



What Makes Good Composition in Artwork

KS3 ART & DESIGN

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What is Composition?

Composition is the arrangement of all the different parts in an artwork. It's how an artist decides where to place colours, shapes, people, and objects to create a piece that looks good and tells a story. Think of it like arranging furniture in a room — where you put things matters a lot.

Think of it like arranging players on a sports team. Each player (or element) has a position, and they work together to create something that works well.

The Rule of Thirds

One of the most famous composition ideas is the **Rule of Thirds**. Imagine drawing two horizontal lines and two vertical lines across a picture to create **9 equal squares**. Important things — like a person's eyes or a sunset — often look better when placed along these lines or at the corners where they cross, rather than stuck in the middle.

Think of it like taking a photo of your friend. Their face looks more interesting if it's slightly to the side rather than perfectly in the centre of the picture.

Balance and Symmetry

Balance makes a picture feel stable and complete. There are two types:

Symmetrical balance means one side mirrors the other (like butterfly wings), and **Asymmetrical balance** means different elements on each side still feel equally important.

Good composition also uses **contrast** — putting light next to dark, big next to small, or rough next to smooth. This makes artworks more interesting and helps your eye travel around the picture.

Leading Lines and Focus

Leading lines are paths in artwork that guide your eye towards the most important part, called the **focal point**. A road disappearing into the distance, a river curving

through a landscape, or even a person's gaze pointing somewhere all work as leading lines.

Think of it like arrows on a map showing you where to look first. The artist uses these lines to tell you: "Look here!"

Space and Depth

How an artist uses **space** affects how real and interesting the artwork feels. Objects placed higher up often look further away, while larger objects seem closer.

Overlapping shapes create the illusion of **depth** — the sense that some things are in front and others behind.

Great composition brings all these ideas together. It's not about following strict rules, but understanding how to arrange things so your artwork communicates clearly and captures people's attention.