

# AQA



**Component 1**  
**Personal Investigation**  
**60% of overall mark**

**Component 1 – Personal investigation**

Excerpt from AQA A Level Art and Design Specification,

- **This is a practical investigation supported by written material.** Students are required to conduct a practical investigation into an idea, issue, concept or theme, supported by written material.
- **The focus of the investigation must be identified independently by the student** and must lead to a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes.
- **The investigation should be a coherent, in-depth study** that demonstrates the student's ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning from an initial starting point to a final realisation.
- **The investigation must show clear development** from initial intentions to the final outcome or outcomes.
- **It must include evidence of the student's ability to research** and develop ideas and relate their work in meaningful ways to relevant critical/contextual materials.
- **The investigation must be informed** by an aspect of contemporary or past practice of artists, photographers, designers or craftspeople.
- **The written material must confirm understanding** of creative decisions, providing evidence of all four assessment objectives by:
  - clarifying the focus of the investigation
  - demonstrating critical understanding of contextual and other sources
  - substantiating decisions leading to the development and refinement of ideas
  - recording ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions by reflecting critically on practical work
  - making meaningful connections between, visual, written and other elements.
- **The written material must:**
  - be a coherent and logically structured extended response of **between 1000 and 3000 words of continuous prose.**
  - include specialist vocabulary appropriate to the subject matter
- Include a bibliography that, identifies contextual references from sources such as: books, journals, websites, through studies of others' work made during a residency, or on a site, museum or gallery visit
- be legible with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar so that meaning is clear.
- **Annotation must not be included** in the word count for the written material. Students can present the written material as a single passage of continuous prose or as a series of shorter discrete, but linked, passages of continuous prose incorporated within the practical work.
- **There is no restriction on the scale of practical work produced.**
- **Students should carefully select, organise and present** their work for their Personal investigation to ensure it is well structured and provides evidence that meets the requirements of all four assessment objectives.
- **The personal investigation will be assessed as a whole.**
- **Evidence of meeting the requirements of all four assessment objective must be provided** in both the practical and written material.
- **Students must identify and acknowledge sources which are not their own in the Bibliography.**

## Developing your focus

### Step 1: Brainstorm Ideas

- **Write down all subjects, themes, places, things, activities or issues that are**

**personally relevant and that matter to you** (even random, unexpected things, such as the art room sink, or heirloom knives and forks in your kitchen drawer). The purpose of any artwork is to communicate a message: to comment or scream or sing about the world in which we find ourselves in. If there is no emotion behind the work, there is no driving force – nothing to direct and shape your decision making. Write down the things that you care about; that move you.

**Include topics that are unusual, challenging, controversial, gritty or inspiring: those that fill you with passion.** Students who select substantial, heartfelt issues that they really believe in are more likely to achieve great results than those who choose aesthetically pleasing but superficial subjects. A tried and true subject can still be approached in an individual and innovative way, but choosing a topic that is novel and fresh has certain advantages. Strong, contentious issues are those which the assessors themselves have a reaction to; they provoke an emotive response. Such topics make the markers and moderators sit up and take notice: it gives them ample opportunity to see the merit within your work.

## Step 2: Evaluate your ideas

Think carefully about the topics that you have written down. Use the flowchart at the end of this section to evaluate your ideas.

- **Eliminate those which are ‘cheesy’** (i.e involving pink hearts and Brad Pitt), **insincere** (i.e. a theme of ‘World Peace’, when really this is something you couldn’t care less about) and **overly “pretty” or lacking in substance** (i.e. bunches of roses). This doesn’t mean that a traditionally ‘beautiful’ subject cannot be successful, but think carefully before proceeding with such a topic.

- **Eliminate those subjects which you are unable to explore first-hand.** In order to create artworks, you will need access to high quality imagery. For example, if you are exploring the way in which humans kill animals in order to consume their meat, access to the inside of a butchery or abattoir/freezing works is likely to be essential. Reliance on photographs taken by others is rarely a good idea. No matter how awesome a theme appears, if you are unable to explore any aspect of it first-hand, it is very unlikely that you will be able to do the topic justice. Remember that you will likely need to return to your source imagery several times during your high school course, so a submission based upon a particular plant that only blooms for a couple of weeks out of the year or a view of your village during a rare winter snow storm is very risky. The ideal Art A-Level subject is one that you can physically return to, whenever you need – to draw, photograph or experience first hand.
- **Remove the topics for which the source material is excessively simple, i.e.** containing only a few forms, textures and patterns. A small pile of cardboard boxes, for example, might inspire a great drawing, but if this is the starting point for an entire year's A2 work, the straight lines, rectangular forms and flat box surfaces are unlikely to provide enough visual variety to explore for months on end. Overly busy source material, on the other hand, is not an issue – it is much easier to simplify form and detail than it is to add back in.
- **Eliminate those topics for which the source material lacks aesthetic appeal.** Do not mistake 'aesthetic appeal' for pretty. In fact, some of the 'ugliest' things can be stunningly rendered in an artwork or design. Art teachers (and artists in general) often speak of finding the beauty in the ordinary or mundane: seeing the magic in that which others have discarded or forgotten. This does not mean, however, that anything is suitable for your A Level topic. Some scenes are genuinely unattractive and unsuitable visually. Certain object combinations (due to their particular shapes, colours or textures) are extremely difficult to compose in a pleasing way. Similarly, some items – particularly disproportionate drawings or designs by others – are very challenging for a high school student to replicate. A drawing, for example, of a doll that is proportioned unusually, may appear to be an inaccurate, badly proportioned drawing of an ordinary doll. In other words, the examiner may not realise that the doll is proportioned badly – they may think you simply cannot draw. (If you find ascertaining the aesthetic potential of your ideas difficult, discuss this further with your art teacher.
- **Eliminate topics which are common or over-done (unless you have an original way of approaching this topic).** It doesn't matter if *some* others have explored the same topic as you... With the millions of people in the world, it is highly unlikely that you will be the only one to explore a particular theme (in fact, this is beneficial, as you can learn from others...and no one will make art exactly like you), but, if EVERYONE is doing it – if it is a topic that the examiners have seen a hundred times before, you should think carefully about whether you have something sufficiently new and original to say about it.
- **Ensure that the topic you choose is something that you really care about and which can sustain your interest for a prolonged period..** If you have more than one topic left on your list, pick the thing that you care about the most.

