Mastering the Art of Still Life

Learning objective: I can analyse, compose, and evaluate still life art using techniques like lighting, texture, and focal points.

About 15 minutes. Grown-up tip: Encourage your child to look for shadows in their own home to see how light changes the look of everyday items.

Still life focuses on inanimate objects. When arranging your composition, consider the rule of thirds. Example: If drawing a fruit bowl, place the largest piece of fruit slightly off-centre to create visual interest rather than placing it directly in the middle.

Word bank: composition · focal point · perspective · contrast · texture · foreground · background

1. Zara is arranging a still life with a robin figurine, an oak leaf, and a shiny pebble. Explain why it is better to overlap these objects rather than placing them in a straight line. Give a reason. (2 marks)

2. Look at the light source. If a lamp is placed to the left of your objects, on which side of the objects will the shadow fall? Describe the effect of this shadow on the overall composition. (2 marks)

3. How does using a variety of textures (e.g., a smooth glass vase next to a rough piece of bark) change the way a viewer experiences your artwork? Use evidence from the textures mentioned. (2 marks)

4. If you are drawing a still life featuring a £2 coin and a half-eaten apple, how could you use 'scale' to make the coin the focal point of your sketch? (2 marks)

5. Critique: Why might an artist choose a plain, neutral-coloured cloth for the background of a still life instead of a patterned one? Provide one reason. (2 marks)

Draw: A still life arrangement featuring a collection of natural items found in a British garden, such as a conker, a smooth stone, and a curled dried leaf, arranged on a wooden surface with a single light source.

Extension challenge: Select three objects from your school bag. Arrange them in two different ways—one 'balanced' and one 'chaotic'. Write a short paragraph explaining which arrangement is more visually engaging and why.



I did it! **Name:** _____ **Date:** _____

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