Mastering the Still Life: An Artistic Study

Learning objective: I can observe, analyse, and describe the composition and techniques used in a still life arrangement.

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

Today, you will act as an art critic. Choose a collection of three objects (e.g., an apple, a ceramic jug, and a folded cloth) and arrange them in a patch of natural light. Observe how the light hits the surfaces and use this template to plan your masterpiece. Worked example: For 'Lighting', you might write: 'The light enters from the left, creating a bright highlight on the polished apple and a long, soft shadow behind the jug.'

Word bank: composition · highlight · shadow · texture · perspective · contrast · vantage point · opaque · translucent

1. Composition and Placement: Describe how you have arranged your objects. Which item is the focal point and why did you place it there? (2 marks)

2. Light and Shadow: Identify where the primary light source is coming from. How does this affect the shadows cast by your objects? (2 marks)

3. Texture and Surface: Choose two objects. Describe their textures using precise adjectives and explain how you will show these differences in your drawing. (3 marks)

4. Colour Palette: List the colours you intend to use. Explain how you will use tones and shades to create depth within your chosen palette. (2 marks)

5. Artistic Intent: What mood or story are you trying to convey through this still life arrangement? How does your choice of objects help communicate this? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a detailed sketch of your still life arrangement, focusing on the outline of the shapes and the direction of the light source.

Extension challenge: Try drawing the same arrangement again, but change your vantage point to be looking down from above (bird's-eye view) instead of from the side. How does the composition change?

I did it! Name: _____ Date: _____

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