## Step 3 – Create your draft proposal

• After you have identified the focus for your developing practical work in steps 1 and 2 above, list the main themes that you want to explore. State which artists, craftspeople or designers you will look at. Identify the materials you are going to use. You can use your brainstorm to help you. Create a **question or statement** which you will investigate and will become the title of your essay and the focus of your developing practical work. This should be written as a piece of continuous prose which is no less than 300 words long. This will form the basis for your final proposal and your introduction to your written work.

## Step 4 – Create your illustrated proposal

- **Visit a Gallery, exhibition, or take part in a workshop.** This needs to have some relevance to your developing practical work.
- **Collect images, take initial photographs, make sketches and write down ideas** which you might like to explore based on the work you have seen.

- **Use your draft proposal to help you** develop your initial ideas into a formalised and illustrated proposal.

**Art:** In an A3 sketchbook present an illustrated proposal – this can include sketches, photographs and collected materials, artist links and other ideas and inspirations. In effect it will be a formal presentation of your brainstorm, draft proposal and a mood board combined. This should be at least a double page in an A3 sketchbook. It can contain artist/contextual investigations as well as some of your own images and initial ideas.

## Step 5 – Record from observation

***First-hand*** observation is best but can be supported by own photographs and/or observations of secondary sources or written ideas and notes. ***You should record from observation and present these in your sketchbook or webpage.***

**Record from observation;**

- Using information from your proposal, choose objects, people, textures, places to record from observation. **(AO3)**

***Drawing from a primary source*** means producing drawings by observing real objects or from drawing on location. You could also take photographs of primary sources and then draw and develop from your own photographs where possible.

***Drawing from secondary sources*** means drawing from found images or photographs. These may be from books, the internet etc.. Using secondary sources is ok sometimes as long as you mainly work from primary sources where possible.

**Quantity; You need at least 6 pages of observations. At least 4+ of these should be first hand observational drawings and can be supported by 2+ pages of own photographs of a good quality, (vary your media and style.)**



## Step 6 - Write the first paragraph of your essay

**State your interest, identify your artist links and state your intentions. You should pose the question or statement within the first paragraph. This should be approximately 250 – 350 words.** Using the piece of writing you used to create your draft proposal, and using formal language and subject specific terminology, create an introductory paragraph to your essay.

- *Clearly explain where your interest for this unit has come from. • What you are going to explore.*
- *Identify at least 2 of the artists that you are going to look at.*
- *Explain your starting statement or question to formally identify the focus of your investigation.*
- *It is **essential** that your **spelling, grammar and punctuation is correct.** • Use **subject specific terminology** where appropriate.*
- *Make sure that all **artist's names are correct.***

**(AO1, AO3)**

**Email your first paragraph to your mentor;**  
[eallen@budmouth-aspirations.org](mailto:eallen@budmouth-aspirations.org)

**Subsequent paragraphs should be emailed fortnightly.**

## Example Fine Art, 2017/8:

### An Exploration into the comparison between historical and modern styles of architecture

Throughout the ages, architecture has always been at the forefront of art, being depicted in a variety of different ways over time. But also as time has passed, many styles of architecture have also emerged – altering with changing art styles. Main examples of these sorts of reformations have been the Renaissance and the Bauhaus, both reforming art and architecture simultaneously. Also art is not the only factor which influences architecture and its styles, buildings are often built for political and economic reasons, which determines their size and style. You can often find classical and modern architecture in the same location due to surrounding areas being updated, while certain buildings and areas being left for historical value as well as for economic reasons. This leads to some very interesting juxtaposition which surrounds us in the modern world. You can witness these scenes in local areas, such as Chester and more prominently in Liverpool. Architecture can often be identified easily as to what era it belonged to purely by just looking at the features of the building, this will often show the type of art style at the time, indicating what period it may be, whether it be Gothic, Neoclassical or Modern. Artists which have used architecture in their works include Sarah Morris, Max Ernst and Mandy Payne (who is not well known but was featured in the recent John Moores Painting prize 2016). These artists have all produced works which I intend to refer to in this study.

## **Step 7 —Development of your ideas through;**

- **Contextual Links**
- **Experimentation and development**

**Research at least 2+ artists**, designers, craftspeople or cultures which are linked to your proposal AND your initial observational drawings and recordings. **(AO1)**

When creating an artist link you can include this alongside your developing work.

