

A Level Fine Art (OCR)



Student Handbook



Course Overview

An outline of what the course entails. For more information, search online for the full OCR Fine Art A Level Specification 2015.

Year 1		What it's worth
September – December	Skills development Workshops Mini projects	(100% of AS Grade)
January – April	Exam/mock exam paper 10 hour exam in April	
June - July	Return from study leave Begin year 2	

Year 2		What it's worth
September – January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Investigation • Related Study (3000 words) 	60% of whole A2 grade
February– April	Exam paper 10 hour exam in April	40% of whole A2 grade
June - July	Study leave Course ends	

Assessment

All work is assessed by your teachers, and then moderated by a visiting OCR moderator in June.

Assessment Objectives	
AO1 25% of overall grade	Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.
AO2 25% of overall grade	Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.
AO3 25% of overall grade	Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.
AO4 25% of overall grade	Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Commitment

How can I make sure that I am successful?

You get out of this what you put into it.

In our experience, a student's grade can be directly linked to their commitment to the course. This grid outlines how attitude and commitment can lead to success or failure.

A	B	C	D	E/F/U
Stay all lesson Arrives equipped with ideas and materials	Stay all lesson Arrived with work and equipment	Stay all lesson Arrives with work	Arriving late Finishing early	Arriving late Finishing early
Attend every lesson Numerous works from Primary sources	Attend every lesson	Attend every lesson Primary sources but reliant on Secondary	Handing work in not in order and unfinished	Handing work in not in order and unfinished
Work in frees. Work after school. Work at Home Work to refine	Work in frees. Work after school. Work at home Refines in places	Work out of lessons Refines in places, some inconsistency	Handing in rushed work Not labelling work	Handing in rushed work Not labelling work
Organised. Always meeting deadlines. Work in order and presented	Always meeting deadlines Work in order and presented	Meets deadlines. Work in order	Work missing (research, annotations, evaluations). Relying on secondary sources Repeating images	Work missing (research, annotations, evaluations).
Taking on board advice Visiting galleries etc. Using class time to full potential Using exam time effectively – Full mornings / afternoons	Taking on board advice Visiting galleries etc. Using class time to full potential Using exam time effectively – Full mornings / afternoons	Taking on board some advice Using class time to full potential Using exam time effectively - Full mornings / afternoons	Ignoring advice Driving lessons instead of attending school Written research in practical lessons Not using exam time effectively	Watching paint dry Working in the Library on 'Research' Boyfriends/friends coming to visit! Not using exam time effectively

Support

Your teachers are here as facilitators. They will create opportunities for you to improve your skills, knowledge and understanding of Art. They will coach you to meet the assessment objectives. They will give you feedback to help you improve and get the best possible outcomes. We are not here to tell you what to do/create, but we will help you come to the best decisions possible.

Your teachers may be pretty awesome, but they sadly are not mind readers...

It is important to be open and talk to your teachers. No question is a stupid question. The stupidity is not asking!

AS artists will be provided with a free room timetable. During these times you are welcome (and encouraged) to continue working on your art. You are also welcome and encouraged to attend the catch-up sessions after school every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 3.30-4.30pm.

You may also find it beneficial to become an Art Ambassador as this will provide leadership opportunities within the Arts at Tuxford Academy (great for that personal statement!).

You will receive feedback at least every half term. Feedback will be given using the below format.

OCR A Level Art/Photography Feedback

Name:

What is the most successful piece of work so far?						
Completed work:						
AO1 Develop, Show critical understanding			AO2 Explore, Experiment, Review & Refine			
AO3 Record, Reflect critically			AO4 Select and present, connections, intentions, personal/meaningful			
Incomplete work/New tasks:						
Final piece ideas?						
Grade U Superficial Limited Unfocused Minimal Obscure Simple	Grade F Limited Some ability Basic Some/s little	Grade E/D Suitable Effective Appropriate Relevant	Grade D/C Meaningful Purposeful Knowledgeable Informed Detailed Focused Well developed	Grade B Meaningful Relevant Perceptive Relevant Outstanding Insightful Focused In depth Fully developed Informed	Grade A Meaningful Relevant Critical Confident Sustained Skilful Sophisticated Informed Outstanding Insightful Creative	

