

Words for images

Your name here



Przestrzen Odnaleziona, 1965
Makowski, Zbignieur (b.1930)

This handbook will help you to: annotate your sketchbooks; write meaningfully about your own art work; describe and analyse contemporary art/artefacts and those of the past.

Contents

Part I: Critical

- 3 The Seven Formal Points:
- 4 + Mood and feeling
- 5-8 Composition (and scale)
- 9-10 Light
- 11-12 Form
- 13 Line
- 14-15 Space/Depth
- 16-19 Colour
- 20 Texture
- 21 An example of how to use the seven formal points
- 22 A piece of cake
- 23-25 Painting words
- 26-29 Textiles words
- 30-31 Sculpture words
- 32 Photography

Part II: Contextual

- 33 The Function and Purpose of Art:
- 34-35 Style and Art Movements
- 36-38 Function and meaning glossary
- 39 Defining Style
- 40-42 The Viewer and the gaze
- 43 The Human Form

Part III:

- 44 In the Museum and the Art Gallery
- 45 Reading the label
- 46 How to use sources?
- 47 Glossary of action verbs
- 48-49 Examples of Student writing

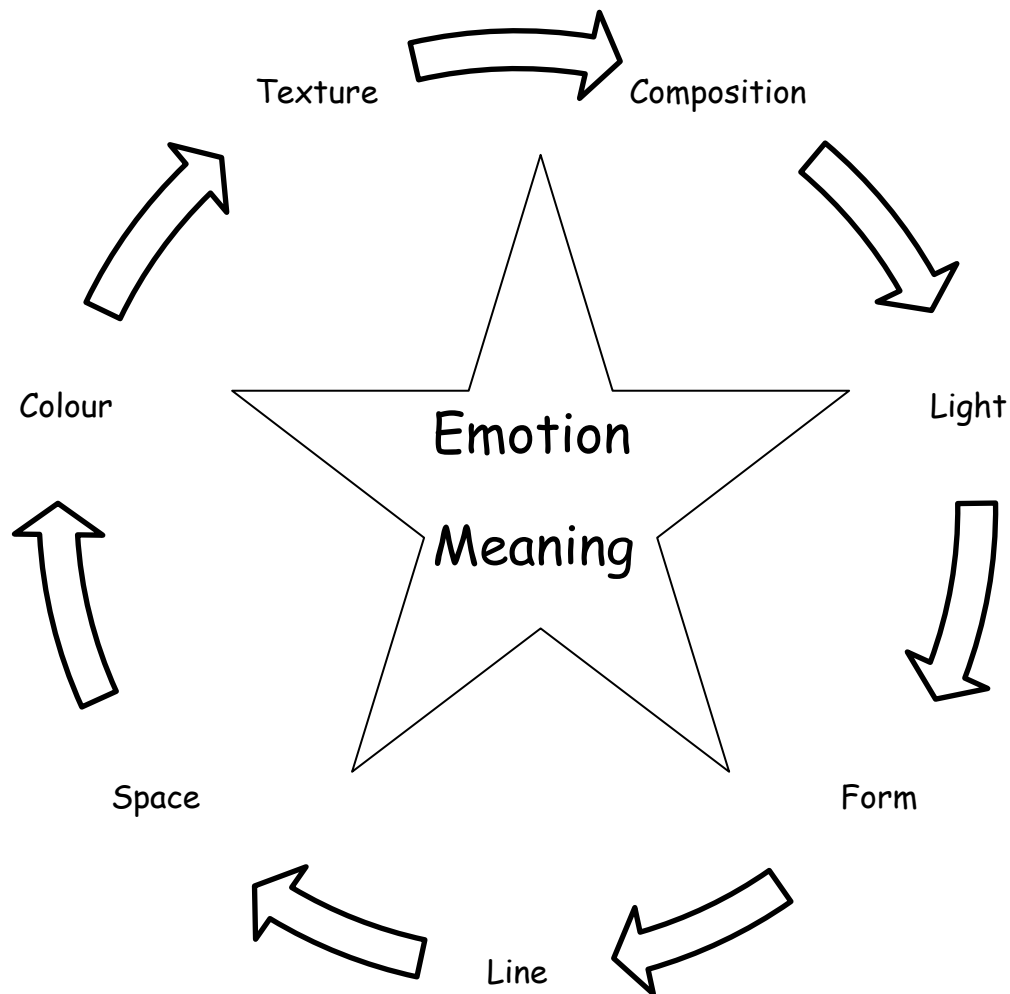
If you are looking for images then start with **Bridgeman Education**, which can be accessed via the Library website or directly at:

<http://www.bridgemaneducation.com/default.asp>

User name: Oakham Password: 3Luc01

Use their thematic search to help initiate your ideas.

The Seven Formal Points of Art Criticism



Always start and end by considering the emotional impact and the meaning of the work.

Use the 7 points as prompts to your description in whichever order seems appropriate. Their importance will vary according to what you are looking at.

Mood & Feeling

Trust your instinct, and start by describing your first reactions to the work of art.

- Aggressive
- Atmospheric
- Moody
- Violent
- Disturbing
- Distinctive
- Disconcerting
- Alarming
- Bewildering
- Boring
- Upsetting
- Soothing
- Unnerving
- Shocking

Some artists use images to shock the viewer. Goya is using Art as satire to poke fun at superstition with his baby eating witches.



Goya 'There is plenty to suck', plate 45 of 'Los Caprichos', 1799 (etching)

Some art simply aims to be good to look at. Artists such as Matisse create images that are **aesthetically** pleasing. Many people consider this to be the main purpose of Art. Matisse himself said that a painting should be something to relax you after a hard day's work 'like a good armchair'.

Henri Matisse 'The Flowing Hair' 1952



- Stunning
- Riveting
- Dreamlike
- Dramatic
- Dynamic
- Busy
- Confused
- Cool
- Calm
- Cold
- Dry
- Impressive
- Poignant
- Affecting
- Touching

- Emotional
- Psychological
- Magical
- Dreamlike
- Transcendental
- Meaningful
- Meaningless
- Empty
- Stylish
- Sexy
- Sensitive
- Seductive
- Deep
- Superficial
- Transitory

Composition

Composition is the arrangement of the elements within a painting. In sculpture it is the relationship of the forms to each other and the surrounding space.

When you analyse composition you could consider:

1. The format
2. The arrangement of shapes
3. The positive and negative space
4. The arrangement of lines and shapes
5. Cropping
6. The Scale

For example you might say:

"The shapes appear to float in space."

"The shapes are densely composed."

"The composition of the shapes is well balanced."

"The lines are composed in a diagonal configuration"

You might ask:

Which shapes dominate?

Where is the eye led?

Where are the major divisions?

Is the composition?

- Dramatic
- Planned
- Informal
- Complex
- Symmetrical
- Asymmetrical
- Imbalanced
- Harmonious
- Rhythmic
- Random
- Chaotic
- Confused
- Chance
- Geometric
- Regular
- Irregular
- Systematic

Format

Landscape or Portrait?

Panoramic?(a wide view)

A tondo (round)

A miniature

Is it part of a series of related forms? Or a multi panelled work?

Diptych

(two panels)

Triptych

(three panels)

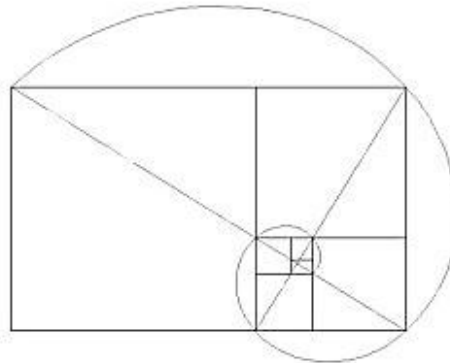
Polyptych

(multiple panels)

Predella

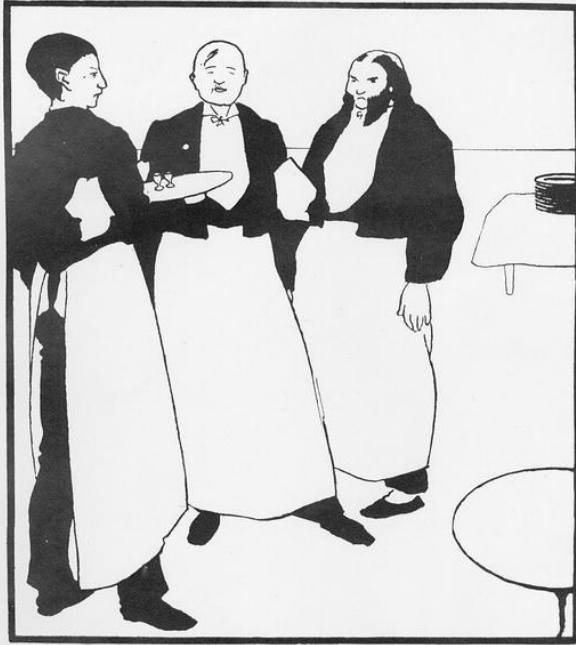
(a long panel that runs underneath the main work)

The Golden Section: A ratio of 8:5 that is considered aesthetically pleasing. The view finder of a camera and A4 paper, for example, are both to the proportion of the golden section. By placing the key elements of a composition according to the golden section a more interesting image is created - theoretically. Classical art and architecture often uses the Golden Section to achieve a harmonious effect such as in the Parthenon below.



Composition

Balance and imbalance can make a composition dynamic, as in Beardsley's drawing. He makes careful use of positive and negative space as well as the placing of shapes in relation to the frame.



The Frame

The frame or edge of the image is important.

How does the design of the composition relate to the boundaries or border?

Negative space and Positive space

Negative space describes the area around the objects and **positive space** describes the area taken by the object. In a strong composition there will be an interesting balance between these areas, with the negative space being just as visually arresting as the positive, as in this example by Jo Clinch an AS student.