**Include;** *at least 2/3 relevant images, the artists name, date of the work, title if known. Describe at least 1 image in detail and use Art specific words, give your opinion on the work. How has this work or how will this artist influence your own work? (AO1)*

**Produce at least 6 hours** worth of experimentation or equivalent 3D studies. Use a variety of media and techniques. Try using some techniques you are familiar with to start with and then be brave – try something new. **(AO2)** *(you should have at least 6 pages of development so try to balance your time on this—don't spend 6 hours on 1 or 2 experiments.)*

**Research** a further artist, designer, craftsperson or culture which is linked to your experimentation. **(AO1)**

**Annotate your project up to date.**





## Step 8— The main body of your essay...

You are expected to make at least one paragraph of approximately 250 words progress per fortnight.

- The essay must be **illustrated** with actual examples and photographs of your development work as well as relevant artist, designer and craft worker's work.
- The essay will include references to your own work, your own judgements and opinions; use art specific words.
- When referencing the work of others put it into your own words-**Do NOT Plagiarise what others have written!**
- When writing about a piece of work the **title must be in inverted commas**.
- **When the work is first mentioned you must write next to it; (see fig1).**The number refers to the order of illustrations in the whole essay, so the first illustration is 1. For example; In the 'Title' (see fig1) the form is portrayed in a powerful manner using strong colours.
- Next to an illustration write the **Fig number, title, date when it was made and the materials used**. For example 'Still Life' Fig 1, 1971, oil on canvas and Artist name.

(A01, A03)

Use the following guide to help you write.

- Describe how you started to develop your ideas?
- Discuss artistic content of own work and that of artist/designer's work using formal elements.
- Make comparisons between your work and work of other artists' and also between work of different artists.
- Make comparisons between subject matter.
- Say how has the work of others inspired your work?
- Make sure you include examples of their work and illustrations of your own work which is relevant.
- When analysing techniques and processes do not give a step by step guide to what techniques were used, assume the reader knows the techniques, name them and discuss their relevance to your work.
- How have you resolved problems and so improved your work? • Show/explain how you have developed your ideas & why you have made choices.
- Discuss developments in your own work & relate these to your experiments, the artists you have looked at & any other observations that may have influenced you?
- What is the subject matter of the work?
- Take care not to use the following phrases too much; I, me, then I, and then, next I.....
- No text speak or abbreviations. For instance; didn't, shouldn't, wouldn't etc. Use correct English.
- Paragraphing – Start a new paragraph for a new subject matter, media or artist reflection.
- Use the same tenses all the way through the essay. Remember you are writing about your work once you have developed it so you should use past tense when discussing what you have done and present tense when discussing your opinions. E.g. I created a series of drawings by using continuous line. I feel that these drawings are successful because ..... I was inspired to look at the work of ..... who uses continuous line to describe contour lines within their drawings.

Email the next paragraph of your essay to your teacher.

[eallne@budmouth-aspirations.org](mailto:eallne@budmouth-aspirations.org)

### **E.g. Excerpt from Fine Art Essay 2017/8.**

For my work I moved on and started making my own paper print and making my own fabric. I started by using the materials of ink and bleach. I picked these materials as I have always been fond of using ink and bleach with my drawings as it creates something different. To create my paper print I used a potato and cut my shape to

make a print. I experimented with all different colours of inks, bleaches and spray paints. I made several types of papers using gold, blues and pinks to create something different within my work. I am looking forward to sewing on top and making more texture to the paper. With this work I found I was experimenting more and enjoying the process of my work. During this work I am still trying to keep the quality of my sewing shape to be visible.

## **Step 9—Continued development of ideas;**

**Choose one or more of the areas of continued development below. You should be spending at least 8 hours on this.**

- **Re-inform your work with further observations.**

This could be an evaluative paragraph reflecting on your development of your ideas so far and the direction of your investigation or further drawings, photographs, collections of images, items etc. **(AO3)**

- **Continue with further experimentation;** the work you have done so far may have given you ideas about exploration of further techniques, skills and materials.

You could repeat some of the successful processes you have already explored with different imagery, you may have discovered a technique accidentally as part of another experiment that you would like to develop. One or more of your experiments may have led to looking at the work of an artist/craftsperson or designer which may have suggested further experiments. You may have chosen a technique to practice which has not yet yielded the results you want and you might want to practice this until you perfect it. **(AO2)**

- **Investigate the work of artists/craftspeople or designers.**

It may be relevant to look at the work of others at this point. This could be to link to your prior experiments or observations or in order to refresh your ideas and help you develop a new focus.

When creating an artist link you can include this alongside your developing work.

**Include;** at least 2/3 relevant images, the artist's name, date of the work, title if known. Describe the images in detail using Art specific words, give your opinion on the work. How has this work or how will this artist influence your own work? **(AO1)**

**Annotate your project up to date. (AO3)**

## **Step 10—make good progress weekly**

You now need to ensure that you make good progress on your unit every week, (at least 8 hours of progress weekly as well as making progress on your essay.) In terms of development, you will all be at different stages in your investigation and you will need to constantly reflect and evaluate where you are and what you need to do next.

**Use the following guide to help you to work out what you need to do next;**

### **1. Is there more that I can do to develop this thread of development? (AO2)**

Yes—Continue to experiment with similar materials and techniques. You should be making progress in terms of mastery of skill and development of your ideas.

No—Either do;

- Further observations based on the artists/photographers/designers that I have looked at. (go to 2)
- Create further links to artists/photographers/designers. (go to 3) •

Annotate my work thoroughly. (go to 4)

### **2. Do I need to re-inform my work with new first hand observations/photo shoots? (AO3)**

Yes—Create new drawings or take new photoshoots from first hand observation. Make sure that you show a developing ability to record from first hand observation. Drawings should show that you are becoming more accomplished in your techniques. You should show that you are able to react to your developing work by choosing relevant styles, exploring new and relevant techniques and responding to the work of others. Your developing skills in taking photo shoots should show that you are able to increasingly plan your shoots, choreographing and directing your subject matter, using your camera in an increasingly proficient ways and developing your ideas by making links to your own development and the work of others.

