

A guide to AQA  
GCSE Fine Art



# Welcome to GCSE Fine art

## Introduction to the course

You will be following the **AQA GCSE Art and Design (Fine Art) specification**.

Fine art is all about your **skill, creativity and imagination**. You will create work in response to project themes and different kinds of inspirational starting points. Although you will all begin from the same starting point you will **develop your own unique thoughts and ideas** to explore. Key to being successful at GCSE Art is your ability to **gather first hand (or primary) research**.

When You receive a project starting point the first step in responding will involve gathering in-depth research. This could be done in a number of different ways. **Drawing, photography and writing** are the most obvious but you can discuss other methods with your teacher.

You must make **connections with the work of other artists** from different times, places and cultures. The 'story of art' is very much a living and ongoing thing. There are countless artists alive and working today, shaping the world that we see and experience around us. It is important to show in your work that you have investigated contemporary and historical artists who share similar ideas, or ways of working, to your own. This process might be informed by visits to galleries, exhibitions and museums along with meeting practising artists.

From your research, you will begin to **experiment** with and **explore** the potential of different **techniques, materials and processes**. This could include traditional fine art practice such as drawing and painting. However, you will be encouraged to **be as experimental as possible**, so things like **3D making, digital media, photography, printmaking and mixed media** could all become part of your work. The work that you build up will form the basis for a final piece that sums up your project. This will assess you're ability to bring all your thoughts together and **express your ideas in response** to the original starting point or project theme.

## AQA GCSE Art Specification

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206/subject-content/fine-art>

## Course Overview Assessment Objectives

### Component 1: Coursework 60% of final mark Food & Identity

During the course you will build up a portfolio of work that is carefully selected and thoughtfully presented. This will include two extended projects responding to a theme in an in-depth way. Evidence will take the form of sketchbooks, development pages and test pieces. Projects will be concluded by a final piece outcome, usually taking the form of a larger scale artwork. Work might painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, digital media and 3D making

### Assessment Objectives

AO1 = 25% -

Artist research AO2 = 25% -

Experimentation of materials and development AO3 = 25% -

Recording (drawing, painting, sculpture, collage etc) AO4 = 25% - Outcome (final Piece) Students are marked out of 24 for each assessment objective, meaning that there will be a total of 96 marks available for each unit

**AO1** EXPLORE  
BEGIN TO LINK A THEME TO YOUR CHOSEN ARTISTS WORK  
ANNOTATE  
THEME IMAGES  
WRITTEN ANALYSIS  
LINK ARTISTS WORK TO IDEAS AND ARTWORK  
ARTISTS  
RESEARCH

**AO2** EXPERIMENT  
LINKING TECHNIQUES TO ARTISTS AND THEMES  
WITH A RANGE OF MEDIA  
TEXTILES  
CLAY  
DRAWINGS  
MIXED MEDIA  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
OIL PASTEL  
WATERCOLOUR  
PEN AND INK

**AO3** IDEAS  
IDEAS LINKING TO ARTISTS WORK  
OBSERVATIONAL  
DRAWINGS  
ALL ARTWORK  
LINKING TOGETHER  
PLANS, DESIGNS  
IN A RANGE OF DIFFERENT MEDIA  
PLANS  
EXPLANATIONS  
ANNOTATION

**AO4** FINAL  
MEANINGFUL PIECE OF WORK  
INFORMED SHOW UNDERSTANDING  
RESPONSE LINKS  
LINK BETWEEN VISUALS AND ARTISTS TO ARTISTS WORK  
PRESENTATION  
RELEVANT

# Assessment

The AQA exam board specification describes the different final assessment grades as showing evidence of the following:

## Grade 7 to 9

Candidates creatively develop and explore ideas through investigations. They sustain related activity perceptively and effectively analyse and evaluate images, artefacts and products. Responses, interpretations and subsequent developments are thoughtfully informed by an understanding of culture and context. They thoughtfully develop and refine their ideas through experimentation, confidently manipulating and exploiting a wide range of relevant resources, media, material, techniques and processes. They combine their knowledge, skills and understanding in resourceful, discriminating and purposeful ways. Significant relationships are established between process and product through continuing evaluation, planning and modification as their work progresses. They sensitively and skilfully record ideas and interpret observations and experiences. They present imaginative and personal responses, communicating the results of thorough research and enquiry in appropriate forms that clearly relate to and facilitate the realisation of intentions. They make perceptive and informed connections between personal lines of enquiry and the work of others

## Grade 4 to 6

Candidates effectively develop and explore ideas through considered investigations. They analyse and evaluate images, artefacts and products with a clear sense of purpose. They demonstrate a suitably broad understanding of context and culture, which inform developing responses. They refine their ideas and select and employ a range of resources, media, material, techniques and processes appropriately. They combine their knowledge, skills and understanding in a generally appropriate and accomplished manner. They understand the relationship between process and product, and demonstrate growing ability to review, modify and refine their work as it progresses. They demonstrate the necessary skills to effectively record and respond to observations and experiences. They present ideas and the results of their research and enquiry competently in forms that are consistent with intentions. They make connections with the work of others, which inform personal responses and support the realisation of intentions.