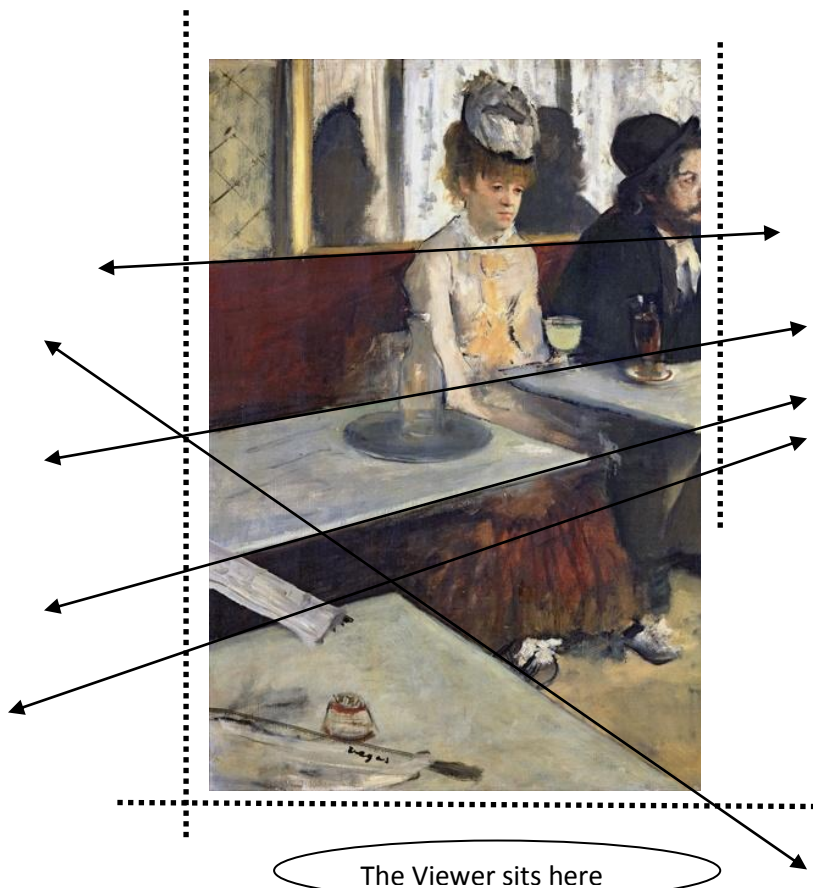


Composition

Cropping

This is when objects are cut through by the picture's edge, as occurs in photography. Cropping is less evident in paintings made before the invention of photography in 1837. It is a **compositional device** that artists have copied from photographs.

"..the composition is closely cropped"
in other words, there is little space around the edges of the objects.



Viewpoint

Spectator
Audience
Onlooker

This is the point that the artist/audience is looking from.

If the picture is in strict linear perspective there will be one fixed viewpoint.

Often artists combine several viewpoints, even though the picture appears to be from one. Non Western Art and Cubism use multiple viewpoints

The spectator's viewpoint is very important in determining the effect of the image on us:

Are we looked down upon from on high to make us feel small? Or are we looking down from a hilltop to make us feel powerful? Or are we confronting a scene directly as part of a drama?

Perhaps we are kneeling at the altar rail in a church and looking up at the painting?

Also consider where the painting is to be hung....at standing height or perhaps much higher?

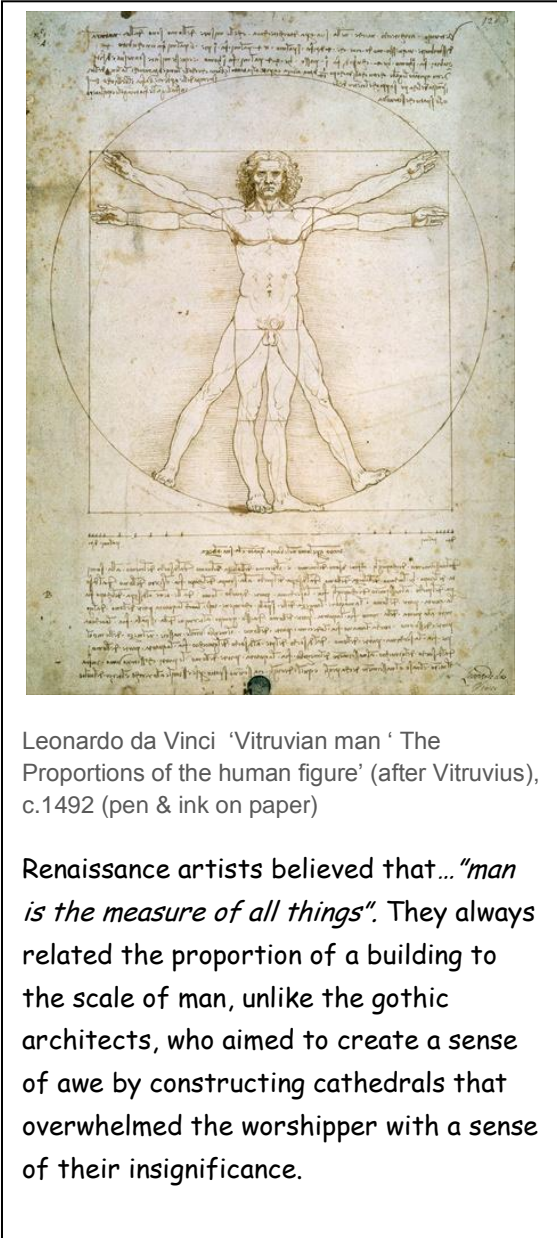
Does the artist draw us into the scene or block us out?

'The Absinthe Drinkers' Degas 1875. Degas uses the receding diagonals of the table tops to place us -the spectator - at the table in the foreground. He has cropped the table in the foreground: it continues out of the picture and by implication we are sitting at it. This makes the viewer part of the scene. He also crops the table that the man sits at, which gives the impression that the scene continues beyond the picture frame. Cropping - shown above with the dotted lines -tells us that we are seeing a snapshot of a bigger scene.

Scale

Scale is crucial to our relationship to a work of art: it determines how far away or how near we come to the piece. We are drawn in close to a small work and view it intimately, whereas we stand back from large works, which overwhelm us and fill our **field of vision**.

When you are looking at a reproduction check the **dimensions** and then imagine - or measure out - the actual size.



Don't confuse scale with **proportion**, which means the relationship in size of one thing to another:

"Even though the figures are on a massive scale the artist has drawn them in accurate proportion"

Always relate the scale to human dimensions such as:

"You have to stand back to see the painting as it is so immense that it fills the whole wall of the gallery"

"The drawings were so small that you had to go up close to see the detail"

Scale

Size

Vast

Magnitude

Miniature

Detailed

Intricate

Precious

Life-size

Monumental

Overwhelming

Colossal

Microcosm: Small world

Macrocosm: Large world

Monumental

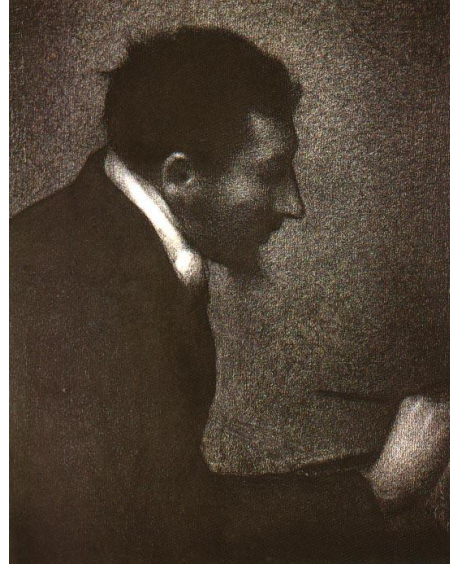
A work can have a monumental effect even if it is relatively small. Picasso was adept at achieving this by giving his figures solidity and weight; he combined this with a low viewpoint to make the viewer feel over powered

Light (tone)

Tone: this is light and dark.
Tonal contrast should be considered as separate from colour contrasts. Imagine the image in black and white to help consider how the tones are being used. The artist might have strong tonal contrast? They might be using mid tones?



In this conte crayon self portrait, Seurat uses no lines, only variations in tone. The effect is dramatic, with the form **silhouetted contrejour** (against the light). He has **spot lit** the collar and **highlighted** prominent parts of his face.



The atmosphere is **suffused** with light that appears to radiate from the paper

Rembrandt uses **cross hatching** to build different **densities of shadow** in this etching. **The light of the white paper glows** from within the image. The darkness creates an intense depth and psychological power



Light and Mood

The use of light will determine the mood of the image.

- Cold or warm?
- Suffused?
- Atmospheric?
- Crisp, sharp, harsh?

Is the artist using:

- Artificial light (electric, gas, neon or candlelight?)
- Daylight (cold blue tinted northern light or warm yellow sunshine)

Where is the light source:

- Within the picture?
- From outside? Which side?
- Or perhaps there are multiple light sources?

Are the forms?

Contrejour: this is when an object or person is placed against the light so that they form a silhouette.

Back lit

Down lit

Spot lit

Flood lit

"The light shines from above."

"The direction of the light is very clear/ unclear."

"The figures are spot lit as if in the theatre?"

Soft

Blinding

Reflected

Sharp

Harsh

Glaring

"The light bleaches out the colours"

"The rays of light seem to filter through the darkness."

Romantic light

Darkness

Emptiness

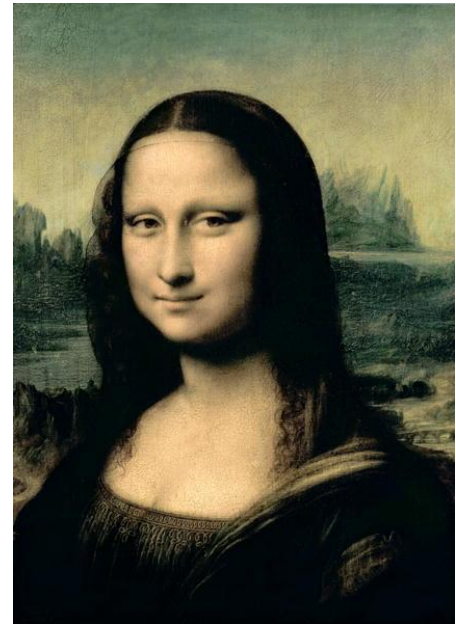
Void

Obscurity

Negative dense blackness

Sfumato: a technique in which the artist overlays translucent layers of colour to create perceptions of depth, volume and form. In particular, it refers to the blending of colours or tones so subtly that there is no perceptible transition. Look at how Leonardo Da Vinci has used sfumato to model the Mona Lisa's face.

