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# Art and Design Curriculum Intent

**GCSE Year 11**

The GCSE Art & Design curriculum provides students with opportunities to develop the creative, technical, and critical skills required to produce independent and personal artwork. Through the study of a wide range of artists, designers, photographers, and craftspeople, students gain an understanding of how visual language can communicate ideas, experiences, and perspectives.

Students are encouraged to observe and interpret the world around them from an artistic viewpoint, developing creativity, curiosity, and confidence in their own visual responses. The curriculum promotes experimentation with a variety of materials, techniques, and processes, enabling students to refine their skills and discover their individual strengths and interests.

A key focus of the course is the development of reflective and analytical thinking. Students are expected to challenge themselves through both practical and written work, evaluating and refining their ideas throughout the creative process. Progress is measured holistically through the assessment objectives, which recognise students' ability to develop ideas, explore and experiment with media, record observations, and present meaningful personal outcomes.

GCSE pathways are available in both Art & Design and Photography, allowing students to pursue their creative interests while preparing for further study and future careers within the creative industries.

**Terms 1 and 2**
Topic

## Identity: Coursework Completion and Mock Examination

### Big Picture
*What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?*

The Identity enquiry provides students with the opportunity to apply the technical skills, creative confidence and independent working practices developed throughout Year 10 to a more personal and conceptually challenging theme. Students investigate how artists explore identity through portraiture, symbolism, typography, sculpture and mixed media, developing increasingly individual responses that reflect their own experiences, values and perspectives.

Working with greater independence, students complete the final stages of Component 1 (Portfolio) by producing a sustained body of coursework supported by contextual research, practical experimentation and critical evaluation. The enquiry culminates in a two-day mock examination, allowing students to experience the demands of the GCSE examination process whilst refining the skills required for the externally set assignment later in the year.

### Zoom In
*What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?*

The enquiry begins by introducing the broad concept of Identity, encouraging students to explore how artists communicate ideas surrounding personality, memory, culture, relationships, belonging and self-expression. Students strengthen their substantive knowledge through investigating a range of contemporary and historical artists whose work explores identity from different perspectives. The enquiry provides opportunities for students to study practitioners such as Barbara Kruger,

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Antony Gormley and other artists selected to reflect students' own developing themes and personal interests. Teacher modelling explicitly demonstrates how successful artists move beyond recording appearances to communicate deeper meaning through symbolism, composition, text, scale and material choices. Students investigate specialist vocabulary including identity, symbolism, conceptual art, appropriation, juxtaposition, typography, narrative, metaphor, composition, personal response, intention and interpretation, applying this language confidently through annotation, discussion and evaluation.

Throughout the enquiry, students further strengthen their disciplinary knowledge by planning and managing increasingly independent investigations. Sketchbooks continue to function as professional working journals, documenting artist research, observational recording, practical experimentation, annotation and reflective evaluation. Students are expected to make purposeful decisions about media, composition and artistic influences, selecting approaches that best communicate their own creative intentions.

Teacher support becomes increasingly personalised through tutorials and individual feedback rather than whole-class direction. Students continually evaluate their progress against the AQA Assessment Objectives, revisiting and refining work where necessary to strengthen the quality and coherence of their portfolio. Structured critique and professional dialogue continue developing students' oracy, enabling them to confidently explain artistic decisions, justify experimentation and respond constructively to feedback.

As the enquiry progresses, increasing emphasis is placed upon independence, resilience and ambitious decision-making. Students are encouraged to take creative risks, experiment with unfamiliar materials and revisit previous work where refinement can strengthen the overall quality of their portfolio. The development of thoughtful written analysis remains integral throughout, ensuring practical outcomes are fully supported by critical understanding.

The enquiry concludes with students planning and producing a personal final outcome during a two-day mock examination. This authentic examination experience allows students to apply the knowledge, skills and creative processes developed throughout the portfolio whilst evaluating their readiness for the externally set assignment. By completing Component 1, students demonstrate secure evidence across all four Assessment Objectives and enter the final stage of the GCSE course with increasing confidence and independence.