Annotations

Written notes help communicate your ideas to the moderator. It helps you explain what things are, how it fits into the big picture and analyse the effectiveness of techniques/materials. It gives your whole art journey a sense of focus and direction. *Artists regularly annotate work as they go to help develop their ideas.*

Questions to consider	Complete the sentence
What is the work of? What has been explored? What is it inspired by or based on? Is it something that has been developed from a previous piece of work?	This piece is based on... I wanted to explore... The work contains... It has been developed from by.....
How has it been created? Which materials and techniques have been used?	Materials such as..... have been used. The materials have been applied by..... Which gives the effect of..... The colour scheme is.....
How does this piece link to your theme, ideas or artist?	I feel this links with my idea of by..... The relationship between..... The work is similar to..... because of the....
How well has it been composed? Would you rearrange anything?	The eye is first drawn to the... Shapes and lines such as..... Help guide the eye towards..... Which gives a feeling of.....
Which sections are you most pleased with and why?	I particularly like the.... Because... I think most eye-catching section is because..... I think the section which is least eye-catching is..... Because.....
What didn't work and why? Does it not meet your intentions?	What surprised me about this piece was..... There isn't very much... This links to the idea of..... because.....
How could you develop these successful sections into the next piece?	This suggests... Next, I would like to explore.....

Line

Tone

Shape/form

Texture

Space

Colour

3-dimensional

Quality

Shade

Scale

Style

Mood

Composition

Pattern

Meaning

Movement

Detail

Symmetrical

Geometric

Sharp

Crisp

Soft

Inspired by

Colour scheme

Try to use your art vocabulary; demonstrating understanding of key art terms will gain you marks! You can also improve your art vocabulary by watching videos and reading articles about other artists work.

Art critical analysis (Minimum 2 in AS, 3 in A2)

You must demonstrate your analytical ability. The below questions will help you sound like a proper artist when looking at others work. Try to answer as many of the questions as possible, and use your art vocabulary! Remember there is a difference between **describing** art and **analysing** it.

Factual Information

What is the artist, designer, craftsperson, culture or movement you are looking at?

What is the title of the work and the date it was made?

What media is the work in? (Painting, sculpture, collage, digital etc.).

Why did you choose to look at this piece of work? How does it relate to your own work? Describe the work

What is the theme/idea behind the work? What do you think is the theme/idea?

What were the artist's intentions? What do you think were their intentions?

What message is being communicated?

Is there a story behind the work?

Is there an intended function?

Analyse & Evaluate the Form & Content

Describe in detail the layout and composition of the work. How do the shapes, objects, textures and patterns guide your eye around the work?

How have the formal elements been used to create visual language?

- Formal elements (line, tone, shape, texture, pattern, colour, composition)
- Visual Language (meaning, emotion, context, ideas)

How has the artist used formal elements and visual language to communicate purpose and meaning? (E.g. how do the colours show emotion, how do these emotions affect the overall piece?)

How effective are these things in making the work successful? (E.g. why do the black lines look good?) What would you change about the formal elements used? Why?

Analyse & Evaluate Media & Process

Describe how the artist has used their materials. Have they used a paintbrush, palette knife, collage, clay etc?

What techniques have they used? (Expressive strokes, dots, patterns, stencils, stippling, enlarging etc.)

How well do these techniques help to communicate meaning/ideas/qualities?

Do you think these techniques are well chosen? What would you change/do differently? Why? Political, social, cultural influences or contexts surrounding the work

What era was it made in?

Is the work from the past?

What was going on in the artist's life that might have influenced the work?

Related Study (A2 only)

The related study is worth 24 marks out of 120 and needs to cover all four assessment objectives (develop, explore, record, present). It should be an illustrated essay 1000-3000 words.

It asks you to establish the related context in which your coursework fits. We want to see your **understanding of art** historical movements, genres, practitioners and artworks, considering the way that these change and evolve within chronological and other frameworks. We also want to see your **understanding of the relationship between society and art**: art historical terms, concepts and issues; methods of researching, investigating and analysing; and how works are interpreted and evaluated.