The word is derived from 'fumo' – meaning smoke.



He has also used **coulisse** -the river snaking away into the distance - and **atmospheric perspective** – the misty mountains to enhance the sensation of depth.

Form

Form has a specific meaning in Art: the three dimensional aspect of objects. In images form makes objects appear to be realistic solids, even though they are in fact two dimensional.

Form can also be used in the sense of 'giving form' to ideas: in other words making them concrete.

Chiaroscuro: the modelling of light and dark to show form. A clear light source casts shadows transforming a shape into a form – shade the example below to change it from a shape to a form, adding a cast shadow will enhance the illusion.



Caravaggio 'Boy bitten by a lizard'. The light striking his shoulder casts the underside into shadow giving the illusion of three dimensions (form and depth).

Useful words:

Volumetric form
Monumental form
Modelled
Modulation
Rendering
Highlights
Shadows
Hatching
Palpable forms
Solid
Heavy
Realistic
Vague forms

For example you might say:

"The artist has fragmented the forms" or perhaps "The forms have a density and weight".

"The lines follow the forms."

"The curving and flowing lines emphasise the forms."

"The light describes the form"

Cezanne used colour and line to create a solid sense of **form** rather than relying on the effects of light that western artists had used since the renaissance. There is no clear sense of where the light comes from in this painting, yet the objects have a strong sense of form.



After the Bath' Degas 1891 Charcoal on paper



Describing form in two dimensions:

Degas has used both line and tone to describe the form of the woman.

Chiaroscuro: The light falls from the top left and he has shaded the areas on the right. This transition – or modulation- from light to dark gives the figure convincing three-dimensional volume.

Line: Degas varies both the weight and thickness of the lines. This helps to imply movement, as if they are flowing around her form. The result is a convincing description of her flesh.

Mark making: the hatched lines suggest a plane or curves; these again emphasise form. He varies these more rigid marks with soft smudges or graceful strokes.

Sffumato: The use of soft smudges contrasts with the crisp focused lines to suggest both depth and form.



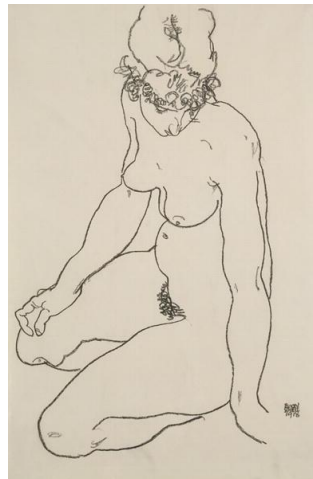
Pontormo 'Study of a pair of legs and two feet for a figure of St. Michael' (red chalk with pen & ink). He is using exactly the same visual language as Degas to show form: graceful outline; chiaroscuro and hatching.



Line can also be used without the modulation of tone to show form. For example in this ancient Greek Red Figure Vase painting we feel the bulge and form of the athlete's legs purely due to the delicately observed outline. He has also designed the negative areas in the background to further emphasise both shapes and form.

Line

Soft
Harsh
Heavy
Gentle
Sharp
Crisp
Delicate
Sensitive
Flowing
Hesitant
Ragged
Graceful
Graphic
Scratched
Dragged
Sketched
Subtle
Engraved
Etched
Incised
Smudged
Steak
Stroke
Contour
edge



Seated Nude 1918

Egon Schiele

Lines describe the edges of forms; where solid meets space.

Paul Klee said that
'Drawing is taking a line for a walk'

Pentimenti

These are the mistakes or alterations that an artist makes. Modern artists often leave their mistakes, as this gives a sense of movement and a trace of the thought process they went through as the work developed. Matisse has done this in his life drawing.



Henri Matisse 1927 Nude Pencil on paper

Mark- making: This is a term often used by artists to describe the character of graphic effects in both drawing and painting. Mark words: **Blot, spot, blotch, scratch, smudge, splatter, drag, stain, bleed, smear, score.** When you describe mark making consider the texture of the surface the artist is using.



Rembrandt 'Saskia ill' 1642

Rembrandt has used a range of mark making to give this emotional portrait of his wife great expressive power and depth of feeling.

He uses broad, and heavy, inky brushstrokes dragged across the grain of the paper to create a dry brush effect. At points the wet ink has been absorbed and bled into the paper. Sharp and strong rich black lines drawn with a reed pen give focus and detail, sometimes these are tight and follow the texture of her clothing and other moments they break free to express the artist's emotions. Finally soft and delicate marks communicate the fragility of her face.

Graphic: A graphic mark is one that has been drawn or scratched. Graphic can also mean clear or vivid. The drawings on this page are all graphic, both in style and in effect. Hence the related words:

Graffiti (as in street art) and **Scraffito**

which is the effect of scratching away a top layer to reveal the colour underneath (this is often used in ceramics as well as in painting).

Space / Depth

Space is the three dimensional expanse in which objects are located. In images artists attempt to give an illusion of space on a two dimensional surface.

Depth is how far back the image appears from the surface of the picture (the picture plane).

The principal ways of creating an illusion of depth are:

1. Overlapping
2. Linear perspective
3. Atmospheric perspective
4. Aerial perspective or Colour contrast
5. Tonal contrast
6. Intersecting planes

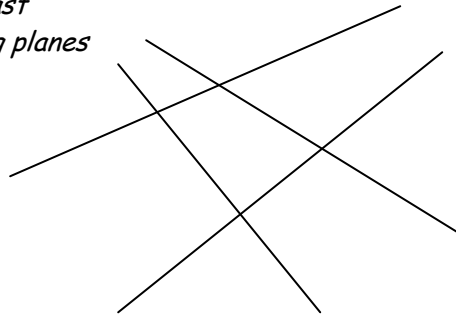
Useful words:

Recedes
Foreground
Middle distance
Background
Distance

Useful phrases:

"The abstract forms appear to leap forward from the picture plane"

"The landscape recedes into an atmospheric haze of blues"



Linear Perspective: When the scene is viewed from a single viewpoint with objects shown diminishing in size as they become more distant: as in a photograph, or as in this drawing by Leonardo Da Vinci)



Overlapping: This is the simplest way of giving the illusion of depth.

Intersecting planes and overlapping shapes are used in cubist paintings to give the illusion of depth. Modern paintings often appear flat or even appear to come forward from the picture plane. Artists also remind the viewer of the physical surface of the canvas or paper: the picture plane.



Foreshortening: This is the effect of an object appearing shorter than it is because it is shown in perspective coming towards us.



'The Dead Christ' Mantegna 15th c.

Space / Depth

Atmospheric perspective: is when forms are out of focus in the distance and crisper in the foreground to give a sense of depth

Aerial Perspective: is when colour values are used to create an illusion of depth.

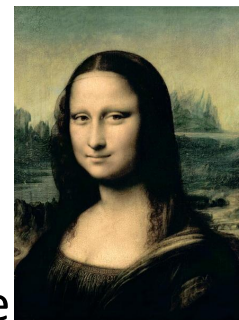
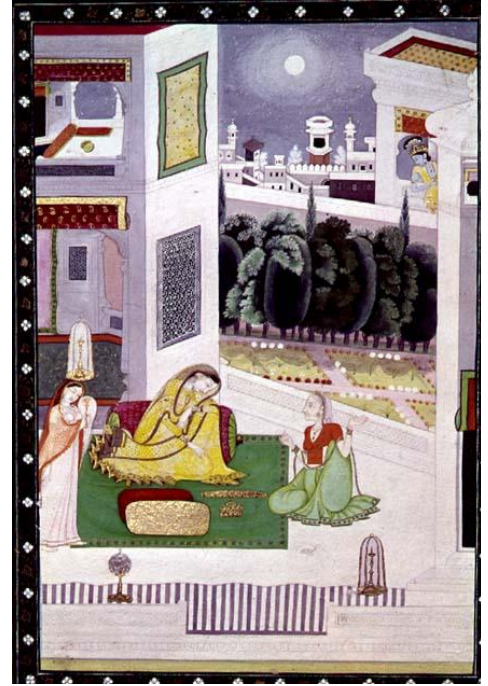


Three methods of showing depth:

1. **Atmospheric perspective** is used by Turner as the scene recedes out of focus towards the horizon and of course the diminishing scales of the cockle pickers into the distance.
2. **Linear perspective** is evident through the diminishing lines of the clouds towards the vanishing point (the sun) that are also apparent in their reflection on the sands.
3. **Aerial Perspective** is evident in the changing strengths of colour from the coral pinks and yellows in the foreground, which come forward and the cool blues towards the horizon, which recede. This is, however, contradicted by the intense colours of the sunset.

Schematic representations of depth:

Depth can be shown without perspective as in many of the eastern traditions such as in Indian, Islamic, Chinese and Japanese works.



Coulisse

The Mona Lisa again! This time she is illustrating coulisse: Leonardo has created the effect of stage scenery by having the landscape snake away into the distance as in stage wings, creating a powerful sense of depth. This technique was much favoured by early renaissance artists, but also notice how this is used by oriental landscape painters instead of perspective.

Colour Words

We can see up to five million colours. However, colour is very difficult to describe in words so be imaginative and make up your own colour vocabulary. Use the names on paint tubes or the dyes to help. Or refer to this website, which has all the commercial colour names:

Reds:

Rose

Madder

Carmine

Alizarin

Scarlet

Sanguine: the colour of dried blood.

Oranges:

chrome

Yellows:

Chrome

Cadmium

Lemon

Ochre

Primrose

Naples

Greens:

Viridian

Lime

Sap green

Terre Verte

Olive

Emerald

Chrome

Khaki

Blues:

Indigo

Cyan

Céruleen

White and Black are not always considered true colours as they do not occur in the spectrum.

Blacks: Lamp Black, velvet black, Payne's grey

Whites: lead white, titanium white, ivory white, cream white.



Gunther 'Prisoner at work' Airbrush 1969

Mono chromatic means with only one colour. The artist may have chosen a colour to create a mood, but they are working in tones.