No—Either do;

- Experiment with new techniques and materials based on the work I have seen. (go to 1)
- Create further links to artists/photographers/designers. (go to 3) •

Annotate my work thoroughly. (go to 4)

**3. Have I included relevant artist/photographer/designer links and annotated them to show my opinion of the work and made clear links with my own development? (AO1)**

Yes—Either do;

- Further observations based on the artists/photographers/designers that I have looked at. (go to 2)
- Experiment with new techniques and materials based on the work I have seen. (go to 1)
- Annotate my work thoroughly. (go to 4)

NO—Complete all relevant artist/photographer/designer links including my own opinions and clear links to my developing art practice.

**4. Have I reflected on my work and annotated my ideas and experiments thoroughly? (AO3)**

Yes—Either do;

- Further observations based on the artists/photographers/designers that I have looked at. (go to 2)
- Experiment with new techniques and materials based on the work I have seen. (go to 1)
- Create further links to artists/photographers/designers. (go to 3)

**5. Have I acted upon all the advice given to me by my teachers?**

Yes—Go to 6.

No—Complete all compulsory actions suggested by Art staff and consider carefully all suggestions by investigating these thoroughly.

**6 Have I made satisfactory progress on my essay? Have I acted on the advice given to me by my mentor and made at least 250 words of progress this fortnight? (AO1/3)**

Yes—Email my new draft to my mentor.

No—Bring my essay up to date by writing at least 250 words on my developing practical investigation. I must ensure that I illustrate my essay with my own work and the work of others. It should be continuous prose and have relevant labels and a bibliography. Email my new draft to my mentor.

## Step 11—create a personal, meaningful final piece or pieces. (AO4)

It is now time to start thinking about your final piece(s). Your developing practical work should inform this and will hopefully lead you to an idea of what you want your final piece to be. **Whatever it is; however, it needs to answer your initial question or be a relevant conclusion to your investigation.**

- ◇ Firstly you should ensure that you have reflected carefully upon all of your work so far. This reflection should be recorded as annotations and perhaps some quick sketches at this point may help you to develop your final piece ideas.
- ◇ You may want to write an evaluative paragraph or a mind map exploring the ideas you are considering as developing as your final piece(s).
- ◇ Your essay must be up to date as far as your practical work. This is important because your essay is a formal transcript of your reflections of your practical journey. In writing this, it will help you develop your ideas.
- ◇ You may want to consider a mood board of similar pieces created by different artists.
- ◇ Consider scale. What size do you want it to be and have you practiced working at this scale?
- ◇ What do you want it to be? A painting? Series of drawings? Set of photographs? Large sculpture? Set of small models? A print? An installation? Whatever you choose it must reflect on the work you have done in your investigation. There is no point in deciding to present a painting if you have not done any painting in your investigations. Look at the work on display—this may give you ideas of what has been done before.
- ◇ Consider the materials that are available to you. If the department does not have them, are you able to provide them for yourself? Discuss this with your teacher or the technician. Make sure you leave enough time as things may need to be ordered.
- ◇ Think carefully about the space that your work will be displayed in. Again discuss this with the Art staff.
- ◇ Create an annotated mock-up, sketch, working drawing of your final piece ideas. ◇ Finally, leave yourself enough time to make your final piece(s).
- ◇ When you have completed your final piece, include a photograph of it in your sketchbook and evaluate your final outcome. You should make sure that all your sketchbook is fully annotated and that you have included all relevant artist/photographer/designer links. All links included in your unit must also be mentioned in your essay and vice versa.



## Step 12—Conclude your essay. (AO1/3)

Summing up your findings or opinions and answering the question or reflecting on the statement made in the introduction

- It is now time to conclude your essay.
- You need to address the main focus that you identified in the introductory paragraph.

You should begin your conclusion by re-stating the focus of your written reflection, identify discoveries that you have made during your journey and end with a concluding statement about how your final piece/s address the focal point of your investigation for unit 1.

### Example 1

To conclude the project, I think my final piece was very successful due to its dramatic impact and the beauty of the flowers. I have tried to use unusual mediums and techniques to create a sculptural yet natural feel to the finished item. The 3-Dimensional the effect of each individual flower, the different textures created and the overall composition have created whimsical head and neck wear that would be suitable for, or adaptable as a costume, sculptural installation, fashion headwear or couture millinery. (Allanah Pearson-Harris 2014)

### Example 2

To conclude the unit a final piece was produced (fig. 34) which includes three portraits of the same sitter expressing different emotions to convey themselves in the painting.

Further inspiration from this composition was taken from Christian Hook through the execution of the paint exploiting movement. This brings life to both the portraits and the background creating dimensions in the piece. The decision was made to compose this as a final piece to make portraiture more contemporary. After producing two formal styles of portraiture, the past experimentation of facial expressions was now needed to be produced in paint. Whilst using the media of a bamboo stick and ink in the portrayal of facial expressions, in past experimentations, movement needed to be exploited through the media of paint, consequently bringing life to the piece.