The study should present your in depth personal views, shaped by a wide range of research on the chosen theme/issue.

<u>Select a good topic</u>		<u>Research thoroughly</u>
<p>A good topic will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relate to art Be something you are genuinely interested in Focus on materials/process OR subject OR theme Be broad enough but not too broad Be about others work and how it influences you Link to your coursework Something that allows you to view art work first hand Compare and contrast Have plenty of source material available Be posed as a question 		<p>It should be backed up by primary (interviews, surveys, gallery visits) and secondary (books, websites, past interviews, publications) research. If you're lucky enough to interview an artist directly, use research on the artist to plan questions you might ask them.</p>
<u>Evaluate and interpret findings</u>	<u>Make it logical</u>	<u>Use subject specific vocabulary, don't be colloquial.</u>
<p>We don't want you to retranscribe full bodies of text or interviews. We don't want you to write a full biography of an artist. You should select and interpret snippets of research which relate to your question/theme. Quotes are good, but explain what you think it means or which idea/concept it supports.</p>	<p>Introduction Main Conclusion References/bibliography</p> <p>Read it through before you hand it in! does it make sense? Is there enough punctuation? Are pictures in the correct place and labelled?</p>	<p>Use our literacy bookmarks to help you sound fancy</p> <p>Don't use a key term incorrectly</p>
<u>Make it personal</u>	<u>Understand cultural context</u>	<u>Critically analyse art work linked to your theme/idea</u>
<p>Relate it back to your own work.</p>	<p>Demonstrate that you understand where work fits in with the rest of the artists' work. Show you understand what was going on at the time which might have influenced the work. What are the personal influences (life, family, past and character of the artist) and external influences (social, historical, political, cultural influences) which might have impacted the work you are discussing? Are there comparisons between different artists you can make of a similar time, style, influence, theme etc?</p>	<p>Analyse doesn't mean describe a picture. You must dig deeper. Carefully include images to support your writing.</p>
		TOP TIPS!

Related study deadline sheet

<p>Introduction</p> <p>What is your chosen theme/question? What are you going to explore? Why are you interested in this area? Which artists or art movements will you look into? What do you find interesting or intriguing about this theme/area? Have you visited a place of interest which links to this idea/theme/question? (gallery etc)</p>	
<p>Artists (3)</p> <p>How would you describe their style of work? Which art movement do they belong to? Why? What are they famous for doing in the art world? Which piece of their work most inspires you? Why? Describe their life, style and technique. In what context do they work within? (cultural, social, historical etc) What was going on personally/externally at the time which might have influenced the work? Compare/contrast between the different artists.</p>	
<p>Critical analysis</p> <p>Analyse three piece of work (Formal elements, visual language, context). Remember the difference between analysing and describing. Use the critical analysis sheet to help. What are the similarities and differences between the three pieces of art? Compare/contrast the key ideas or messages behind all the artists and your own work. Include images in key places to illustrate your point.</p>	
<p>Progression, influences, links to theme/question</p> <p>Discuss the progression of your theme. How has your work developed? How have your ideas progressed through the use of a range of materials and techniques? How have your artists influenced your studies? Talk about your specific pieces that you are / have produced. Include pictures! How do they link to your influences? Link the exhibitions you have visited which have helped you explore this theme.</p>	
<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Summarise how your research has answered the theme question. What have been the key revelations? What have you gained insight into? How has this study influenced your own work as an artist? How does your own coursework link to that of the artists? (it could be similar visually, from context or meaning)</p>	
<p>Bibliography - YOU MUST HAVE A BIBLIOGRAPHY TO GAIN A MARK</p> <p>You must reference any books, websites or footage you have used in your research, even if you haven't directly quoted from them in the essay. http://www.citethisforme.com/harvard-referencing is a really handy tool.</p>	



Key phrases to make you sound fancy!

TOP TIP!

Watch clips of Art programmes and listen to how the presenters talk about art....