Grisaille means drawn or painted in tone, often to look as if the subject has been carved from stone.

Colour

Colour = Hue + Saturation + Brightness
Colour is the visual sensation of **hue** (red for example) **saturation** (how strong the red is) and **brightness** (how light or dark the red is)



This is Itten's Colour Circle with the three primaries in the centre triangle joining to make the secondary colours and with twelve hues surrounding them.

The Spectrum

This is white light refracted into its different wavelengths of colours such as in a rainbow.

The visible **spectrum**: red, orange, yellow, blue, indigo, and violet.

Secondary colours are mixtures of two primaries: green, orange and violet.

The **tertiary** colours are mixtures of three primaries; browns.

Along with pink and mauve they do not occur in the spectrum.

Earth colours: these are made from mineral pigments: yellow ochre, raw sienna, burnt umber, sepia, venetian red.



Itten 'Circles' 1916: this is an abstract exploration of some of the colour contrasts described on these pages.

Colour qualities

Pure, brilliant, bright, iridescent, glowing, suffused, faded, bleached, pastel, opaque (*with white added so you cannot see through*), translucent (*glazed or washed as in stained glass; letting the light through*).

A palette of colours

A range of colours can be described as a **palette** as in: a cool palette (blues); a warm palette (reds and earth colours) a varied palette; or a limited palette.

Colour

The three basic Colour Contrasts

Colour = Hue + Saturation + Brightness (as described on the previous pages)

So the basic three contrasts are:

1. **Contrast of hue:** such as the yellow against the red in Monet's painting of reflections.
2. **Contrast of saturation:** this is the contrast of pure pigments with diluted pigments; such as the pure, strongly pigmented, yellow sunlight with the bleached, pale yellow reflections. Hence you can refer to **saturated colours** or **de-saturated colours**
3. **Contrast of brightness** (tonal contrast): such as between the light blue water lilies in the sunlight with those in shadow.



Claude Monet 'Waterlilies at Giverny' 1907

Harmony and Contrast



When you consider colour describe the colour harmonies and the colour contrasts. For example Monet's use of blues and greens in his landscape are harmonious and set the scene for the contrasts.

Colours that are close on the colour circle will harmonise, those that are far apart will contrast.

An effective way to use colour is by building a harmony of several related colours to act as a background to one or two colour contrasts.

Colour

Active and Passive Contrast

Contrast of **active v passive** colour: we sense reds, oranges and yellows as busy, moving hues, whilst greens, browns and blues, tend to feel quieter. In Monet's painting the yellows and reds are very active whereas the blues are calmer and passive.

Contrast of temperature

Emil Nolde 'Marsh Landscape'



Colours can be divided according to hot or cold hues as in the temperature contrast in this watercolour. Although blue is generally regarded as cool, some blues are warmer than others. Colours such as yellow can have quite different temperature effects according to their context.

Black will always intensify colour values, as in this painting.

Grey will deplete the power of colours.

Contrast of colour key

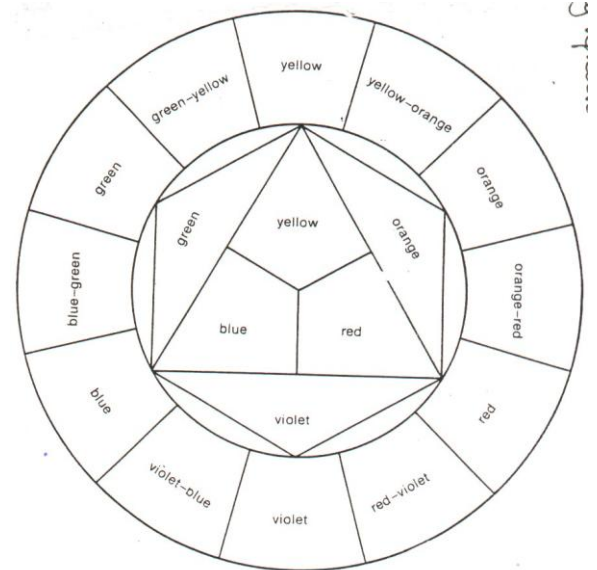
As in music colours can be described as on a scale with yellow being highest and indigo blue lowest; compare the horse's mane – low key- with the landscape – high key.

Complementary Contrast



Franz Marc 'Horse in a landscape' 1910

The contrast of **complementary** *colours: these are the three pairs of opposites on the colour circle: **red v green; orange v blue and yellow v violet**. When placed against each other they enhance their hue as in the horse's red back that Marc has outlined with green; the red seems redder and the green seems greener where they meet than elsewhere in the painting



Do not get confused with the spelling of **complimentary which means to give praise as in; 'He **complimented** me on my blue dress with its **complementary** orange pattern.*

Texture

These are the **tactile** qualities of surfaces, in other words the qualities of **touch**. Your description of texture will be linked to that of media, as these are generally used to imitate the surfaces of objects, as in representational painting when oil paint is used to mimic the surface of for example silk, fur, stone or flesh.

The trick of making objects appear to be real in painting is called:

trompe d'oeil (trick of the eye)

Art represents one texture with an equivalent in a different medium: here a medical condition skin that leads to flaking skin is represented by a fragile glaze.

Tamsin van Essen 'Psoriasis'



Texture is often the primary means of expression in textiles, such as in this piece by Zane Berzina: **fragile, translucent, delicate, brittle, layered, waxy, and ephemeral?**

In painting and in textiles the support that is used will contribute to the texture:

- Canvas**
- Linen**
- Board**
- Metal**
- Silk**
- Hessian**

In sculpture the surface of the material will be crucial to the effect:

- Plaster:** dry, absorbent, inert.
- Stone:** rough, abrasive, granulated, veined, polished, smooth.
- Bronze:** patina, shiny, reflective.
- Wax:** soft, greasy, malleable.

- Touch
- Rough
- Smooth (grain)
- Abrasive
- Shiny
- Glossy
- Repulsive
- Seductive
- Cold
- Plastic
- Oily
- Dry
- Coarse
- Refined
- Dense (as in tightly woven fabric?)
- Open (as in open weave)
- Embossed
- Relief surface



Impasto: The technique of laying paint on thickly to give a pronounced surface texture. Frank Auerbach 'EOW Sleeping' 1976

An example of how to use the seven formal points: 'View from the window' 1888 (oil on canvas) Arthur Segal

Mood and Feeling

The empty chair suggests loneliness.

There is a conflict of mood between the dark interior, which is empty and unadorned, with the lighter and more dynamic exterior. The absence of life, however, is underlined by the formal, cold and abstract nature of the scene.

This is not a passionate canvas, rather it suggests that the artist was experimenting with new ways of painting.

1 Line:

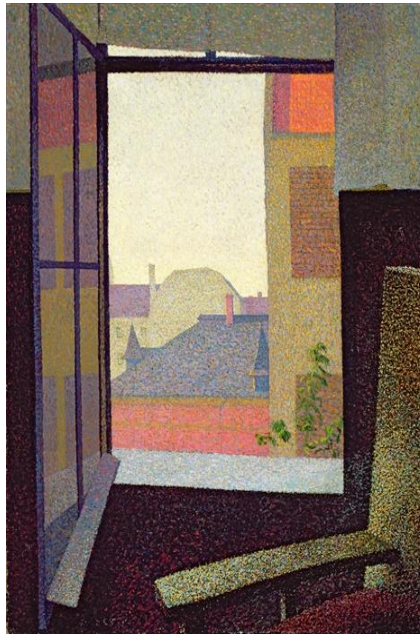
The lines are sharply focused, crisp and precisely drawn. They emphasise the importance of linear perspective especially on the window.

2 Shape:

The portrait format of the canvas is echoed by the window frame. This is also emphasised by the cropping of the window frame and chair at the edges. Similarly the rightangle of the chair sits in the corner of the picture and is repeated by first the window and then the buildings.

3 Light:

The light source is the sky which illuminates the rooftops and creates the shadows within the room.



4 Form:

There is little form to the objects as the artist is more interested in the geometric possibilities of his design. He has, however, used light and shadow (chiaroscuro) on the arm of the chair to show that it is 3D.

5. Space:

An illusion of depth has been created by the receding window. Foreshortening makes it appear that this is coming out of the picture plane towards us. He has used the strong contrasts between the positive and negative shapes to create an abstract pattern. The marks are smaller and softer in the distance enhancing the feeling of space.

6. Colour:

The most striking contrast is between the saturated orange and the de-saturated blues that surround it.

There is also complementary contrast and use of cold warm contrasts.

7 Texture:

The painter is not interested in the actual texture of things; instead he has used the individual marks of his square brushstrokes to leave a dappled pattern. The paint is not blended but each tab of colour is clean and crisp. The affect is of a woven carpet.

A piece of cake?



When you write about art you will need to refer to the art work repeatedly. Try to use varied ways of doing this. For example this is a Pop Art work by Claes Oldenburg. It can also be described as a **work of art**, a **sculpture** and an **art object** try to avoid using the word 'piece' too often as there are plenty of alternatives which will enrich your text.

Piece	Image
Painting	Canvas
Work	Picture
Subject	Creation
Installation (not instillation)	
Collage	Montage (a collage of photographs)
Screen	Panel
Drawing	Sketch
Photograph	
Sculpture	Form
Artefact	Ceramic
Monument	Statue
Textile	Embroidery
Weaving	Tapestry
Garment	Dress
Bodice	Corset
Structure	Hanging

Painting: some technical words

Media or Medium (*you can use either word; both are singular and plural*)

Paint can be:

Opaque: solid, impermeable to light, white.

Translucent: allowing light to shine through a layer of colour, as in a stained glass window

All paints are made up of:

Pigment: The colour

+

Medium: The glue that binds the pigment and that makes the paint flow when it is applied.

Watercolours are Pigment + Gum Arabic (a natural resin) + water

Characteristics: light, bright, fluid, spontaneous, delicate, transitory, pure.

Acrylics are Pigment + Polyvinyl acetate + water

Characteristics: bright, intense, artificial, plastic, smooth, both opaque and translucent

Fresco is pigment + water which is applied onto wet plaster that acts as the binding medium.

