the viewer can see a clear, consistent pattern across the page.

What moves an answer up: Moving from simple placement to explaining the visual effect of rhythm and consistency.

5. A relief print involves carving a design into a block so the raised parts take the ink. A found object print uses an existing item, like a leaf, to pick up ink and leave a mark. (4 marks)

Look for: The difference between carving/raised surfaces and using natural/found textures.

Good: Relief is carving a block, but found object is using things like leaves.

Better: In relief printing, you carve away parts of a block to make a shape. Found object printing uses things you find in nature to make a print.

Best: A relief print requires carving a design into a block so only the raised areas hold ink. A found object print uses the natural texture of an item, like a leaf's veins, to create an impression.

What moves an answer up: Moving from basic definitions to explaining the physical mechanism of how the ink is held.

6. Drawing should show a hedgehog shape with sharp lines for spikes. Explanation: The sharp lines will hold the ink well and create a clear, spiky texture on the paper. (5 marks)

Look for: Clear, sharp lines for spikes and an explanation of why those lines work.

Good: I drew a hedgehog with pointy lines. They will look like spikes.

Better: I drew a hedgehog with lots of triangles for spikes. These lines will create a good print because they are distinct and will hold the ink.

Best: I designed a hedgehog with deep, sharp-angled lines. These will create a good print because the raised edges will pick up the ink clearly and show the texture of the spikes.

What moves an answer up: Moving from describing the drawing to explaining the relationship between the design and the printing process.

7. 1. Use more ink on the block. 2. Press down harder with more even pressure. (4 marks)

Working: Light prints usually result from lack of ink or lack of pressure.

Accept any two logical suggestions related to ink amount or pressure.

8. Artists use a limited palette to make the pattern look more unified and to stop the colours from becoming messy or 'muddy'. (5 marks)

Look for: Mention of 'unified' look or avoiding 'muddy' colours.

Good: So it looks nice and not too messy.

Better: They use fewer colours so the pattern looks neat and the colours don't mix and turn brown.

Best: Artists use a limited palette to create a unified, professional look and to ensure the colours remain bright and distinct rather than becoming muddy.

What moves an answer up: Moving from simple aesthetic preference to understanding colour theory and visual clarity.

What a secure answer looks like

A secure answer shows an understanding that printmaking is about the transfer of ink from a surface to paper through pressure. Pupils should use the vocabulary provided in the word bank correctly.

If your child is stuck

Ask the child to imagine they are a stamp. If they don't press down, will the whole shape appear? If they use too much paint, will it be a blob?

Common mistakes to watch for

Children often forget that the 'raised' part of a relief block is what prints, or they may think that 'found objects' need to be carved like relief blocks.