# Assessment Criteria Grid

## Assessment Objective 1

**Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources**

AO1 is about developing ideas through investigations in your sketchbook; from a starting theme to your final artwork. You need to make clear links in your work to artists/designers/ craftspeople who have explored similar ideas or ways of working.

This is done through artist research, mood boards, sketches and studies related to your ideas. This will develop your awareness of how people have made art in different times, places and cultures. Original and exciting work can take inspiration from all sorts of different



## Assessment Objective 2

**Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, AO1 materials, techniques and processes**

AO2 is how you refine (improve) and explore your ideas relating to the theme in your artwork.

You need to show that you can develop ideas by exploring different ways of working. Types of drawing might involve working in pencil, biro, fine liner applying hatching, scumbling and stippling. Types of painting might involve smooth/flat brush-marks or rough/expressive.

Experimentation with different art mediums, techniques and process is an important process for artists.





### Assessment Objective 3

#### Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses

Inspiration and visual information needs to be taken from the visual world around you.

It is impossible to underestimate the importance of recording from direct observation of primary sources when researching projects and ideas. Drawing, photography and writing are key to all this.

Good quality observational studies (relevant to your project idea!) can make the difference between a high and a low grade.



### Assessment Objective 4

#### Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language

AO4 is about creating a personal piece of art in response to your ideas through out your sketchbook. **Final pieces** are the grand finale of your project. They are only as good as the time, quality and richness of effort that you have put into the other AOs. An outcome needs to reflect the exciting culmination of all your ideas and research. **Spend time planning and thinking** about your outcome. As always record this in your sketchbook (the more visual the better)

# Assessment

At the start of each project you will be given a project sheet. This will provide a starting point or theme for you to begin working from. It will also include an overview identifying what evidence you need to produce to successfully meet the assessment objectives. An important part of it will be a week-by-week curriculum plan giving a structure for what needs to be done in lesson time and for homework. Each lesson you will have a discussion with your teacher to discuss how your work is progressing and identify progression targets. Formative assessment at key points in your project will enable you to receive feedback about your work and make improvements and refinements in order to meet or exceed your target grade. At the end of the course you will submit all of your coursework for assessment by your teacher, it will then be moderated within the school and then seen again by a visiting moderator from AQA.

Page	Assessment Objective	Deadline Sept 24
Mind Map	A01	
Personal Identity Collage	A01/A02	
All about 'Me' page	A01	
Francis Bacon artist research	A01/A02	
Take a series of photos – add a sense of drama/change faces	A03	
Francis Bacon Photography	A01/A02	
HWK	A01	
Mark Powell artist research	A02	
Workshop vintage backgrounds	A01	
Mark Powell development A3	A01	
David Hockney artist research		
David Hockney response homework	A02	
David Hockney photomontage	A01	
Picasso artist research	A01/A02	
Picasso development A3	A02	
Split portrait	A02	
Coffee portrait	A02	
Colour pencil study – zoomed in	A02	
Lettered portrait	A02	
Continuous line portrait	A02	
Oil pastel mono print portrait	A02	
Mono print portrait	A02	
Watercolour	A02	
X3 design ideas	A02	
Final idea	A02	