Characteristics: dry, flat, cool, pure, fresh, bright, light.

Oil paint is pigment + oil and wax

Characteristics: translucent or opaque, fluid, shiny or dull, rich, varied, impasto, sensual, natural.

Tempera is pigment + egg yolk *as a binder*

Characteristics: Opaque, chalky, flat, pure, dry, even, smooth, cool, inexpressive.

The Support: this is the surface that has been painted on. Different surfaces create different effects:

- Wooden panel or board tends to lead to a smoother and more detailed painting
- Metal for smooth and intricate detail
- Canvas or linen for a freer and more textured surface with looser brushstrokes and **dry brush work** so one colour is fragmented over the under painting. Monet's water lilies are a good example of this technique

If oil paint is put on an unsealed surface the colours will fade and become dull as the oil soaks away so usually the surface is sealed, traditionally with a glue size or modern artists use an acrylic sealant on the surface before they paint.

The Ground: This is the base colour and will determine the mood of the painting. In oil painting it is customary to work from a dark or mid tone towards the lighter tones. So artists

will paint the whole surface an **earth colour** to give depth and atmosphere. However the Impressionists changed this. They wanted to work quickly and create bright light paintings so they prepared their canvases with **lead white** so that the colours would appear brilliant. Most modern artists have continued to prepare their canvases with a white ground.

The Under- painting: this term refers to the base colours that an artist **blocks out** the main areas of his compositions with.

Blocking out: This is when the artist fills in the main forms of the composition with solid slabs of colour as a preliminary to adding detail.

Pigment: this is the colour. Earth colours such as ochre are made from ground minerals. In the 19th century chemical dyes were introduced, these were stronger, cheaper and made more reliable colours.

The Oil: linseed oil is the most commonly used oil; though artists use a wide variety of oils with different properties, some dry faster, others yellow less. By changing the quantity of oil the artist can control the shine of the paint and the brilliance of the colour.

Glazing: The use of oil allows artists to create translucent layers of colour. So if you put down a pure yellow, allow it to dry and then put an oily coat of pure blue over it you will still see the yellow coming through from underneath as if looking through stained glass, thus creating a fresh green **translucent** effect.

Wax: The wax in the paint gives it body and thickness. Wax is **opaque** (light doesn't pass through it) and dull. Its properties are opposite to those of the oil so an artist can increase the quantity of wax to create a denser, matt surface. It is good for creating an **impasto** (thick paint) effect.

Blending: because it is slow drying oil is much easier to blend than acrylic paint, this allows the artist to render the changing light over forms.

Stippling: this is an effect achieved by the end of the brush being tapped repeatedly against the surface to produce a series of light dots of colour.

Wet into Wet: wet paint is applied to previous layers of wet paint. This technique requires a fast way of working, because the art work has to be finished before the first layers have dried. If a colour is applied onto wet paint it tends to mix in a smooth way creating an intense and soft effect. This is difficult to achieve without the colours becoming muddied.

Alla prima: this means painted on while the ground is still wet.

Sfumato: a technique in which the artist overlays translucent layers of colour to create perceptions of depth, volume and form. In particular, it refers to the blending of colours or tones so subtly that there is no perceptible transition.

En plein air: French for 'out of doors' meaning in front of the landscape not in the studio.

Dry Brush: by dragging a dry paint mix across a rough surface a texture can be created leaving the 'pockets' of colour from underneath to show through. Monet uses this extensively in his paintings as does Francis Bacon.

Textiles: Critical Starter Sheet

Start by compiling a list of words that you are going to use. Then answering the questions below will help you to collect them in a meaningful order.

1. What is it made from?

At a basic level the raw materials might be: wool (sheep, camel), cotton or silk but most textile artists involve multiple materials and processes: synthetic fibres, paper, hair; or the artist re-cycles materials. If so what were the original processes that the materials went through before being transformed by the artist?

2. How has the raw material been prepared?

Refined, bleached, spun etc?

3. Has it been coloured before being used?

Dyed, stained, aged, distressed. It is useful to refer to this base colour as the 'ground'.

The artist has probably then added other colours and materials?

4. How has the artist made the piece?

Describe the techniques, structure and form of the work.

5. What is the function or purpose?

- **Aesthetic;** *is it an art object to be admired, contemplated or challenged by the viewer?*
- **Practical;** *perhaps it is to be worn or to give shelter?*
- **Symbolic;** *does it signify cultural or social meaning?*

Many pieces will fulfil more than one function, for example a wedding dress is: symbolic of a culture and of a rite of passage; aesthetically beautiful and at the same time a practical item of clothing.

Then write your description.

Artspell: sowing and sewing

Van Gogh 'The Sower' and Vermeer 'The Lacemaker'.



An A to Z of Textiles words:

A	adorned
appliqué	Needlework in which small pieces of cloth are sewn or stuck in a pattern on a larger piece.
alternating	
acrylic	Artificial fabrics - petroleum derivatives.
B	Bobbin
batik	Painting or printing with dye on cloth using wax on the parts which do not have any colour.
bleached	Whitened by chemicals or sun.
block printed	Using a raised wood block as a relief surface to print such as in traditional Indian textiles.
boucle	Wool which has small twists in it, which look like knots.
bonding	Firmly joining different types of fabric using heat or glue.
bodice	The top part of a dress above the waist
blanket stitch	Loose stitch over the edge of a piece of cloth
binding	Cloth that is fastened to the edge of something to protect it.
C	Crumpled, chunky and creased?
crochet	Using wool or cotton with a thick needle with a hook at the end to make a pattern of connected threads.
calico	A type of heavy or rough white cotton.
corset	A piece of women's underwear fitting the body tightly to make the waist appear smaller.
cellulose	A natural substance that forms cell walls in plants and is used in making plastics and paper
crisp	Crisp folds of cloth? Crisp lines?
complex	As in complex embroidery?
constructed	As in sculptural textiles built around a framework, armature or bodice.
corduroy	Cotton fabric made with ridges or piping.
chenille	Wool or cotton thread mixed with silk giving velvet like cloth.
cotton	Textile fibre from the seeds of the cotton plant.
D	Distressed or detailed?
darn	Repair cloth by stitching over it.
dissolvable	Or soluble fabric.
decorative	As in decorative needlework, patterns etc.
deconstructed	Taken apart: perhaps an item of clothing that has been made into a different form?
dye	Change the colour of cloth with chemical or natural dyes.
downy	As in soft cloth or feathery textures?
E	Entangled and entwined, as the threads in the sewing draw?
emboss	A raised design on paper or cloth
embroider	Decorate with patterns of stitching. As in hand embroidered
embellish	To add extra decoration.
ephemeral	Delicate decoration made from thin wire or thread.
elasticated	

F	Fine and fiddly?
felt	Compressed wool matting.
fibre	A material made from a mass of natural or manmade threads: cotton, wool, nerve, muscle and optical fibres.
fiddly	Detailed and difficult!
flax	A plant with blue flowers that is grown to make linen.
filigree	Fine and detailed decoration made from wire or cotton.
floral	Flowery!
functional	As in practical items for wear?
G	Garments
gossamer	Thin and translucent as a dragonfly's wing.
gauze	Light transparent cloth.
H	Haphazard sewing?
hessian	(Or Burlap)A strong rough brown cloth used for making sacks.
hemp	A plant used for making rope and a coarse cloth as well as the drug cannabis.
I	Intricate
interference pattern	Optical illusion created when two grids overlap; sometimes used in textile design.
K	knitting
knotting (knotted)	
L	Layered and lining
lace	Delicate material made from threads of cotton, silk etc. That are twisted into a pattern of holes. (Alternatively a shoe lace!)
lacing	As in the lacing on a bodice or on boots.
loom	A machine for making cloth by twisting threads between other threads. The principal design of a loom is the same in all cultures and dates back to prehistoric times.
looping	
linen	A cloth made from flax for high quality clothes, sheets etc.
M	Is for machine embroidered
mesh	
mordant	Chemical used to fix a dye onto fabric
muslin	Cotton cloth that is almost transparent. Do not confuse with Muslim : a person whose religion is Islam
N	Is for needle skills!
nylon	Polyamide discovered in 1937 and now used to make synthetic fibres for textiles
nap	
O	Original and ornate?
organza	
P	Precious and patterned?
pleating (pleated)	Regular, repeated folds, ironed or sewn into cloth.
patchwork	Larger cloth made by sewing together small pieces.
plastic	
puckering	Small folds or lines in cloth
plaiting	To twist three or more strands together.

R	Ruffles and ruffs.
running stitch	Simple - up and under - stitch to join two pieces of fabric.
repeated	As in repeating patterns or echoed forms?
recycled	As in reused clothing and fabrics
S	Sumptuously sewn!
soluble fabric	
silk	Thread made from the cocoon of the silk worm.
sisal	Fibre made from a tropical plant.
sculpted	As in shaped and given form.
screen printed	Using a masking stencil (photographic resist or waxed paper) to print a design or image onto fabric.
spin (spun)	To make thread from wool, cotton or silk by twisting it.
strapping	
stencilled	Design cut from card to reproduce onto fabric.
starched	Cloth which is stiffened by use of a chemical or spray starch.
synthetic	Such as nylon and viscose.
T is for Textiles	T is for torn, textured, tasselled and tattered? T is also for more Textiles words? Email Mr Poppy with any that you think should be added to this list?
tatting	
tied	
tattered	
tufted	
tension	Being stretched tight
torsion	Twisting especially when the other end is fixed
tweed	A thick rough cloth made from wool that has small spots of different coloured thread in it: tweed jacket.
V	Voluminous and veined?
velvet	Cloth made from silk, cotton or nylon with a thick soft surface.
W	Wrinkled and watery?
weave (woven)	To make cloth by passing threads over and under each other (usually on a loom).
worsted	A cloth made from wool with a smooth surface: a grey worsted suit.
wired	
warp	lengthways yarns
weft	yarn woven across the weft
wool	Rutland sheep!
Y	
yarn	Thread that has been spun.