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| | **Pre-Requisite Knowledge**<br>*What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?* | | **Pitch Up**<br>*How will we challenge ourselves?* |

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| Students begin this enquiry having completed the Natural Forms project during Year 10, developing secure observational drawing skills, contextual understanding, experimentation across a range of media and increasing confidence in producing sustained personal investigations. Students understand the four AQA Assessment Objectives and appreciate that successful portfolios develop through continual refinement, critical reflection and increasingly independent artistic decision-making. | This enquiry expects students to demonstrate the qualities of increasingly independent artists. Students are challenged to develop highly personal responses that communicate meaningful ideas rather than simply producing technically accurate artwork. Every creative decision should be purposeful, informed by contextual research and supported through thoughtful annotation and evaluation.<br><br>Stretch is embedded through encouraging conceptual thinking, ambitious experimentation and sophisticated critical analysis. Students are expected to justify the relationships between artists, themes and practical outcomes whilst continually refining their work in response to feedback and self-evaluation.<br><br>Grade 8 and Grade 9 portfolio examples are used throughout the enquiry to demonstrate how originality, sustained development and confident artistic judgement distinguish exceptional GCSE coursework. Students are encouraged to embrace challenge, develop their own artistic voice and produce work that demonstrates maturity, independence and creative ambition. |
| **Wider Framework**<br>*How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?* | **Curriculum Hinterland**<br>*What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?* |
| This enquiry completes Component 1 (Portfolio) of the AQA GCSE Art & Design specification, strengthening evidence across all four Assessment Objectives.<br><br>Students continue developing:<br>• AO1 through sustained contextual investigation and critical understanding.<br>• AO2 through purposeful experimentation, refinement and material exploration.<br>• AO3 through observational recording, photography and visual research.<br>• AO4 through producing ambitious, personal outcomes that communicate clear artistic intentions.<br><br>Students also strengthen literacy through analytical annotation, oracy through professional critique and discussion, and independent learning through managing an extended creative project. | Students broaden their understanding of identity within contemporary society by exploring how artists respond to issues including culture, gender, memory, family, belonging, media influence and personal experience. Through gallery collections, documentaries, artist interviews and independent research, students appreciate that art provides a powerful means of communicating ideas, challenging assumptions and exploring complex social issues.<br><br>Students are encouraged to engage with collections from Tate Modern, The National Portrait Gallery, The Saatchi Gallery, The Photographers' Gallery and Google Arts & Culture, developing cultural awareness through exposure to a wide range of artistic voices and perspectives. |

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## Authentic connections

*How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?*

The study of Identity provides meaningful opportunities for students to explore how art communicates individual experiences, beliefs and perspectives. Students develop spiritual understanding through reflecting upon their own identity whilst appreciating how artists use visual language to express emotion, memory, culture and personal meaning.

Social and cultural understanding is strengthened through investigating how artists from diverse backgrounds represent identity, belonging and human experience, whilst moral understanding develops through considering themes such as equality, representation, diversity, stereotypes and freedom of expression. Students recognise that art has the power to challenge prejudice, celebrate individuality and encourage meaningful discussion about contemporary society.

This enquiry explicitly develops the following Skills Builder Universal Framework competencies:

- Creativity – Students generate highly personal ideas by combining contextual research, experimentation and imaginative visual responses.
- Problem Solving – Students overcome conceptual and technical challenges through continual refinement, evaluation and independent decision-making.
- Speaking – Students confidently discuss artistic intentions, evaluate practical outcomes and justify creative decisions using increasingly sophisticated specialist vocabulary.

This enquiry provides authentic insight into careers within the creative industries, including:

- Graphic Designer – Using imagery, typography and visual communication to convey messages across advertising, publishing and digital media.
- Portrait Photographer – Creating visual narratives that communicate personality, identity and emotion through photography.
- Fine Artist – Producing original bodies of work that explore personal, cultural and contemporary themes for galleries, exhibitions and commissions.