When you are writing, imagine yourself to be one of those stroke-beardy people walking around a gallery!

However...

In contrast...

Similarly...

Comparatively...

Interestingly...

On the other hand...

Conversely...

It could be said...

Although...

Such as...

This suggests...

Gives the

impression of... One

gets the feeling of...

Because...

I feel...

Surprisingly...

Inparticular...

Which is rather

	Related Study Assessment Criteria
Level 1 1-4 marks Simple Minimal Inaccurate Incoherent No connections	Simplistic ability to communicate ideas, with minimal exploration of critical and contextual understanding. Some inaccuracy and incoherence in recording when using specialist language and vocabulary are demonstrated. Simplistic knowledge and understanding are shown when presenting the study and realising intentions. Connections, where appropriate, between visual and other elements are minimal.
Level 2 5-8 marks Limited Some Inaccurate Partially structured Some vocab Some connections	Limited coherence when communicating ideas, with some exploration and limited evidence of critical and contextual understanding. Limited accuracy and partially structured recording when using specialist language and vocabulary are demonstrated. Some evidence of knowledge and understanding is shown when presenting the study and realising intentions. Connections, where appropriate, between visual and other elements are limited.
Level 3 9-12 marks Effective Appropriate Accurate Mainly structured Vocab Knowledge Connections made	Effective communication of ideas, with appropriate exploration and clear evidence of critical and contextual understanding. Accurate and mainly structured recording when using specialist language and vocabulary are demonstrated. Evidence of knowledge and some understanding is shown when presenting the study and realising intentions. Connections, where appropriate, between visual and other elements are appropriately developed.
Level 4 13-16 marks Detailed Refined Has purpose Vocab Well-developed Connections	Detailed communication of ideas with informed exploration, refinement and critical and contextual understanding. Purposeful use of specialist language and vocabulary in recording is demonstrated. Evidence of knowledge and well-developed understanding is shown when presenting the study and realising intentions. Connections, where appropriate, between visual and other elements are well developed and purposeful.
Level 5 17-20 marks Well-considered Insightful Refined Extensive Vocab High level structure Reasoned Insightful connections	Well-considered communication of ideas with insightful exploration, refinement and critical and contextual understanding. Extensive and well-considered use of specialist language and vocabulary in recording is demonstrated. A high level of structured and reasoned knowledge and understanding is shown when presenting the study and realising intentions. Connections, where appropriate, between visual and other elements are fully developed and insightful.
Level 6 21-24 marks Sophisticated Thorough Excellent Extensive	Sophisticated and sustained communication of ideas with thorough exploration, refinement and excellent critical and contextual understanding. Extensive and sophisticated handling of specialist language and vocabulary in recording is demonstrated. An accomplished level of structured and reasoned knowledge and understanding is shown when presenting the study and realising intentions. Connections, where appropriate, between visual and other elements are sophisticated.

Key dates

Use this space to note down key dates such as mock exams and exams as they are given to you.

Inspiring Artists

Here we have listed some of the big players for studying art. If you're struggling for inspiration, look into some of these guys...

Francis Bacon

Franz Marc

Tracey Emin

Jenny Saville

David Hockney

Sam Taylor-Wood

Pablo Picasso

Gerhard Richter

Gillian Waring

Damien Hirst

Edward Hopper

Marcus Harvey

Cornelia Parker

Lucian Freud

Yves Klein

Andy Goldsworthy

Henry Moore

Claus Oldenburg

Patrick Caulfield

Richard Billingham

M.C.Escher

Anthony Gormley

William Turner

Lee Krasner

Gustav Klimt

Alberto Giacometti

Chuck Close

Francis Picabia

Wilhelm De Kooning

Top Ten Mistakes Made by Art Students *from studentartguide.com*

In no particular order, the mistakes are as follows:

Thinking Art will be an entertaining, 'filler' subject

Many students select Art thinking that it will be a fun subject where you hurl a bit of paint around and scribble with brightly coloured crayons. Students who enter under this misconception suffer a very quick wake-up call. Art can indeed be fun, but it is also an unimaginable amount of work. It requires constant and ongoing effort. Many students spend more time on their Art homework than they do on all of their other subjects put together. Art should be taken for one reason only: because playing with line and tone and shape and form and texture and colour fills you with joy. If you don't love making art, your subject selection will torment you. Art will become your demon: the subject you resent with a passion, instead of enjoy.