Looking at Sculpture - some starting points:

Carved
Modelled
Objets trouves
(found objects)
Welded
Constructed
Armature
Framework
Structure
Model
Maquette
Moulded
Modelled
Malleable
Chiselled
Hewn ~ Hacked ~
Smoothed.
Cast
Stone ~ Marble ~
Bronze ~ Plaster ~
Clay
Lost wax
Patina
Abraded

Sculpture is either **constructed** from wood, plastics or metal (steel or iron) or it is **moulded** from clay or plaster or it is **carved** from wood, plaster or stone. The artist might have used natural **found materials** such as branches or **manufactured** materials such as scrap metal to make an **assemblage** of forms.

So did the sculptor start with a **block** and carve it? Or was it **shaped** from a soft material and then **cast***? The surface will give you clues; you might find traces of the artist's finger marks or evidence of his chisel? He may have worked over an **armature** to support his clay?

Stone sculpture will be coloured and textured according to the original stone such as hard and smooth **marble** or grittier **granite**.

Wood can be left rough or polished smooth or even painted? Can you tell what species of tree it is from? Steel can be shiny or left to go rusty etc.

***Cast sculpture** is when the sculptor started with clay, plaster or wax and when they had moulded the forms of the original they cast it by creating a mould into which they poured a molten metal (usually **bronze** which is a mixture of copper and iron) to form a permanent version of their original (look up 'lost wax technique' for more detail). Because metal is expensive, cast sculptures are usually hollow – *tap the sculpture to find out if you are outside but not if you are in the gallery!* Casting allows the artist to make several copies of their original. Bronze sculptures can be **polished** to a reflective shine or left to **oxidise** becoming greenish or shades of brown. The surface finish is called the **patina**.

Always relate sculptures to a human scale. How does the sculpture of a walking man by Giacometti relate to the surrounding space?



Form and space in Sculpture

Sculptors are dealing with real form rather than the illusion of form. In a sculpture it is the relationship between form and space which is crucial, as in these examples.



Maillol	Archipenko	Giacometti
The forms are expanding out into the surrounding space	Intersecting planes create the forms	The surrounding space is compressing the form
He has emphasized volume and weight.	The shapes curve sinuously in a contrapposto pose and echo, to create rhythm.	Forward movement is implied as the figure slices through space
Although the form is standing still, the potential of movement is suggested by the contrapposto pose.	The artist has broken the form with holes, so that the negative spaces have the same importance as the positive forms.	The broken texture of the surface suggests the transitory nature of the form.

Sculpture is usually exhibited on a pedestal (a base), a plinth (block) or on a socle (a pillar/column like pedestal)

Photography

When analysing photography you can use the seven formal points as you would with a painting. There are, however, some points that are of particular relevance:

1. The Gaze (look at the notes on The Viewer and the Gaze)
2. Cropping
3. Time
4. Depth of field
5. The lens

Depth of field: this is the range of focus in a photograph. Modern photographs generally have a much greater depth of field: both foreground and background are in focus. A photographer will often use the limitations of depth of field for expressive effect to draw the subject towards us, against an out of focus background for example.



In this composition by Bill Brandt he has created a surrealist effect by confusing our expectations; whilst the beach recedes in atmospheric perspective the cliffs are still within the range of the depth of field, so are unnervingly crisp.

The French photographer Henri Cartier Bresson spoke of '**The decisive moment**' as being crucial to a successful image.



A photograph is of a split second. Consider why the photographer has chosen at this precise moment to click the shutter?

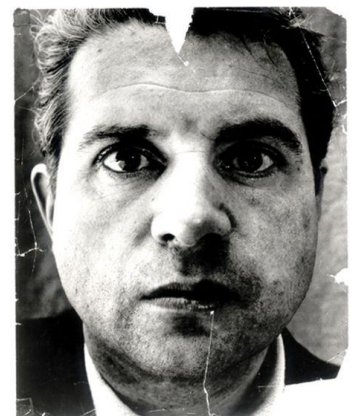
Cropping:

This is when objects are cut through by the picture's edge. A photograph may sometimes be carefully composed to minimise these cut off points but it is more usual for the photographer to use cropping as a strong element of the design of the composition.

Cropping is what reminds the viewer that that we are looking through a window or seeing a framed portion of a reality that continues outside of the frame.

- Captured
- Posed
- Snapped
- Photo Journalist
- Documentary
- Factual
- Reportage
- Social comment
- Advertising
- Voyeurism
- Candid
- Intimate
- Focused
- The decisive moment
- Split second
- Depth of Field
- Drama
- In/Out of focus
- The Shutter

The Lens is the eye of the camera, it determines how the image will look. For example if the subject is close to a wide angle lens then the face will be slightly distorted giving an enhanced sense of closeness.



The Gaze of the photographer and of the subject is often private and intimate. However, when an image is displayed in public this personal moment is shared with strangers from a different time and space!

Part II: Contextual

The Function and Purpose of Art

Art has different purposes that often change over time and which may no longer follow the artist's original intention. You will need to research this contextual information. The museum label is often a good starting point, together with these online resources:

For factual information use the schools edition of **The Encyclopaedia Britannica** as your first call (the Smallbone Library website). This gives three levels of feedback: Primary, GCSE and A/IB level. It is often helpful to start with the basic level. For example when looking up Surrealism the GCSE response will be short and to the point then once you understand this move to the higher level for more detail then try Oxford Art Online:

<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/>

The Art entries on Wikipedia are usually very good but it always best to get your initial information from the above sites.

Remember to keep a note of your sources as you go and to cite these on your sketchbook pages.

Style and Meaning

Style

Expressive
Free
Wild
Daring
Carefree
Loose

Traditional
Classical
Surreal
Cubist
Abstract
Modern
Realistic
Photographic
Detailed
Obsessive
Meticulous
Tight

Skilful
Naturalistic
Picturesque
Visual
Illustrative
Tribal

Simple
Naïve
Childlike
Primitive

Complex
Eloquent
Imaginative
Fantasy

Passionate
Restrained
Controlled

Romanticism (18th and 19th century): This is the first Art movement that had a distinct set of aims and an ideology. The Romantics thought that art should emphasise feeling and content rather than celebrating order and beauty. Romanticism is often concerned with the sublime, the supernatural, and the exotic; the free expression of feelings often concerning love or death.

Arnold Böcklin 'The Isle of the dead' 1886



Surrealism: This was a 20th-century literary and artistic movement that attempted to express the workings of the subconscious by fantastic imagery and incongruous juxtaposition of subject matter. Nowadays the word surreal is often used to describe something that is strange or out of place.



Meret Oppenheim 'Luncheon in Fur' 1936

Some useful words to describe style:

Simple: You can describe works as being 'simple' - meaning straightforward or direct and uncomplicated - avoid saying 'simplistic' unless you intend to suggest that it is without any merit.

Capture: an artist captures a scene or a photographer captures the decisive moment. Avoid writing 'gets'.

Ambiguous: art rarely has a straightforward interpretation, rather our reactions are usually ambiguous: having more than one interpretation. Artists often make their work deliberately **ambivalent**.

Juxtapose

Artists often contrast unusual forms by placing them next to each other. This helps to emphasise the intrinsic qualities of each object or image.

Contemporary

1. Living or occurring at the same time.
2. Belonging to the present.
3. Modern in style



Damien Hirst 'Spin Drawing' 1995

Irony

Patricia Waller has evoked an ironic response by: choosing a disjuncture of scale; by using the inappropriate media of textiles for a violent scene; by using a style that is supposed to be soft and gentle for a gruesome act, and of course by using black humour.



A 'Function and Meaning' Glossary

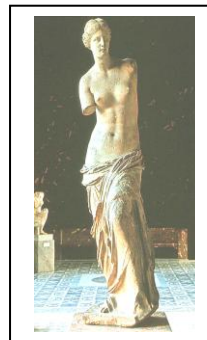
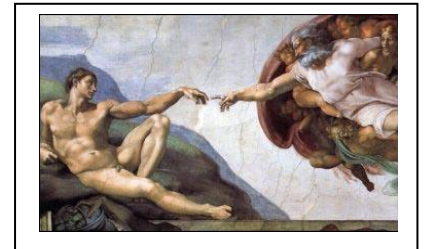
When writing about artworks ask yourself this question:

Why has this artefact been made?



*Perhaps to demonstrate the artist's **skill**? Or to uplift the viewer spiritually and to reinforce a religious message by narrating a story? Or to be aesthetically pleasing? Or to challenge*

the viewer's preconceptions about art? Or as an aid to magic and the spiritual?



This A-Z glossary of words and ideas may help you with your answers:

Aesthetic: Concerning pure beauty: beautiful or pleasing to the eye. Some modern art attempts to be **Anti Aesthetic**.

Art: The use of the imagination to express ideas or feelings.

Beauty: The philosopher Kant argued that there were two kinds of beauty: **free beauty** and **dependant beauty**. Free beauty assumes no idea as to what an object represents and is instinctively appreciated by us all - such as a sunset or a flower - whereas dependant beauty relates the object to an idea and is judged beautiful in respect to how it meets the perfection of the object - such as Leonardo's portrait of the Mona Lisa. Dependent beauty has to be learnt - such as the appreciation of Art - whereas free beauty is already evident in nature.

Conventional: Following the traditional rules - such as in a representational landscape painting

Artefact: An object that is made by a person.

Commission: A contract or agreement from a patron to an artist to produce an agreed artwork. Prior to the 20th century most art was produced to commission.

Dialectic: A debate between two views. Often art seeks to promote discussion and argument.

Conceptual: Idea based art, where the artist seeks to stimulate debate as to philosophical meanings.

Gallery Space: (See the section on museums and galleries).

Genre: A type of art (such as still life painting)

Hierarchy: Until the nineteenth century there was a set order to the importance of subjects in art:

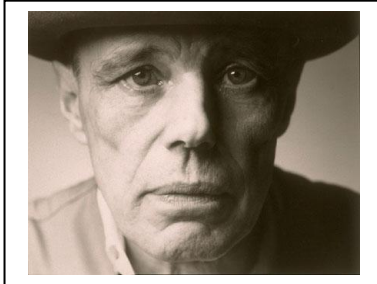
1. History Painting (scenes from the bible or from classical legends or from political events)
2. Portraiture
3. Still life painting
4. Landscape painting

This changed when 'How?' a picture was painted became more valued than the subject of the artwork.