## GSCE ART Annotation

<b>Shape, form, space</b> Closed Open Distorted Flat Organic Deep Flat Positive Negative Foreground Background Composition Curvaceous Elongated Large Small 2D 3D	<b>Tone</b> Bright Dark Faded Smooth Harsh Contrasting Intense Sombre Grey Strong Powerful Feint Light Medium Dark Dramatic Large Small	<b>Pattern and Texture</b> Repeated Uniform Geometric Random Symmetrical Soft Irregular Coarse Bold Uneven Bumpy Rough Smooth Uneven Spiky Broken Furry Fine Flat Grid	<b>Line</b> Fluent Free Rough Controlled Powerful Strong Geometric Angular Light Delicate Flowing Simple Thick Thin Horizontal Broken Interrupted Rounded Overlapping Broken Faint	<b>Colour</b> Bright Bold Primary Secondary Tertiary Radiant Dull Vivid Contrasting Deep Monochrome Harmonious Complementary Natural Earthy Subtle Pale Cool Warm Saturated Luminous Strong
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Basic, simple, solid, loud, quiet, bright, realistic, stylised, observed, busy, vibrant, strange, interesting, balanced, lively, negative, recognisable, abstract, tactile, meaningful, symbolic, depressing, unique, emotive, hidden, textural, dynamic, disturbed, sophisticated, puzzling, optimistic, powerful, intentional, concealed, subtle.

### Example

I have created this piece using watercolours, coloured pencil and oil pastel. I have learnt how to blend the watercolours to show different tones and use oil pastels to show the darkest tones and add texture. The piece shows strong shapes and vivid colours. I have added coloured pencils to show some areas in more detail and focus. The artist Georgia O'Keeffe has inspired my piece. In her work she uses bright, bold colours to show close up views of flowers with a range of dark to light tones. I aim to now further develop my piece by using other materials. I could do this by experimenting with block prints on watercolour back grounds or possibly try painting onto fabric to then stitch into to show more detail.

**REMEMBER to check your...  
Spellings, Grammar and  
Punctuation**

### Sentence Starter Help

**Try thinking of your own too**

- In this piece I have...
- The materials I have used are...
- The technique I have used is...
- Through working in this way I have learnt how to...
- I have shown... in the style of...
- This piece could develop further by including...
- The artist..... has influenced my designs because...
- To develop this piece further I could...
- I think using... worked really well because...
- I am particularly pleased with... and I now aim to...

**A01** EXPLORE  
BEGIN TO LINK A  
**THEME IMAGES**  
TO YOUR CHOSEN ARTISTS WORK  
WRITTEN ANALYSIS  
LINK ARTISTS WORK TO  
IDEAS AND ARTWORK  
**RESEARCH**

**A02** EXPERIMENT  
WITH A  
**RANGE**  
LINKING TECHNIQUES  
TO ARTISTS  
AND THEMES  
**TEXTILES OF MEDIA**  
CLAY MIXED MEDIA  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
DEN AND INK  
**WATER COLOUR**

**A03** IDEAS  
IDEAS LINKING TO  
ARTISTS WORK  
ALL ARTWORK  
LINKING TOGETHER  
**PLANS, DESIGNS**  
IN A RANGE OF  
OBSERVATIONAL  
**DRAWINGS**  
**PLANS**  
EXPLANATIONS

**A04** FINAL  
MEANINGFUL PIECE OF WORK  
INFORMED SHOW UNDERSTANDING  
**RESPONSE LINKS**  
LINK BETWEEN TO ARTISTS WORK



## Analysis framework

### 1. Introduction

- Introduce the artist.
- Some relevant background information.
- Name and date of a piece you find inspiring.

### 2. Describe

- What can you see?
- How has the piece been arranged?
- Is there a focal point?
- Is there a style to their work?

### 3. Process

- How was the artwork made?
- What materials have been used to create this piece?
- What skill has the artist used to create this piece? (digital, painted, collaged, drawn etc.)

### 4. Mood

- How does the work affect the viewer?
- Does it convey meaning or feeling? Give an example of where you see this.
- Why have they made this piece? What are they trying to communicate?
- Can you find a quote to back up this argument?

### 5. Connection

- How is the artist relevant to your work?
- How will you use them to inspire your ideas?
- Will use use materials similar to theirs? Or is it their concept that interests you?
- What response to you intend to make? Using what primary image?

### Sentence starters

The artist I have chosen to investigate is.....

The piece I am particularly interested in is.....

In this piece I can see..... They have composed this by..... The focal point being.....

(Artist surname) has made this (title) by..... Using..... They have developed use of..... within the piece.

It has a direct impact on the viewer

because..... And conveys the meaning

of..... I feel (artist surname) made this to communicate.....

It is relevant to my theme because..... And will inspire my ideas.....