Taking too long to begin

Some students are struck with a fear that they don't have an original starting point or that they haven't interpreted their exam topic in quite the right way. They spend weeks fretting over their topic selection and worrying whether it is good enough. Here's the truth: it's not the idea that matters – it's what you do with it. Even the lamest beginnings can become draw-droppingly amazing if they are developed in the right way, with reference to the right artist models (visit our [Pinterest Boards](#) for artist ideas). Delaying your project in the hope of stumbling upon a 'perfect' topic rarely works: instead it results in panicked, lastminute submissions that are a pale shadow of what they could have been, had the full allotment of time been used. Great high school Art portfolios (in almost all cases) need time. Do yourself a favor and *begin*.

Producing weak or uninspiring compositions

Compositional errors can be broken into the following four categories:

- **Cheesy:** Surprisingly, there are still students who attempt to create artworks containing hearts; glitter; prancing horses; leaping dolphins or bunches of roses. Overly 'pretty', cliché and/or unimaginative subjects are rarely successful.
- **Boring:** Those who select appropriate but common subject-matter (i.e. portraits) but make no effort to compose these in an innovative way, do themselves no favors. Even highly able students sometimes submit projects that make an examiner want to yawn. (A less able student, on the other hand, with exciting ideas and clever compositions, can make an examiner sit up and take notice).
- **Simple:** Another common compositional error – usually evident in weaker students – is to avoid complex / challenging arrangements and/or choose a scene that is completely 'flat' or formless (i.e. an enlarged detail of a brick wall or a cloudy sky). This is unlikely to give you sufficient opportunity to render complex three-dimensional form and runs the risk of limiting or stifling your project.
- **Unbalanced:** Every image, page and preparatory component of your high school Art project should be arranged in a well-balanced, aesthetically pleasing way. This can be a challenge for some, but certain principles – and directing conscious attention to composition – make this easier. (More on composition in an upcoming article).

Flaunting poor skills

Struggling with a practical aspect of Art is not a mistake (no one is perfect; everyone is in the process of improving their skills and becoming better) but flaunting your weaknesses to the examiner is. Remove

weak pieces and ensure that you present your skills in the best light. If you are messy and struggle to control paint, choose an artist model that allows you to apply gestural, expressive brush strokes, so it appears that your lack of control is intentional (this will allow you to continue practicing with wet mediums, rather than avoiding them completely). If you struggle to draw realistically, Read [11 Tips for Creating Excellent Observational Drawings](#) and consider embracing gestural drawing, distortion, manipulation or semi-abstraction. Showcase your strengths and use these as a distractive mechanism, while confronting your weaknesses head-on.

Failing to show development

Many Art qualifications (i.e. IGCSE, GCSE, NCEA and A Level Art) ask students to develop ideas from initial concept/s to final piece. Difficulties with development usually present themselves in two forms: **submitting a body of unrelated work** OR **submitting work that doesn't develop at all**. We have written an in-depth [article about development](#) to help those who struggle with this (it was written for A Level Art students, but it applies to other Art qualifications also): this is one of the most important articles on this website.

Continually restarting work

Those who take Art are often the perfectionist type, wanting every aspect of their portfolio to be perfect. This ambition is great – in fact, most teacher's wish this was a more widely-held attitude – however the mechanisms for achieving this are often flawed. Continually restarting pieces of work is *not a good idea*. It is rare that a drawing, painting or mixed-media piece cannot be worked upon and improved. In almost all cases, initial 'bad' layers give an artwork substance, resulting in a richer final piece (see this article about working over [grounds](#) for more). Those who habitually restart work have less time to complete the second piece and often end up with a folder of semi-complete pieces, none of which truly represent their skill in the best light.