Narrative: to tell a story. This may be to instruct - didactic- such as in a religious painting or to use allegory to evoke emotional and spiritual feelings. Or the story may be for political ends to reinforce the power of a leader or an ideology (set of beliefs).

Manifesto: Many modern art movements have set out their aims in a manifesto - as a political party would declare its beliefs and ideas: the Futurists, Dadaists, Surrealists and De stijl are examples of this.

Modern artist: Since the nineteenth century the feelings of the artist have become



increasingly important to the meaning of the art work. This was not the case previously, so do not always assume that the artist is expressing their ideas - often they are simply earning a living by expressing the wishes of their patron.

Contemporary artists are very different - Kurt Schwitters said, *'Everything that the artist spits is Art'*. The German philosopher **Hegel** - saw art as a sort of "conscience" for the world and believed that it should exist on the perimeter of society to reflect and critique. He said that the clash of contrary principles helps society progress (see **dialectic**).

Object trouve: A found object that is exhibited as a work of art.

Patron: Someone who supports an artist, either by buying their work in a gallery or by employing them to make works of art to their taste (hence: **patronage**).

Representation: An artificial model of reality

Nature: Art often seeks to imitate nature, but also to idealise it, or alternatively, to construct a world of the imagination apart from nature.

Objective: Independent of perception and the observer's conceptions. Objectivity is essential to scientific experiments (see Subjective).

Original: The modern world gives great importance to originality. This is not so in other art traditions, such as China, where artists seek to sustain the values of the past.

Oeuvre: An artist's body of works (as in their entire production)

Subjective: Relating to the mind of the thinking subject and not the object. Art is by nature subjective as it is open to different interpretation (see objective).

Perception: Becoming aware of something through the senses.

State Art: Art sponsored by a government, usually to promote a specific ideology though propaganda.

Sublime: A feeling of smallness in comparison to the magnitude of nature (or of God's creation). In the eighteenth century Edmund Burke wrote on *'The Beautiful and the Sublime'* suggesting that fear and the sublime were more powerful than beauty in evoking emotional responses from the spectator. Artists have often followed his ideas from the apocalyptic canvases of John Martin to the abstractions of Rothko.

Site Specific: Installation or sculpture (or murals) that are made for a special location.

Tradition: A long established way of doing things.

Religious Art: Most art before the 20th century was produced as an aid to worship. '

Reality: Things as they are or as they appear to be. Artists often play with concepts of reality by for example mixing real objects with illusionary painting (Picasso/Pop Art) Artists also try to reconnect with reality by breaking down the barriers between gallery and the outside world.

Readymade: A term coined by Marcel Duchamp to describe the man made objects that he exhibited as original artworks.

Verisimilitude: The appearance of truth to reality.

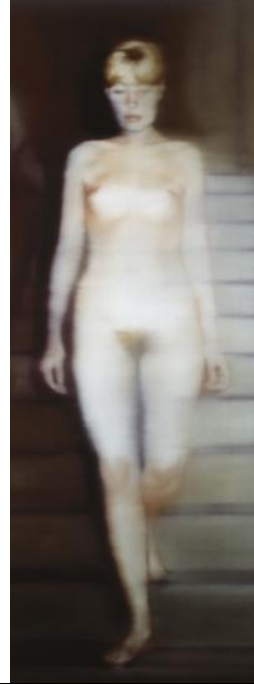
Some Art words that help to define style.



Kritios Boy 4thcBC Greek.



Nina Volkova 'Textile Worker'



Gerhardt Richter 'Ema' 1952



Wyndham Lewis 'Blast' 1915

Idealised

The Artist has perfected reality. In advertising and fashion, models are usually idealized.

Realist

This is the attempt to show an exact imitation of the world. It is also used to describe showing the ordinary and everyday in a straightforward manner.

Photorealist

The artist deliberately imitates the visual qualities of a photograph.

Abstract

The use of colours and shapes to create an effect rather than attempting to represent real life accurately.



Erich Heckel 'Nude on the beach' 1913



Duchamp Nude Descending a Staircase



The Wigned Victory of Samothrace

Schematic

As in a diagram or plan. Animations such as South Park or The Simpsons often use schematic figures.

Expressionist

Expressionism: This is when the artist's emotions are the main subject of the work. It is a subjective response.

Cubist

An amalgamation of multiple viewpoints into a multifaceted surface of geometrical planes

Allegorical

When an image is used to symbolize a deeper moral or spiritual meaning. The winged goddess above is an allegory of the Greeks victory in battle

The Viewer

Robert Doisneau 'Lovers, Paris' 1930



Where are we, the viewer, in relation to the work?

Viewpoint

That is the point that the artist/audience is looking from. The spectator's viewpoint is very important in determining the effect of the image on us.

If the picture is in strict linear perspective there will be one fixed viewpoint. Often artists combine several viewpoints, even though the picture appears to be from one. Non Western Art, Cubism and Modern Art often make use of multiple viewpoints.

Do we take the same viewpoint as the artist? Does the artist want us to be drawn into the action or to stand apart?

A **high viewpoint** gives power to the **spectator**.

A **low viewpoint** makes it seem that we are less important than the figures in the scene; this is often the case with religious subjects.

If we are at the same level then we *confront a scene directly as part of a drama and perhaps feel* more included in the events.

The Voyeur: someone who gets pleasure from spying on others. Sometimes the artist makes us unseen onlookers into people's private lives.

Robert Doisneau 'Le Regard Obscure'



The Gaze

This is the word art historians use to refer to how we look at a figurative image.

There are different types of gaze:

1. The spectator's gaze: the gaze of the viewer at an image of a person
2. The intra-diegetic gaze: a gaze of one depicted person at another
3. The direct address to the viewer: the gaze of a person looking 'out of the frame' as if at the viewer
4. The look of the artist - or of the camera - in other words how the artist appears to look at the people depicted.



James Elkins suggests different ways you look at a figurative painting in a gallery:

"You, looking at the painting, figures in the painting who look out at you, figures in the painting who look at one another, figures in the painting who look at objects or stare off into space or have their eyes closed. In addition there is often the museum guard, who may be looking at the back of your head, and the other people in the gallery, who may be looking at you or at the painting. There are imaginary observers, too: the artist, who was once looking at this painting, the models for the figures in the painting, who may once have seen themselves there, and all the other people who have seen the painting - the buyers, the museum officials, and so forth. And finally, there are also people who have never seen the painting: they may know it only from reproductions... or from descriptions."

The Gaze

"Looking is not indifferent. There can never be any question of 'just looking'." Victor Burgin (1982)

The gaze is a way of considering the social power relationships between **the observer** and **the observed** that are implied by figurative images, especially with respect to the **male gaze** and the **female gaze**: men gaze at women; women gaze at themselves; women gaze at other women; and the effects of these ways of seeing.



"The gaze signifies a psychological relationship of power, in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze"
Jonathan Schroeder

John Berger observed that *'according to usage and conventions which are at last being questioned but have by no means been overcome - men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at'*. Berger argues that in European art from the Renaissance onwards women were depicted as being *'aware of being seen by a [male] spectator'*.

'Women are depicted in a different way to men - because the "ideal" spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him'

John Berger 'Ways of Seeing' 1972

'In advertising males gaze, and females are gazed at'

Jib Fowles 1996.

'Female models treat the lens as a substitute for the eye of an imaginary male onlooker; 'It could be argued that when women look at these ads, they are actually seeing themselves as a man might see them'. These advertisements 'appear to imply a male point of view, even though the intended viewer is often a woman. So the women who look at these ads are being invited to identify both with the person being viewed and with an implicit, opposite-sex viewer' Messaris 1997

The Human form

Alice Neel Pregnant woman 1974

Although Neel has posed the woman in a traditional, reclining position her raw treatment and the honesty of her drawing make this an uncomfortable scene for the spectator; the woman is naked not nude.



Naked or Nude?

The Art critic Kenneth Clarke made a distinction between naked and nude to help describe how the unclothed figure is portrayed in art. When the life model is posing we see them as a nude, but if they wander around the room they are naked.

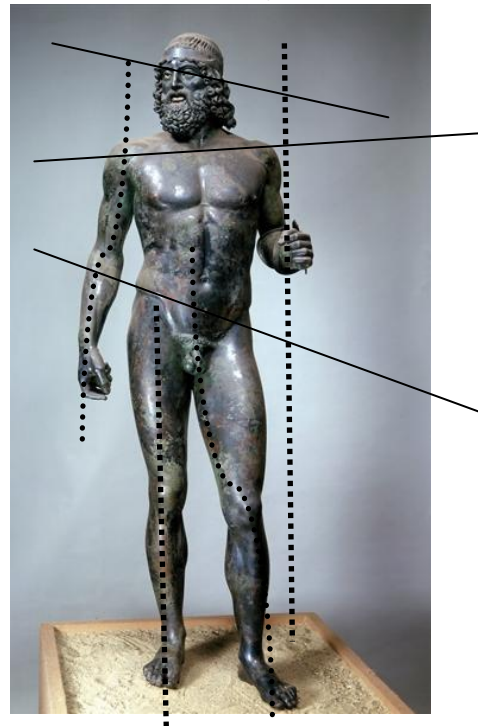
Sexist?	
Masculine	Feminine
Passive	Active
Submissive	Overpowering
Powerful	Dominant
Natural	Threatening
Unnatural	Artificial
Sexy	Sensual
Effeminate	Androgynous
Challenging	Unclothed
Naked	Nude
vulnerable	prone
	reclining

John Berger developed this idea in his book 'Ways of Seeing'. Often men are shown in active poses and women in relaxed poses. John Berger suggests that in images "Men act women appear".

Contrapposto

Humans rarely stand in a symmetrical pose; usually the weight is on one side of the figure. Greek sculptors exploited this to give a sense of movement to their figures. The pose is called contrapposto: one leg is relaxed and one tense; the opposing arm is relaxed and the other tense; one hip is raised, the other lowered; one shoulder raised, the other lowered.