**Email your final copy, including illustrations and Bibliography to your mentor.**

[eallen@budmouth-aspirations.org](mailto:eallen@budmouth-aspirations.org)

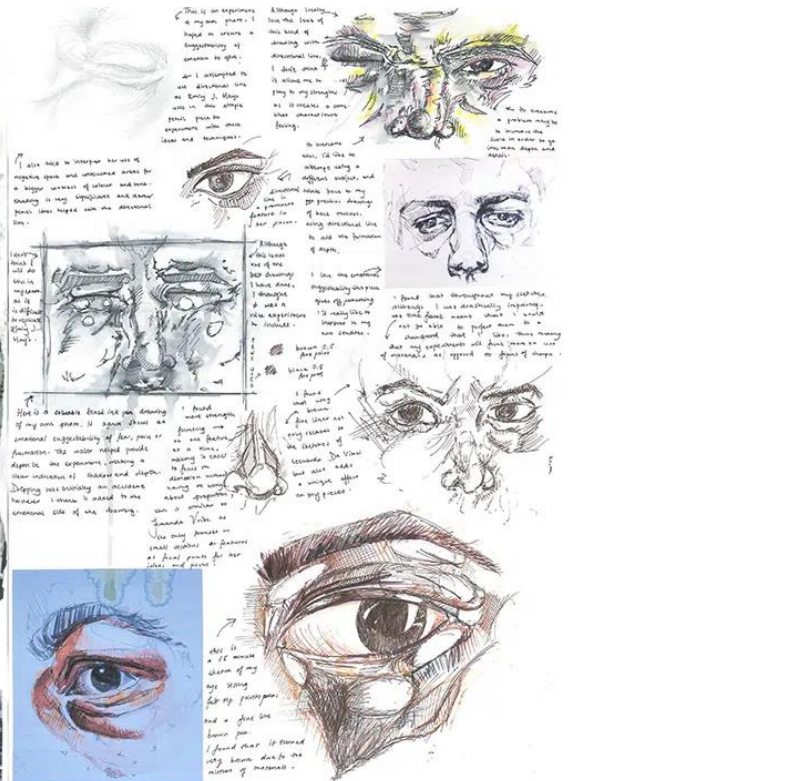
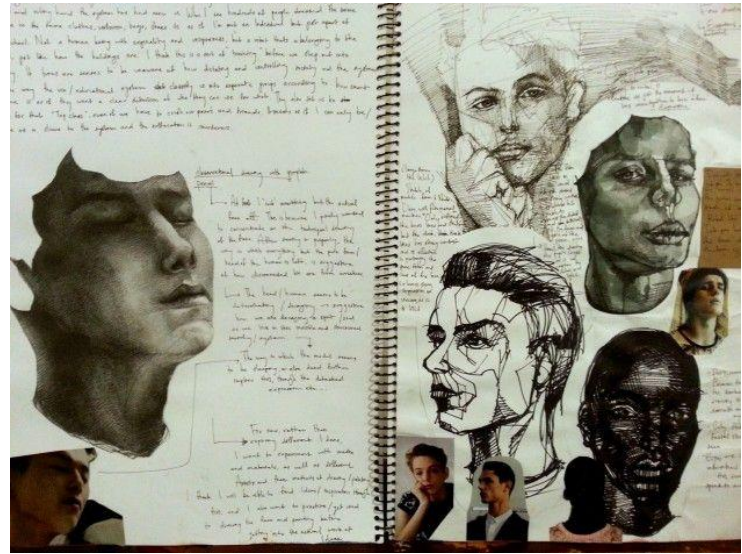
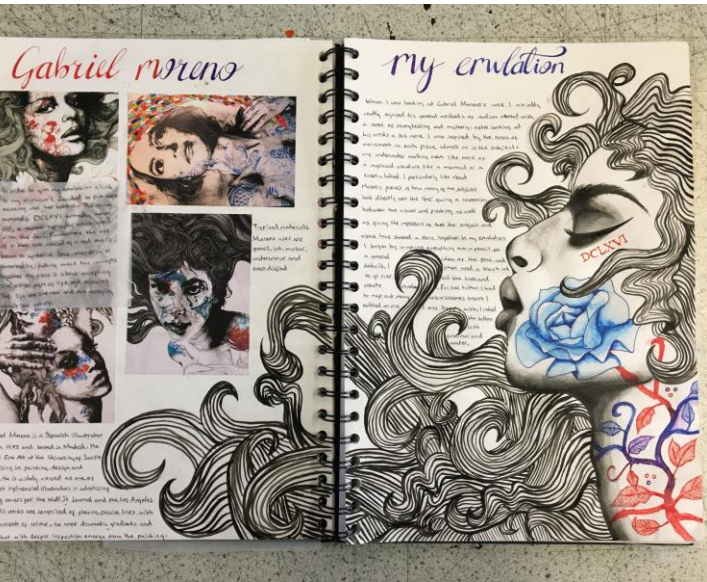
## A Level Assessment Objectives