Drawing from second-hand sources

Drawing or painting from images taken by others is one of the most risky strategies a high school Art student can use. It sets off alarm bells for the examiner, as it can indicate a lack of personal connection to a topic, a lack of originality, plagiarism issues and result in superficial / surface-deep work. Using images sourced from magazines, books and the internet screams of one thing: a student who cannot get off their backside long enough to find something of their own to draw. NOTE: This is a guideline only. There are certain art projects – some of which are featured on this website – in which drawing from second-hand resources is acceptable. In general, however, this is something that should be approached with extreme care.

Spending too long on annotation

For some students, writing comes naturally – they enjoy pouring words onto a page. Others use annotation as a form of procrastination, to avoid working on the visual material. There is nothing wrong with annotation. It is an excellent mechanism for refining ideas, evaluating work and communicating concepts and ideas. But students should remember this: it is usually possible to score perfect marks with little or zero annotation (except, of course, in artist studies where written analysis is required); it is never possible to score perfect marks with annotation only. The practical work is what matters. Spend your effort creating outstanding drawings and paintings. Use annotation as and when is necessary, but put your fullest energy into creating artwork. Put the art first and the annotation second.

Presenting work poorly

Whether you admit or not, presentation is important. Art and Design is a visual subject. Those who assess it are highly sensitive to visual cues. The way artwork is mounted, arranged and put together speaks volumes to the examiner about your attitude as a candidate: your enthusiasm, your commitment and work ethic. Scrunched, dog-eared, smudged works can (if you are lucky) communicate the idea that you are an insane, artistic genius, but they are more likely to communicate the idea that you are a disorganised, slovenly student who couldn't care less about the subject. When someone has a few minutes to assess or moderate

your entire year's work, *first impressions count*. Let your work shine. (We will have detailed presentation tips in an upcoming article – stay tuned)!

Procrastination

The ultimate downfall of an Art student is procrastination. This is the number one barrier to success. Leaving things until the last minute can work in some subjects (especially the kind where knowledge is absorbed and regurgitated on cue) if you have an excellent memory, excellent grasp of the subject and a have a refined cramming technique – but it *almost never works* in Art. Even skillful, highly able students need *time* to produce a great Art project. Why do Art students procrastinate? How do you stop?

Helpful Websites

Photoshop.com – Every art student has worked with Adobe Photoshop at one point. This online version is similar, allowing you to edit, get ideas, share, and store—all while working directly on the web.

DeviantArt – DeviantArt is an online art community where students can share work, chat with others, get critiques, and sell work. The forums on this site are an excellent place to find jobs and more.

Tutorialized – Tutorialized is a tutorial website loaded with thousands of free tutorials for Photoshop and Flash. Students can find tutorials that range from the basics to creating web layouts.

MorgueFile – MorgueFile is a free public image archive. Art students can find loads of high resolution images that can be used for personal or commercial projects.

Art Tutorials Wiki – Art Tutorials Wiki is a free tutorial site for technical and digital artists. In addition to tutorials, the site also features free stock images.

ArtLex – With over 3,600 art terms, ArtLex is an all-inclusive art dictionary. This handy website is a great reference for artists, students, and educators.

Art Studio Chalkboard – The Art Studio Chalkboard assists artists with the technical fundamentals of painting and drawing. Created specifically for art students, this online source teaches shading, colour, and perspective.

Color Matters – Color Matters is a good place to find everything colour. Artists can find the best ways to use colour for design and study basic colour theory.

Art a GoGo – Art a GoGo is a refreshing art news site that provides news, reviews, art links, and art events.

Artcyclopedia – Students looking for an online replacement for heavy art history books will find what they need on Artcyclopedia. This online encyclopedia includes information on everything from great artists to movements.

ArtDaily – ArtDaily is an online newspaper that covers art events around the world.

Saatchi – Saatchi is a worldwide online art gallery. The site was created for art students who want to meet others around the globe, display work, and get critiques.

Tate Online – A huge selection of articles, exam support and artist library from the UK galleries. It's particularly useful just after the exam titles have been released.

Scrawl any other websites you find useful here!

Blanks page

...or is it?