# Scheme of Learning- Long Term Planning

## Art Key Stage 4

	<b>TERM 1</b>	<b>TERM 2</b>	<b>TERM 3</b>
<b>KS4</b>  <b>YEAR 10</b>	<p><b><u>Identity Project</u></b></p> <p>This project aims to explore the concept of identity through various artistic mediums and techniques. Students will investigate how personal, cultural, and social identities can be expressed and interpreted through art. They will complete a final piece that showcases their understanding and personal expression of identity.</p>	<p><b><u>Natural Forms Project</u></b></p> <p>This project aims to investigate the beauty and complexity of natural forms through various artistic mediums and techniques. Students will explore organic shapes, textures, and patterns found in nature, and translate their observations into creative artworks. They will complete a final piece that reflects their understanding and appreciation of natural forms</p>	
<b>KS4</b>  <b>YEAR 11</b>	<p><b><u>Coursework Review</u></b></p> <p>During this term students will be given one-to-one tutorial time with their Identity and Natural Forms projects. This will be an opportunity for students to expand and refine their previous sketchbook work to the best of their ability.</p>	<p><b><u>Externally Set Test—Public exams</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Title chosen from exam paper</i></b></p> <p>Students have the choice of seven different project themes set by the exam board, they will then respond to this theme. Their work will be marked according to how well they evidence the 4 Assessment objectives.</p> <p>They will produce an outcome within their 10-hour exam. This exam will take place over two days.</p>	

# Vocabulary

To fully understand and successfully achieve on your GCSE Art course you will need to be familiar with these specialist words and be able to explain their meaning:

**2D Formal Elements:** Keywords that can be applied and used to describe art and design such as drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, photography and graphics (Line/Tone/Texture/Shape/Pattern).

**3D Formal Elements:** Keywords that can be applied and used to describe art and design such as sculpture, furniture, architecture and millinery (Structure/Form/Volume/Balance/

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**Composition:** How the elements of art (like shapes, colours, and objects) are arranged in a piece of art to create a balanced or interesting picture.

**Contrast:** The difference between two things, such as light vs. dark colours or smooth vs. rough textures, that makes parts of the artwork stand out.

**Texture:** How something feels or looks like it would feel. For example, rough, smooth, soft, or hard.

**Tone:** How light or dark a colour is. Adding white makes a colour lighter (tint), and adding black makes it darker (shade).

**Perspective:** A technique that makes objects in a picture look like they are close or far away, creating a 3D effect on a flat surface.

**Form:** A three-dimensional shape that has height, width, and depth, like a cube or sphere, often seen in sculptures or 3D drawings.

**Proportion:** The size relationship between different parts of an artwork, like how big a person's head is compared to their body.

**Hue:** Another word for "colour," referring to the different shades like red, blue, yellow, etc.

**Abstract:** Art that doesn't look like real life, often made up of shapes, lines, or colours that represent an idea or feeling rather than something realistic.

**Realism:** Art that aims to show things as they really look in real life, with lots of details.

**Symmetry:** When one side of an artwork looks the same as the other, like a mirror image.

**Medium:** The materials or tools used to make an artwork, like paint, pencil, clay, or digital tools.

**Line:** A continuous mark made on a surface by a moving point. Lines can be straight, curved, thick, or thin and are often used to define shapes.

**Balance:** The way different parts of an artwork are arranged to create stability or harmony. Symmetrical balance is equal on both sides, while asymmetrical balance is uneven but still feels balanced.

**Pattern:** A repeated decorative design or sequence of shapes, colours, or lines that creates a consistent visual effect.

**Focal Point:** The area in a piece of art that grabs the most attention. It's where your eyes are drawn first.

**Movement:** How an artist guides the viewer's eyes through a piece of art, making certain elements seem like they're in motion or leading you from one part to another.

**Space:** The area around, between, or within objects in a piece of art. Space can be used to show depth and distance or to give the artwork breathing room.

**Horizon Line:** The line in a picture that represents where the earth and sky meet. It helps show perspective and distance.

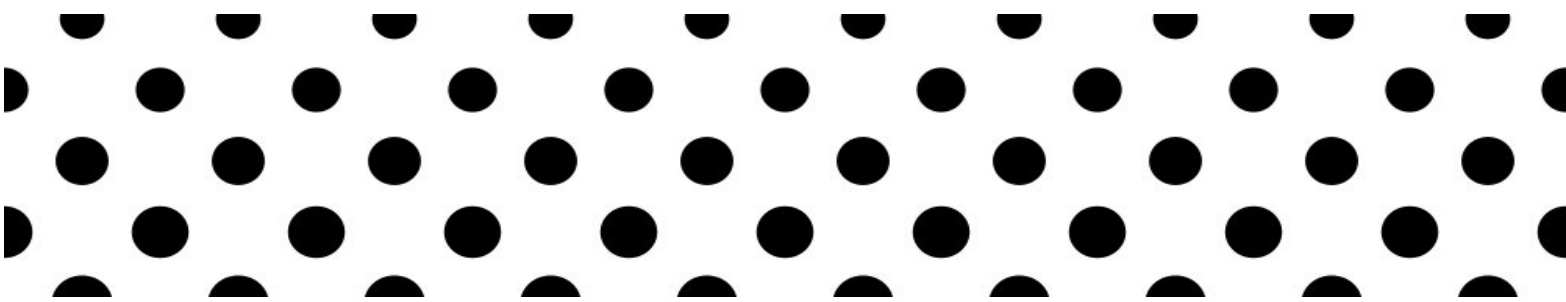
**Foreground:** The part of an artwork that is closest to the viewer, often the most detailed.