Marks	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
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	<b>Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding</b>	<b>Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops</b>	<b>Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.</b>	<b>Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.</b>
24 Convincingly 23 Clearly 22 Adequately 21 Just	An exceptional ability to develop ideas through sustained investigations informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates exceptional analytical and critical understanding.	An exceptional ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, material, techniques and processes. Reviews and refines ideas in a confident and purposeful manner as work develops.	An exceptional ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions. Demonstrates an exceptional ability to reflect critically on work and progress.	An exceptional ability to present a personal and meaningful response. Demonstrates an exceptional ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.
20 Convincingly 19 Clearly 18 Adequately 17 Just	A confident and highly developed ability to develop ideas through sustained investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates confident and highly developed analytical and critical understanding.	A confident and highly developed ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes. Reviews and refines ideas in a confident manner as work develops.	A confident and highly developed ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions. Demonstrates a confident and highly developed ability to reflect critically on work and progress.	A confident and highly developed ability to present a personal and meaningful response. Demonstrates a highly developed ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.
16 Convincingly 15 Clearly 14 Adequately 13 Just	A consistent ability to develop ideas through sustained investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates consistent analytical and critical understanding.	A consistent ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes. Reviews and refines ideas with increasing confidence as work develops.	A consistent ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions. Demonstrates a consistent ability to reflect critically on work and progress.	A consistent ability to present a personal and meaningful response. Demonstrates a consistent ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.
12 Convincingly 11 Clearly 10 Adequately 9 Just	A reasonably consistent ability to develop ideas through sustained investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates reasonably consistent analytical and critical understanding.	A reasonably consistent ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and process. Reviews and refines ideas with a degree of success as work develops.	A reasonably consistent ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions. Demonstrates a reasonably consistent ability to reflect critically on work and progress.	A reasonably consistent ability to present a personal and meaningful response. Demonstrates a reasonably consistent ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.
8 Convincingly 7 Clearly 6 Adequately 5 Just	Some ability to develop ideas and sustain investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates some analytical and critical understanding.	Some ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes. Reviews and refines ideas with limited success as work develops.	Some ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions. Demonstrates some ability to reflect critically on work and progress.	Some ability to present a personal and meaningful response which is uneven. Demonstrates some ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.
4 Convincingly 3 Clearly 2 Adequately 1 Just	Minimal ability to develop ideas and sustain investigations, informed by context al and other sources. Demonstrates minimal analytical and critical understanding.	Minimal ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes. Minimal evidence of reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.	Minimal ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions. Demonstrates minimal ability to reflect critically on work and progress.	Minimal ability to present a personal and meaningful response, limited by a lack of skill and understanding. Demonstrates minimal ability to realise intentions and, where appropriate, make connections between visual and other elements.
<b>Comment</b>				

# Sketchbook Annotation Help Sheets



# Annotating A01 - Research

## Initial analysis of an artist's entire practice

- Why do you like the work of this artist? Is there an image, or period of their work, you like in particular? Why?
- What are the direct relations back to your own work or concept?
- How have they made their work? Using which materials?
- Using which stylistic approach? Using which tools? Were they effective? Why do you think this? Would you incorporate them into your work?
- Does the artist's context influence their work? When and where were they working? Did any major events occur during this period that might have affected their work? Are the events comparable to any events and contextual influences today?
- What is the focus of their work? Is it personal to them? Is it a wider political or philosophical comment? What is your evidence for this? Give specific and clear reasons. Does their focus influence your own?
- What do you think the artist wanted the viewer to think or feel? Do you think or feel this, or something different? Why? What do you think would change your emotional response to the artwork?
- Is there any symbolism within the artwork? What? Is this obvious or subtle? Does it change the meaning of the artwork to you? Why?
- What scale/shape is the work? Which colour palette/ tonal range/ textural effect/ patterns has the artist chosen? Why and what is its impact on the artwork?
- Where is your eye drawn to first? What do you think the artist wants you to focus on? Why? Is this important for conveying the meaning of the piece?
- Has the artist created a balanced work (symmetrical/asymmetrical) or an unbalanced work? Why is this? Does it fulfil a purpose?
- Does the content of the artist's work link to your area of study, or is it simply their technical style that you find inspiring? Explain specifically which areas.
- Are the materials they work using important to their practice? Have you tried using them yet?

## Comment on your copy of the artist's work

- Have you captured the work of the artist accurately? How? Where was it difficult to do this? Why, what challenges did you face??
- Did you select a section of the artist's work to copy, or did you try to reproduce a full artwork? Why did you select this specific section? Explain how it is relevant to your own work.
- Which materials did you use? How did you apply them? Is this effective? What size did you choose? Why and how is this relevant to your own work/ Justify this clearly to show you are looking at relevant sources.
- Did you manage to capture the quality of the artist's work that you liked? What was this? How? Will you incorporate it into your own

## Other questions to ask

- Have you made the work of artists more personal to you in the way you present your analysis and artist copy? How?
- What else has inspired you, aside from the work of artists? What about graphic design, architectural form, natural objects, poems or songs, literature, personal photographs and films – show that you are an inquisitive and innovative student by taking inspiration from a wide range of primary and secondary source material. Can you find links? Have others been inspired by similar things?
- Are there any deeper links between you and the artist which connect you more closely? Any other aspects of your work, personal life or conceptual ideas?

## Finally

Include a piece of further info or insight on the artist such as; Newspaper cuttings, Book pages, Exhibition leaflets or Quotes. This demonstrates the depth of your research and that you are delving deeply into the context surrounding their work.

# Annotating A02 - Experiment and refine

## Explaining your initial experiments

- Why did you choose to experiment with this material? Have you been inspired by an artist's use of it? Is it particularly well matched to your subject? Why is this? Are there other ways you could experiment further and use the material to your benefit?
- What did you enjoy most about the materials that you used? Why was this? Expand on their effectiveness. What did you choose to work on? Paper? Canvas? Was this important? Do you think it impacted your outcomes in any way?
- Were you limited by the materials available? Did you have to make any judgements about what material to use in its stead? Do you think this affected your outcome, or did you have everything you needed to experiment exactly as you wished?
- Did you achieve the textural qualities you were hoping for? Why? Were there specific processes and techniques which you had to adopt/attempt/invent to do this?
- Did you achieve the colour qualities you were hoping for? Why? How challenging was this? Was it as successful as you intended? Why do you feel this was?
- Did you achieve the tonal qualities you were hoping for? Why? What did you have to do to attain this?
- Did you achieve the shapes or forms you were hoping for? Why? Were there any processes you used to assist in this?
- What size did you work at? Was this important? Would the material act differently on a much larger/smaller scale? Would you like to attempt this on a different scale? How do you think this might impact the outcome?
- Did you use a methodical approach, carefully trying the material in different ways, or did you dive in and use a tacit approach, trusting your instincts? Do you think your approach resulted in any interesting discoveries?
- Do you intend on pushing your experiments further? How might you do this? What else do you think you might discover/realise? If you were to keep experimenting how do you think it might impact your project?

