

Year 11 GCSE Art and Design parent guide

This guide explains what Year 11 students are working towards and how you can support their independent research and practical work. Your child's teacher will share the school's specific deadlines and any arrangements for additional studio time.

The courses and assessment

Our current Year 11 courses are Art, craft and design and Three-dimensional design (3-D), under AQA GCSE Art and Design. Students develop personal ideas through research, practical experiments and refinement, then present a final response. Photography may be used as part of a relevant project, but it is not a separate GCSE offer for this cohort.

Component	What it involves
Portfolio 60%	Work developed during the course, including a sustained project that shows the creative process.
Externally set assignment 40%	AQA provides starting points. Students prepare a response and complete a final piece in 10 hours of supervised time.

Both components assess four equally weighted skills: developing ideas using artists and other sources; experimenting with materials and improving work; recording observations and insights; and producing a personal, meaningful response. A strong project shows the thinking and changes along the way, as well as the finished piece.

How parents can help

- **Ask about the next step.** "What are you trying out next?" and "What did you change after looking at that artist?" are often more useful than asking whether the final piece is finished.
- **Make room for regular work.** Encourage your child to follow the tasks and deadlines set by their teacher, bring their work and materials to lessons, and speak up early if they are falling behind.
- **Encourage original sources.** Photographs, objects, places, museum visits and drawings from observation can give a project a personal starting point. Students should record where images and ideas came from.
- **Support experimentation.** A trial that did not work can still be valuable if the student explains what they learned and how it changed their next decision.
- **Let the work remain theirs.** Discuss ideas and help them find opportunities to gather first-hand material, while leaving the practical work and written reflections to the student.

A simple way to discuss artist research

Research should help a student make decisions in their own project, rather than become copied biography. Ask: Who made the work? What materials and visual choices did they use? Why might they have made it? Which part could inspire your own experiment, and how would you change it?

Useful places to start

Use these sites for different purposes. A small number of relevant sources, thoughtfully explored, is more useful than pages of copied images or text.

- **AQA GCSE Art and Design** Official course and assessment information.
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201/specification>
- **Art UK** Search artists and artworks in UK collections by theme or place. <https://artuk.org/>
- **Tate** Explore artists, movements and clear explanations of art terms. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art>
- **Victoria and Albert Museum** Find art, craft, design, objects and photography.
<https://www.vam.ac.uk/collections>
- **Crafts Council** Explore contemporary makers and materials, especially useful for 3-D work.
<https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/>
- **Google Arts and Culture** Look closely at artworks and visit collections online.
<https://artsandculture.google.com/>

If your child is unsure which sources or activities suit their project, please ask them to speak to their Art teacher before spending money on materials or starting a substantial piece at home.