**Background:** The area of an artwork that is furthest from the viewer, often less detailed than the foreground and middle ground.

**Saturation:** How intense or pure a colour is. A highly saturated colour is bright, while a less saturated colour looks faded or dull.

**Still Life:** A type of artwork that shows objects like flowers, fruits, or everyday items arranged in a way that makes an interesting composition.

**Sketch:** A quick, rough drawing used to capture basic ideas or shapes. Sketches are often used as plans for more detailed artwork.





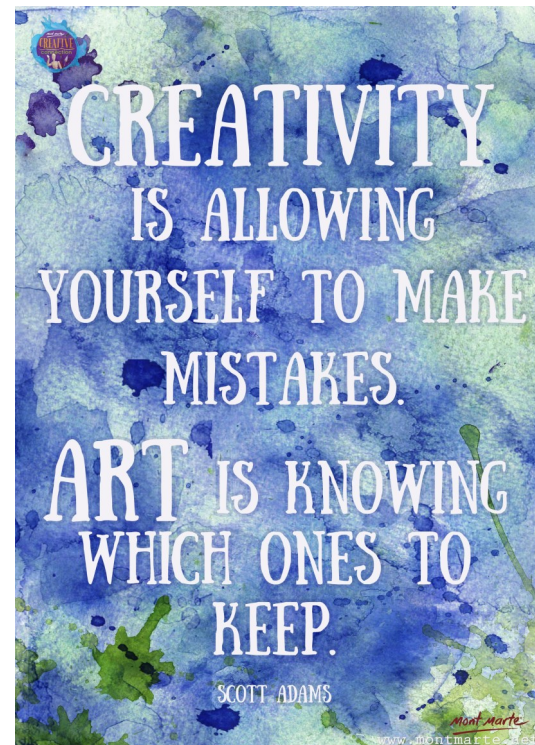
## Rules and Expectations in GCSE Fine Art

Do not be afraid of making mistakes  
this is a vital part of developing as an artist.

Ask if your parent or carer can take you to see an art gallery or exhibition in your own time at least once per term. Living in London we are lucky enough to have a large number of art galleries that are free to visit.

**Weekly homework needs to be completed on time. It is important in Art that you keep on top of the deadline otherwise your workload snowballs and it is difficult to catch up.**  
**1 Hour per week minimum**

**ART HAS**  
THE ROLE IN EDUCATION  
OF HELPING CHILDREN  
BECOME LIKE THEMSELVES  
INSTEAD OF MORE  
LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.  
-SYDNEY GUREWITZ CLEMENS



Keep every piece of work that you do even if you are unhappy with it and have started again.  
Pieces such as this can be used to demonstrate experimentation and ideas development earning you valuable assessment marks.

### CLASSROOM

Tidy up and clear away properly after you have finished working in the art room. If we do not look after the art resources and facilities properly then we won't be able to produce high standard work.

**Look after your sketchbooks taking a personal pride in how they are presented. Do not rip out any pages.**

## Useful Resources

If you want to succeed and achieve good grades on your GCSE Art course you need to visit galleries, museums and exhibitions on a regular basis. Living near London you are lucky enough to have some of the world's most famous galleries right on your step and many of them are FREE to visit! Harlow has some great local FREE galleries too!

- The National Gallery <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/>
- The National Portrait Gallery <http://www.npg.org.uk/>
- The Victoria and Albert Museum <http://www.vam.ac.uk/>
- The British Museum <http://www.britishmuseum.org/>
- The Design Museum <http://designmuseum.org/>
- The Natural History Museum <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/>
- The Science Museum <http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/>
- The Wallace Collection <http://www.wallacecollection.org>
- Tate Modern <http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern>
- Tate Britain <http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-britain>