## Evaluating the experiments

- What have you learned from undertaking this experiment?
- How has this learning affected your understanding of art?
- Do you think it has been successful? What will you do differently next time? What results do you think you might encounter?
- Do you need to try the same thing again, perhaps to improve your technical approach, or to try a subtly different approach, or to start using the knowledge you gained during the process of creating this experiment?
- How has this experiment changed/reinforced your ideas about what to use in your artworks? What are those changes? How might this impact the development of your work?
- Did you manage to match what you were expecting, or did something unexpected occur? Was this positive or negative?
- What is next for your work? Ensure you explain clearly how your experiments are building your understanding of both other artists work as well as your own?

## Finally

- Do you think you have managed to perfectly match the methods of the artists who inspire you? Is this important? If so or if not explain clearly.
- Have you shown genuine intent to improve and refine your technical approach? How? Has it been successful? If so or if not explain why you think this is?
- Have you shown that you are an inquisitive student? How? What new ideas or concepts have emerged from this exploration? How is your work showing that you are improving and refining your skills? Can you give any specific examples? How are you pushing yourself to actively progress your abilities? How might you push yourself next?

# Annotating A03 – Annotate and draw

## Explaining and justifying your recording

- Why did you choose to include this? What do you like about it? Is it the aesthetics, or the concept? How does it relate to your own? Has it influenced your own way of thinking?
- How is it relevant to your idea? Has it helped you to develop or refine your idea further?
- How did you record it? What materials, technologies or process did you use?
- Is it recorded from direct observations (first-hand), is it copied from somewhere else (second-hand), or is a secondary source (made by somebody else)?
- If you made it, are you happy with it and why? How long did it take to record? Did you record it 'en plein air' (on location) or in the studio? Did this impact the outcome? Why and how might it have done this?
- Why did you choose the materials you did? Does this relate to the recording itself or the location of the recording?
- If you found it, where did you find it? Was context important? Who is the intended audience?
- If you found it, who is it by? When was it made? Does it have an important context behind it?
- Where and when did you encounter it? When did you have the idea to record this? What triggered it?
- Is there any interesting story, anecdote, or quote to accompany the visual imagery recorded?
- What decisions did you need to make whilst making these recordings?
- Did those decisions impact the way you viewed the subject matter? Why was this?
- If you were to gather further recordings of the same subject matter what do you think you would do differently? Why would this be?

## Reflecting on your recording

- What links could you make between this imagery and earlier work in your project?
- Does it link via composition, shape, colour, balance, symmetry, subject matter or any other way?
- How is it relevant to your project title? How is it relevant to the other things you have included? Is it directly relevant to an artist? Has that artist influenced you already? How do you think they might influence your work now?
- What happens next? Will you use this recording as a learning experience and move on, or will you reuse the imagery, extend the focus or repeat the exercise? How might this impact the direction of your work?
- What have you learned by undertaking this recording? Did it introduce you to something new, or has it been made using a technique you are very comfortable and confident with?
- Do you feel you have more insight into the recordings you made now? Would this impact any future plans to make more recordings of the same subject matter? How might it do this?

## Finally

- Have you recorded information in a broad variety of formats (observational drawing/photographs/found objects or images/descriptive writing/diagrams)? If not why not? Have you decided that a certain format is more relevant to your work and concepts? Why would this be?
- Have you included both primary and secondary source material, as well as first-hand and second-hand recording? If not why? Do any of the different types of source materials have different strengths or weaknesses regarding your project?
- Always ask yourself WHY you are recording something – it may not be obvious and that is fine, but if it is, record this reason too.
- You should show that your recordings are targeted and focused, even when you are not sure what you might discover. Ensure that you are showing your ability to systematically move through a concept and follow relevant paths and disregard irrelevant ones.

# Annotating A04 – Final piece and book

## **Demonstrating critical understanding of your outcome**

- What do you think is the most powerful feature of your image? Why do you think this? What evidence and conjecture do you have to reinforce your opinion?
- What do you think is the most original feature of your image? Why? How have you decided this? Have you weighed up which aspects of your project are influenced by other artists and which are purely developments of your own experiments and explorations?
- Where could you have been technically more capable? How? Why weren't you what challenges did you face and how did you decide to adapt to them?
- Where might your concept have been better expressed? How? Why wasn't it? What might you do to adapt your ideas moving forwards? How might this change the path of your project?

## **Did you realise your intentions?**

- Have you managed to perfectly fulfil your intentions in the final outcome? Does it look as you expected it to when you first imagined it? If not why not? Were there issues which you encountered that you didn't expect? Give details on how they changed your expected outcome.
- In what ways does it vary from your initial intentions? Did you change your approach whilst making it? What triggered this change? Was it by choice or necessity? Why was this? Explain giving specific reasons and explanations?
- Were you satisfied with the outcome of your intentions? Was it better than your original intention? What was different and why do you feel that was?
- Did you feel you were prepared enough when you started making? Could you have done anything else to make the production of your artwork easier?
- How did you envisage the work being presented or displayed? Did this happen? Could you still improve the way it is displayed? Does it need to be photographed? Is there a specific environment that this should be done in to achieve the best results?

