Zara’s Sketchbook: Mastering Observation

Learning objective: I can use sketching techniques to capture texture, form, and light in my drawings.

About 15 minutes. Grown-up tip: Encourage your child to look for the 'hidden' colours within shadows, such as blues or purples, rather than just using black.

Use your pencil to carefully observe the world around you. Zara the zebra loves to look for patterns and textures. When sketching, don't just outline; try to show depth. For example, if sketching a badger's fur, use short, light pencil strokes to show direction rather than drawing a solid black shape. Use a soft 2B pencil for shading and a hard HB pencil for fine lines.

Word bank: cross-hatching · tonal range · perspective · contour · texture · shading · opacity

1. Identify your subject: What natural object or pattern from the school playground or garden have you chosen to observe today? (1 mark)

2. Texture analysis: Describe the surface of your subject. Is it rough, smooth, jagged, or soft? How will you use your pencil to recreate this texture? (2 marks)

3. Tonal planning: Look at your subject closely. Where is the darkest shadow and where is the brightest highlight? Describe where you will apply the most pressure with your pencil. (2 marks)

4. Perspective check: Explain how you have positioned yourself to draw this object. Are you looking down at it, or is it at eye level? How does this change the shape you see? (2 marks)

5. Self-reflection: Compare your sketch to your subject. What is one technique you used that successfully created a realistic effect, and what would you change if you drew it again? (3 marks)

Draw: Find a quiet space in the classroom or garden. Choose a small object like a leaf, a stone, or a piece of bark. Sketch it in the space below, focusing on using at least three different levels of shading to show its form.

Extension challenge: Try a 'blind contour' drawing of your own hand. Look only at your hand and not your paper while you draw the outline in one continuous line, then add texture once you look back at your page.



I did it! Name: _____ Date: _____

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