Students recognise that the communication, critical thinking, creativity and independent project management developed throughout this enquiry are highly valued across both the creative industries and a wide range of professional careers.

## Resources

*What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*

Teaching and learning throughout this enquiry are supported through a range of practical, digital and contextual resources that encourage increasingly independent artistic investigation.

- Sketchbooks used as professional working journals to record research, experimentation, annotation and reflective evaluation.

## Assessment

*How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*

**Baseline Assessment**

Students review their Year 10 portfolio before planning an independent investigation into the theme of Identity, identifying opportunities to develop increasingly personal and ambitious responses.

**Mid-Point Assessment**

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| • Teacher modelling, individual tutorials and visualisers to support increasingly independent portfolio development.<br>• High-quality exemplar GCSE portfolios, including Grade 8–9 examples demonstrating ambitious personal investigations.<br>• Practical media selected to support individual project outcomes, including drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, photography and mixed media.<br>• Artist monographs, exhibition catalogues and gallery publications focusing on identity, portraiture and contemporary practice.<br>• Retrieval activities, specialist vocabulary displays and AQA Assessment Objective guidance.<br>• Digital resources including:<br>  ○ National Portrait Gallery – https://www.npg.org.uk<br>  ○ Tate – https://www.tate.org.uk<br>  ○ Saatchi Gallery – https://www.saatchigallery.com<br>  ○ Google Arts & Culture – https://artsandculture.google.com<br>  ○ AQA GCSE Art & Design – https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design | Students complete a portfolio review demonstrating sustained artist investigation, experimentation, annotation and refinement, receiving personalised feedback against the AQA Assessment Objectives.<br>**End of Enquiry Assessment**<br>Students complete **Component 1** by producing a sustained portfolio and a personal final outcome during the Year 11 mock examination, demonstrating secure evidence across all four Assessment Objectives and readiness for the externally set assignment.<br>**40% Substantive Knowledge**<br>Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:<br>• How artists communicate identity through visual language, symbolism and conceptual approaches.<br>• The work and influence of artists including Barbara Kruger, Antony Gormley and other relevant practitioners.<br>• Specialist vocabulary relating to identity, composition, symbolism, conceptual art and artistic intention.<br>• How contextual research informs personal artistic development.<br>• The requirements of the four AQA Assessment Objectives within Component 1.<br>**60% Disciplinary Knowledge**<br>Students demonstrate their ability to:<br>• Develop increasingly independent and personal investigations.<br>• Analyse and compare artists critically using specialist vocabulary.<br>• Experiment confidently with a range of media and processes.<br>• Refine work through sustained evaluation and purposeful development.<br>• Produce an ambitious personal outcome that communicates clear artistic intentions.<br>• Manage an extended creative project with increasing independence in preparation for the GCSE examination. |

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| **Terms 3-5**<br>Topic | | **Externally Set Assignment** |
| | **Big Picture**<br>*What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?* | |

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The Externally Set Assignment (ESA) represents the culmination of students' GCSE Art & Design journey, providing the opportunity to independently apply the knowledge, skills and creative confidence developed throughout Key Stage 3 and GCSE. Working from a choice of examination themes provided by AQA, students undertake a sustained personal investigation, demonstrating increasingly sophisticated research, experimentation, critical analysis and refinement before producing a final outcome during the ten-hour practical examination.

The enquiry expects students to think, work and communicate as independent artists, making purposeful creative decisions whilst confidently selecting artists, materials and techniques that best communicate their individual ideas and intentions.

**Zoom In**

*What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?*

The enquiry begins with students exploring the annual AQA Externally Set Assignment paper. Teacher modelling demonstrates how successful artists interpret broad themes creatively, moving beyond obvious responses to produce increasingly original and ambitious investigations. Students develop substantive knowledge by analysing the examination themes, exploring multiple lines of enquiry and investigating artists whose work provides meaningful contextual inspiration for their chosen direction.

