

GUIDING STUDENTS IN DEVELOPING PORTFOLIO

Questions to Explore a Theme

- What does the theme mean to you? How do you define it?
- What is your personal reaction to the theme (your feelings and emotions about it)?
- What is its significance to you personally?
- What are other words or synonyms for your theme?
- What are other definitions or explanations or interpretations of your theme?
- What are defining characteristics or features of your theme?
- What formal properties are particularly important to your theme (e.g., colors, shapes, textures, lines, tones, and so forth)? What are their connections with the theme?
- What design principles might you want to emphasise? What are their connections with the theme?
- What are scientific or practical characteristics of your theme?
- What symbols or iconography relate to your theme?
- What metaphors might you associate with your theme?
- What are related issues or problems?
- What artists, artworks, or art movements can you connect to your theme? How do they relate?
- What multicultural connections can you make?
- What visual culture connections can you make?
- What literary or text connections can you make?
- What words might be interesting to include in your image?
- What idea might you propose as a solution to your theme? Can you think of several different possible solutions?
- In what style might you work to solve your theme?
- What media and techniques might you explore?
- What are possible research sources and materials?
- When students are thinking through many different connections to their theme and channeling ideas in their own directions, which forms of knowledge are they exercising?

Questions to Help Students to Research Media and Techniques

- Do you want to be original or more traditional in your choices of media and techniques?
- Did you think about unusual media for your work?
- Did you try some original techniques; perhaps with different tools for marks or for painting?
- Did you try an unique ground or base for your work?
- Did you copy (or transcribe) a small portion of an artwork to comprehend media or techniques?
- Did you include some visual examples of media and techniques you found particularly interesting?
- Did you analyse and evaluate your tests or studies?
- What did you discover about media and techniques you tested?

When students are doing these kinds of tests, which forms of knowledge are they exercising?

Questions to Guide Students in Their Research of Formal Qualities

- Which elements and principles are central to your theme and require exploration?
- Did you include some outstanding visual examples in your portfolio?
- Did you try different color schemes? Schemes of light and dark or tone? Unusual or original textures?
- Did you explore different color theories?
- Did you copy a particular color scheme of a particular artist?
- Did you analyse an artist's composition that you particularly like and try to place your idea in the same composition?
- Did you experiment with breaking rules of composition or just applying standard rules of composition (e.g., the golden mean)?

When students are researching color theory or rules of composition, what form of knowledge are they demonstrating?

- Did you make some of your tests with the computer?
- Did you try making a collage to help organise the composition?
- Did you analyse and evaluate your tests or studies?
- What did you discover about the formal elements and compositions that you tested?

When students are doing these kinds of tests or studies, which forms of knowledge are they exercising?

Questions to Help Student in Research on Art Appreciation

- Did you use resources from fine art? Craft? Visual culture? Folk art? Mass media? Architecture? Other visual arts genre?
- Did you look for historical, contemporary, and multicultural examples of these?
- Did you select images from these different contexts – personal, school, social, cultural, philosophical, economic, environmental, and aesthetic?

An aesthetic context would be examples that satisfy one's personal aesthetic sensibilities and preferences.

- Did you collect primary resources (your own drawings or paintings and ideas based on them) for your portfolio?
- Did you collect secondary resources (your own drawings or paintings that replicate images from books, journals, magazines, posters, and other graphic resources)?
- Did you use museums, exhibitions, galleries, artists' studios, photographs, movies, television, and the Internet as visual resources?
- Did you clip and paste and organise these images in your portfolio in an orderly fashion with page headers?
- Did you annotate the portfolio with accurate information about each image and also analyse and reflect on the merits of each for application to your own artwork?
- How might you check the accuracy of your resources?

By looking at multiple sources related to the same topic, students can determine to a satisfactory degree whether information is basically correct.

- Which image will you focus on for art criticism work?
- Which images might you take out of the portfolio at a review session? Which images are most helpful and should stay in the portfolio?

Questions to Guide Art Appreciation Analysis of a Particular Artwork

- Who did the work?
- When and where was it created?
- Where is the artwork now?
- Where does this work fit within the artist's development?
- What are the elements of the artist's personal style?
- To which broader category of period style does this artist's style belong?
- What are the mode and the medium of the work?
- What special art-making techniques were used to create it?
- What is its size and shape?
- What is the subject matter or theme of the work?
- Is the theme related to some exterior source (e.g., literature, mythology)?
- Is it an image of people, nature, or fantasy?
- What are the steps in the artistic conception and execution of the work?
- Where does the work fit into the history of art, both in terms of style and iconography?
- Why was the work done in this particular way at this time?
- Do we see the work today as it was originally? If not, then how has it been modified?
- What is the physical history of the work (e.g., damages or restorations)?
- What is the provenance of the work?
- Is the work primarily conceptual (the idea behind the image) or perceptual (its physical appearance)?
- Is the work primarily concerned with design qualities and composition (a formalist approach) or imitating nature or life (an imitationalist or mimetic approach) or expressing an emotion (an expressionist approach)?
- What was the function of the work in its society?
- What are the values of the culture that produced this work and how are they represented in the work?
- How did the nature of the time and place in which the work was created shape it?
- How does this work represent its historical period?
- Did this work represent an innovation or does it follow an already established tradition?
- What symbols are used within the work?
- What common elements are shared by artists working in this same time and place?
- What elements are more individual?
- How are works of one time and place similar to or different from works done at the same time but in a different place? At the same place, but a different time? At a different time and place, but perhaps, with the same subject matter?
- What did it mean to be an artist at the time?
- What was the view of art at the time?
- Who was the potential audience?
- What patronage, if any, would have commissioned this work?

- What attitudes, values, and ideologies does the work highlight, devalue, ignore? How is this expressed in the work?
- Why do you think this artwork was important or unimportant in its time?
- Why do you think this artwork is important today?
- Of all the pieces of art that were made when this one was, why do you think this piece was remembered?
- Who chooses what artworks survive?
- Could a female have made this work?
- Do you think another artist from another culture could have made this work? Why or why not?

Source: Compiled from Martin Rosenberg's *A Brief Overview of Art History*.