Riace Warrior 5th Century Greek



The beauty of the form in this sculpture make us view it as art and so he is nude not naked.

The Museum and the Art Gallery

When we see a work of art in a museum or an art gallery we experience it differently from a reproduction. If you are writing about the artwork on display you will need to consider some, or all, of these factors:

1. The frame
2. The lighting (Natural, artificial etc)
3. The architecture and decoration of the room (flooring?)
4. The other works of art in the gallery
5. The architecture of the museum

We look at objects differently in an Art gallery because we arrive with the expectation of a special experience. The surroundings help to create this special atmosphere. In a modern gallery the neutral white space is evenly lit and devoid of distractions. The audience is subdued and visitors tend to show the same respect that you might expect of those visiting a shrine or place of worship. They are full of expectation and heightened sensibility.

"The unfamiliar context sharpens our perception" David Thompson

Even if you put everyday objects in this context we see them differently:



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917. Duchamp believed that the urinal became a work of art because it was presented as such by the artist. It is more accurate to suggest, however, that the urinal becomes a work of art when it is successfully exhibited in an art gallery/museum. *Fountain* points as much to the power of the museum as it does to creative freedom.

"We give (to the fragments of reality) the quality of perception and evaluation that we normally accord to art"

In traditional galleries rich surroundings, ornate frames, gold and expensive wall coverings help to create a sense of value.

The Frame can be like a window, creating an illusion that we are looking through to see a view? Or in modern art there is often no frame, so that the canvas projects from the wall like an object.

The style of the frame may be contemporary with the painting? Or may be from another era (The Impressionists liked to use 18th c Baroque frames)

Ornate, gilded, decorative, carved, embellished, distressed, simple, rebated (set back)

Always read the label.....

And write down the details in your sketchbook so that you can look up the work on the museum website later. If there is an explanatory text this will really help your critical and contextual response but remember to credit this source and use quotation marks for any words copied directly (for example: *Information from Tate Modern labels*).



Date and place of execution will help you to relate the work to the rest of the artist's oeuvre.

Edward Burra (1907-1978)
'In The Bar' New York
1937 Watercolour on paper
37.5 x 25cm
Scottish Museum of Modern Art
(Bequeathed by his estate)

The Artist Dates of birth and nationality will help you research latter.

Medium Use this information to help you examine closely how the artist has achieved the effects. Burra is renowned for his large scale watercolours for example.

Dimensions: These are important to record the scale of the work. For example this is a much larger piece than one might expect from the reproduction.

Provenance
This is the history of the artwork, starting in the artist's studio and then listing all the different owners of the work. In an exhibition just the present owner is on the label or sometimes 'Private Collection', but the catalogue will give the full provenance.

Using sources:

No one expects everything you write to be original thought; you will need to combine your own observations with what you have read. It is, however, essential that you acknowledge other writer's ideas and credit your sources. This is just as important when you make annotations in your sketchbooks as when you write an essay. So tell us where the information came from:

- Web Site address? (*This information came from Oxford Art Online <http://www.....>*)
- Gallery label? (*The Tate gallery label informed me that.....*)
- Artist quote? (*Banksey said that "....."*)
- Book, newspaper, magazine? (*The Art critic for The Independent writes that.....*)

Make it very clear which words are your own on your sketchbook pages by perhaps changing colour or presentation style?

Which photographs are yours? Which are your father's? Which are from the internet?
All these are valid sources for ideas but you should not take credit for other people's creativity, so write next to every photo where it is from.

When you find a passage that is particularly useful you need to decide whether you are going to quote directly or to make notes from it and reinterpret the ideas in your own text so that you do not commit plagiarism.

Look at these examples of what is and what is not acceptable. The paragraph is taken from *Art for Dummies* (2001) by Thomas Hoving and is about Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon":

"The art significance of this chaotic, repellent, magnetic, and lyrical painting is that from this point onward, great art didn't have to be aesthetically right or nice."

This is a good quote so how might you use it?

1. The art significance of this chaotic, repellent, magnetic, and lyrical painting is that from this point onward, great art didn't have to be aesthetically right or nice. **NO this is Plagiarism: the text has simply been lifted.**

2. In *Art for Dummies* (2001) Thomas Hoving states that: *"The art significance of this chaotic, repellent, magnetic, and lyrical painting is that from this point onward, great art didn't have to be aesthetically right or nice."* This comment on Picasso's *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon* shows that artists were now free to make art in any form they wanted.

YES this is fine. The quotation is clearly cited and the writer has commented on its meaning.

3. The importance of this mad, ugly, appealing and magical painting is that from that time important pictures didn't need to look beautiful. **No; this is still plagiarism. The writer has simply rewritten the text replacing similar words: they have stolen the ideas.**

4. Because Picasso's painting broke the rules about what was considered beautiful or appropriate, in painting artists were free to make art any way that they wished. This can be seen in the early works of the DADA artists. **YES this is fine: the writer has understood the idea and has developed it.**

¹ This is a *Glossary of action verbs* for you to use, which will help you to meet the exam criteria for *GCSE, AS, A2 and Visual Art*.

Action verbs:	
Analyse	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements, structure, underlying and any interrelationships involved.
Compare	Describe two (or more) situations and present the similarities between them.
Consider	Contemplate carefully and reflectively with regard to taking some action or forming an opinion.
Contrast	Describe two (or more) situations and present the differences between them.
Demonstrate	Prove or make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating and explaining with examples or practical application.
Describe	Present the characteristics of a particular topic.
Discuss	Offer a considered and balanced review of a particular topic. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by research evidence and sound argument.
Evaluate	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations of different evidence and arguments.
Examine	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
Explain	Describe, giving reasons.
Explore	Study, analyse or examine systematically through a process of discovery.
Identify	Recognize and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature.
Interpret	Use knowledge and understanding to explain, represent symbolically and, where appropriate, draw inferences and create meaning.
Investigate	Observe, study, or make a detailed and systematic examination, in order to establish facts and reach conclusions.
Present	Offer for observation, examination or consideration, to show or display a creative act.

¹ Pg 33 Glossary of action verbs. Visual arts Guide 2009

Examples of Student writing:

Colour

Earth colours such as yellow ochre, raw sienna and burnt umber have been used that further emphasis the naturalistic quality and suggesting a reality beneath the dream like exterior. These mineral pigments create a warm/cold contrast with the cooler hues of cobalt turquoise, phthalo green and a hint of Prussian blue. This blue also creates an energy through their diluted, watery marks as well as the thicker green paint where each stroke of the paintbrush is clearly visible.

Line

The main focus of this painting is the artist's use of line; the light, subtle charcoal not only traces the outline of the figure and shapes in the composition but also brings the whole painting into focus. However, Rivers cleverly prevents these charcoal lines from being overwhelming by keeping the marks sensitive and sketchy rather than thick and solid. This therefore creates subtle definition, making sense of the seemingly random patches of colour. The lines in the foreground are more sharply focussed than those in the distance, as they become thinner and less heavy almost to the point where they are so subtle they are hardly seen. Moreover, there is a combination of straight and curved lines, with the sharp edges of the sweeping linear marks cutting into the colour, creating further contrasts. However, not only do these lines provide and energy and focus to the image, but also create a mixed-media effect suggestive of collage techniques being applied to the painting, producing a diverse and interesting outcome.

Texture

Wou-Ki has used impasto, where skeins of paint physically sit on the surface of the canvass, to bring the piece to life and add an energy through the swiftness of the strokes. The opaque white on black also helps to break up the tightness of some of the more detailed mark makings to create a looseness.

Composition:

Traditionally an image of this sort would have a focal point with at least one image standing out. However, though the artist has created a radial point around which the separate images are arranged, the edges are blurred and the crisp edges are lost which goes against convention. This has the advantage of placing emphasis on other images within the composition, especially the blue trio of men in the top left corner, as the boarder of their image is crisp and isolated. What this isolation and detachment achieves is the impression of immense space around the three men, a sense that is further heightened by the contrast with the chaos and activity that is present at the centre of the combine. Rauschenberg seeks to draw attention away from the space the individual occupies by placing an image of a plant in the void of the upper left hand corner. By doing this Rauschenberg detracts from the impression he has created, but he also highlights the frailty of his composition

Tone and Colour:

The artist uses light and chiaroscuro show that the figure is in three dimensions which makes it stand out more. The light curve lines emphasise this form from the plain flat background. In contrast, the dark colours create a sense of distance. The bull image in the foreground stands out against the plain background, drawing our attention to the curve of his powerful head. The artist creates dynamic focal points and compositions with the use of empty negative space. This piece is predominantly monochromatic. The artist is experimenting restricted palette but in some areas, the painter has used slightly warmer and contrasting colour, such as the golden brown at the middle. This gives the painting an earth quality and slightly warmer feeling in order to balance with the cold colour. The clashing of colour of red, black and white shows a sense of aggression.

Relating your own work to Art that you have looked at:

In my compositions I have used a variety of materials to emphasize depth and physical feeling in the paintings such as wood, wire and sand. This has been done by an impasto technique to strengthen the surface of the painting.

My subject is generally focused on time and entrapment; I have used similar materials to Anselm Kiefer an artist who outlines the sense of no freedom and war through irony to create a dramatic and raw effect.

In my paintings I contrast the smooth and rough to create the lights and darks. The smooth areas are with varnish so are reflective of the light outlining that image. The rough areas are to show physical emotion and pain through the darkness of shadows forming throughout the painting.

My art is a representation of pentimenti, where we can see the original markings and layering of paint and how it has come together. The heavy and harsh lines describe the planes and contours of the graphical images used boldly marking out the directions of the paths. The more subtle lines are to create contrast.

The paintings are dreamlike giving a sense of confusion to the viewer. I have used moody and earth colours in the rough background of the landscape but then the glue markings (often with the gold tint) to contrast the background bringing depth to the painting by layering.

The format of the canvas is echoed by the train tracks, the ship sails repeat the shape of the window frames; this then balances the paintings because it is of a large landscape therefore needs to be well contrasted throughout the canvas.

The spectator's viewpoint is focused on them being part of the scene as though they are stood on the train-tracks and looking into the distant skyline this reinforces the dramatic physical feeling of the painting.