Students undertake extensive visual research using first-hand observation, photography, drawing and independent contextual investigation. Specialist vocabulary including brief, interpretation, conceptual development, synthesis, refinement, intention, experimentation, visual language, personal response, presentation and evaluation is explicitly revisited and embedded throughout the enquiry, enabling students to discuss and justify their work with increasing confidence.

Sketchbooks continue to function as professional working journals, documenting the complete creative journey from initial ideas through to the final examination outcome. Students independently select artists, experiment with a broad range of materials, evaluate practical investigations and continually refine their work in response to self-reflection and teacher feedback. The emphasis throughout is upon purposeful development, ensuring every practical investigation contributes towards a coherent and highly personal final response.

Teacher support shifts from direct instruction to coaching, tutorials and professional dialogue. Individual discussions encourage students to challenge initial ideas, refine artistic intentions and make increasingly sophisticated creative decisions. Students are expected to take ownership of their investigations, demonstrating resilience when overcoming technical or conceptual challenges and recognising that sustained refinement remains central to successful artistic practice.

As the enquiry progresses, students prepare for the ten-hour practical examination by planning compositions, testing materials, refining technical skills and evaluating alternative outcomes. Time management, organisation and independent problem-solving become increasingly important as students prepare to complete their final piece under examination conditions.

The enquiry concludes with students producing a fully realised personal outcome during the ten-hour supervised examination. This final response demonstrates the culmination of their GCSE experience, bringing together contextual understanding, technical confidence, sustained experimentation and personal creativity into a coherent piece of artwork that reflects their own artistic identity and aspirations.

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| Pre-Requisite Knowledge<br>*What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?* | Pitch Up<br>*How will we challenge ourselves?* |
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| Students begin this enquiry having completed Component 1 and developed confidence in observational drawing, contextual research, experimentation, refinement and producing increasingly personal responses. They understand the four AQA Assessment Objectives and have experienced an authentic mock examination, preparing them for the demands of the externally set assignment. | This enquiry represents the highest expectations of the GCSE course. Students are challenged to work with the independence, resilience and critical thinking expected of emerging artists, taking full ownership of every stage of the creative process.<br><br>Stretch is embedded through encouraging increasingly ambitious interpretations of the examination theme, sophisticated contextual links and confident experimentation with materials and techniques. Students are expected to justify every creative decision, continually evaluate the effectiveness of their work and demonstrate mature artistic judgement throughout the investigation.<br><br>Grade 8 and Grade 9 examination portfolios are used to demonstrate how originality, sustained refinement and thoughtful personal responses distinguish exceptional GCSE outcomes. Students are encouraged to take creative risks, trust their artistic instincts and produce work that demonstrates individuality, confidence and technical excellence. |
| **Wider Framework**<br>*How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?* | **Curriculum Hinterland**<br>*What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?* |
| This enquiry completes Component 2 (Externally Set Assignment) of the AQA GCSE Art & Design specification, requiring students to independently demonstrate achievement across all four Assessment Objectives.<br><br>Students continue developing:<br>• AO1 through independent artist investigation and contextual research.<br>• AO2 through sustained experimentation, refinement and exploration of materials.<br>• AO3 through observational recording, photography and visual research.<br>• AO4 through producing an ambitious personal response during the ten-hour practical examination. | Students broaden their understanding of professional artistic practice by exploring how artists develop work in response to commissions, exhibitions, competitions and creative briefs. They investigate contemporary practitioners from a wide range of artistic disciplines, recognising that successful artists continually research, experiment and adapt their ideas throughout the creative process.<br><br>Independent research is encouraged through gallery collections, museum resources, artist interviews and online exhibitions, enabling students to draw inspiration from a diverse range of artistic voices while developing increasingly personal interpretations of the examination theme. |

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| Students further strengthen literacy through analytical annotation, oracy through tutorials and critique, and independent learning through planning and managing an extended creative investigation. | |

## Authentic connections

*How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?*

The Externally Set Assignment provides an authentic experience of professional creative practice, requiring students to respond independently to an open-ended brief through sustained research, experimentation and refinement. Students develop spiritual understanding through expressing personal ideas, values and experiences, recognising how art enables individuals to communicate complex emotions, beliefs and perspectives through visual language.