## **Making connections between your outcome and your influences**

- Do you think you can see the influences of the artists that you studied in the final imagery? In what ways are they still present in your work and decision making? Have they influenced you in ways you were not expecting?
- Can you make direct links between outcomes and recordings? Can you pinpoint a drawing or scribbled idea which started the journey towards a polished and finalised outcome? Did you develop this appropriately as your concept developed? Could you develop another outcome which would learn from the first and improve upon it?
- Have you produced more than one outcome? If so is there a relationship between these pieces? Do they show development of practical and conceptual skills? How do they do this?
- Can you make any connections between your images and yourself or your life? Give specific examples. It is useful to be able to link your artwork to the influences and contextual forces within your own life, this might help to make your own understanding of your work profoundly clearer.

# Artist research page

## How to analyse an individual artwork

Analysing an artist's work means closely studying the elements that make up an artwork, and making informed judgements about the work. You can show your understanding by answering questions which critically analyse the work.

## How to complete an artist research page

- Introduce the artist using a clear page title (e.g. Frida Kahlo: Artist Study).
- Include at least 6+ images of the artist's work (Ensure at least 1 or 2 are at least A5 in size as most of the page should be dominated by artwork images not writing).
- Include an informative biography covering relevant information (one paragraph is suffice).
- Discuss WHAT the artist makes, discuss WHY they make it and discuss HOW they make it.
- You must include your own opinions on their work and link them closely to your project.
- Discuss how their influence might impact your intentions.
- Copy a section of at least one of their artworks (use the same/or similar medium to the artist where possible to show that you are linking to their practical processes/techniques).
- Include a piece of further info or insight on the artist such as; Newspaper cuttings, Book pages, Exhibition leaflets or Quotes. This demonstrates the depth of your research and that you are delving deeply into the context surrounding their work.

## Context

This refers to how the work relates to a particular time, place, culture and society in which it was produced.

- When was it made? Where was it made? Who made it?
- Who was the work made for?
- What do you know about the artist?
- How does the work relate to other art of the time?
- Does the work relate to the social or political history of the time?
- Can you link it to other arts of the period, such as film, music or literature?
- Does the work relate to other areas of knowledge, such as science or geography?
- Does the work reflect events in the life of the artist at that point in time?
- Is he work a part of a larger series/body of artwork from the time?
- Does it have any comparisons to the contemporary context which we live?

# Artist research page

## Content

The content is the subject of a piece of work and what it contains within it.

- What is it? What is it about? What is happening?
- Is it a portrait? A landscape? Abstract? Genre painting? Or telling a story?
- Is it from the Artist's mind or is it based on something they have experienced?
- What does the work represent is there a key message?
- The title - what does the artist call the work? Does it help convey the meaning of the artwork?
- Does the title change the way we see the work? Does it influence your opinion about the artwork?
- Is it a realistic depiction? Or is it distorted by something, painting style, subjective perspective, or your preconceptions?
- Have any parts been exaggerated or distorted? If so, why might this be? Does it influence your understanding of the artwork?
- What is the theme of the work? Does it relate to what you already know about the context of the artwork?

## Form

What is the medium of the work?

- What colours does the artist use? Why? How is colour organised?
- What kind of shapes or forms can you find?
- Are the main shapes organic or geometric?
- Is the image constructed diagonally, vertically or horizontally? Where is your eye first drawn to?
- Does the composition use the rules of thirds or the golden ratio?
- What kind of marks or techniques does the artist use? Is it important to the artwork and does this relate to your use of the same/similar medium?
- What is the surface like?
- What kinds of textures can you see?
- How big is the work?

## Process

Looking at process means studying how the work was made and what techniques were used

- What materials and tools were used to make the piece?
- What do you think was the effectiveness of these materials and tools?
- What is the evidence for this? Can you visibly see this in the artwork? Describe in detail.
- Are there any clues as to how the work developed? If not, what was the developmental process?
- What would you personally do differently to the artist regarding their use of processes and techniques?

## Mood

Mood means looking at how the artist has created a certain atmosphere or feeling within the artwork and how.

- How does the work make you feel? Would you like your own artwork to create similar atmospheres?
- Why do you think you feel like this? Explain what specific aspects are contributing to this feeling.
- Does the colour, texture, form or theme of the work affect your mood or your thoughts about the artwork? Does the work create an atmosphere which you can sense from the artwork? If so what is it about the artwork which draws you to it?



## Useful links:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/frenchie7699/>

<https://www.studentartguide.com/articles/art-sketchbook-ideas>

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/as-and-a-level/art-and-design>

<https://wordart.com/>

<https://worditout.com/>

[www.photographymad.com](http://www.photographymad.com)

[www.ruleofthirdsphotography.com](http://www.ruleofthirdsphotography.com)

[www.digital-photography-school.com](http://www.digital-photography-school.com)

[www.colorpilot.com](http://www.colorpilot.com)

[www.nonphotography.com](http://www.nonphotography.com)

[www.fodors.com](http://www.fodors.com)

[www.steves-digicams.com](http://www.steves-digicams.com)

[www.google.co.uk/images](http://www.google.co.uk/images)

[www.cube.org.uk](http://www.cube.org.uk)

[www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)

[www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk](http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk)

[www.nationalgallery.co.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.co.uk)

[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)

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