Social and cultural understanding is strengthened through investigating artists from diverse backgrounds and exploring how different societies use art to communicate identity, challenge assumptions and reflect contemporary issues. Moral understanding develops as students consider the responsibilities of artists when representing people, cultures and sensitive issues, recognising the importance of originality, integrity and respectful visual communication.

This enquiry explicitly develops the following Skills Builder Universal Framework competencies:

- Creativity – Students generate highly original ideas, synthesising research and experimentation into ambitious personal responses.
- Problem Solving – Students independently overcome technical, conceptual and organisational challenges whilst managing an extended creative project.
- Speaking – Students confidently present artistic intentions, justify creative decisions and evaluate their investigations using sophisticated specialist vocabulary.

This enquiry provides authentic insight into careers within the creative industries, including:

- Creative Director – Leading creative projects by developing concepts, refining ideas and communicating a clear artistic vision across multiple media.
- Exhibition Designer – Creating engaging visual experiences for galleries, museums and public exhibitions through careful planning, presentation and audience awareness.
- Freelance Artist or Illustrator – Responding independently to creative briefs, commissions and exhibitions whilst managing projects from initial concept through to final outcome.

Students recognise that the creativity, resilience, communication, organisation and independent project management developed throughout this enquiry are highly valued within higher education, the creative industries and a wide range of professional careers.

## Resources

*What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*

Teaching and learning throughout this enquiry are supported through a range of practical, digital and contextual resources that enable students to work with increasing independence whilst preparing for the externally set assignment.

## Assessment

*How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*

**Baseline Assessment**

Students analyse the AQA Externally Set Assignment paper, selecting a theme and producing initial investigations that demonstrate creative potential and contextual understanding.

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| • Sketchbooks used as professional working journals to record research, experimentation, annotation and refinement.<br>• Teacher modelling, individual tutorials and visualisers to support increasingly independent creative investigations.<br>• The annual AQA Externally Set Assignment paper and assessment guidance.<br>• High-quality exemplar GCSE examination portfolios, including Grade 8–9 examples demonstrating outstanding independent investigations.<br>• A broad range of specialist art materials selected to support students' individual creative intentions.<br>• Artist monographs, exhibition catalogues and gallery publications linked to students' chosen themes.<br>• Retrieval activities, specialist vocabulary displays and AQA Assessment Objective guidance.<br>• Digital resources including:<br>  ○ Tate – https://www.tate.org.uk<br>  ○ National Gallery – https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk<br>  ○ Google Arts & Culture – https://artsandculture.google.com<br>  ○ AQA GCSE Art & Design – https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design | **Mid-Point Assessment**<br>Students complete a formal portfolio review, demonstrating sustained artist research, experimentation, refinement and increasingly independent development of ideas. Individual tutorials provide personalised feedback against the AQA Assessment Objectives.<br>**End of Enquiry Assessment**<br>Students complete the **ten-hour supervised practical examination**, producing a personal final outcome supported by a sustained preparatory portfolio that demonstrates secure achievement across all four Assessment Objectives.<br>**40% Substantive Knowledge**<br>Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:<br>• The requirements and structure of the AQA Externally Set Assignment.<br>• How artists interpret open-ended themes through personal investigation.<br>• Specialist vocabulary relating to conceptual development, synthesis, experimentation, refinement and artistic intention.<br>• How contextual research informs independent creative practice.<br>• The relationship between preparatory studies and a successful examination outcome.<br>**60% Disciplinary Knowledge**<br>Students demonstrate their ability to:<br>• Independently interpret and respond to an examination brief.<br>• Conduct sustained contextual and visual research to inform personal ideas.<br>• Experiment confidently with a broad range of materials, techniques and processes.<br>• Refine work critically through continual evaluation and purposeful development.<br>• Manage an extended creative investigation independently and effectively.<br>• Produce an ambitious personal outcome that demonstrates originality, technical confidence and mature artistic judgement under examination conditions. |
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