

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

...OR, How to look at artwork and write about it!

You are assessed on your own analysis of artwork. This artwork can be a **primary source** (where you have experienced the piece first-hand in a gallery etc.) or a **secondary source** (from books, websites etc.).

Marks are awarded for use of **specialist vocabulary**, **detailed descriptions** and **personal opinions**. Use illustrations of the artwork to support your comments. Do not simply copy research from the Internet, as you will lose marks.

Answer using full sentences.

INFORMATION	Record the name of the Artist, their nationality, title of the work, date and size of the work.
IMPRESSIONS	Describe your first impressions of the artwork.
MEDIUM/ MEDIA	What is the work made from? (What <i>medium</i> was used?) Find out why the artist has chosen this particular material to work in. Do you think it is the right choice? Can you suggest any alternatives? If so, give your reasons.
CONTENT	What images/objects can you see in the piece?
COMPOSITION	What can you see in the foreground? Mid-ground? Background? What did you automatically look at first? Why do you think this is? How does your eye 'travel' around the work? Do you think that the artist has intended for this to happen? How have they done this?
MEANING	What do you think the work is about? What meaning or message is the artist trying to communicate? Is there a narrative (story)?
VISUAL LANGUAGE	Write about the way the artist has used the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour (e.g. warm, complimentary, bright etc.) • Tone • Shape (2-D)/ Form (3-D) • Line • Texture (e.g. are there examples of rough, smooth etc.) • Perspective • Pattern • Mood/ Expression • Contrast (Light and Shade) • Technique/ Style • Symbolism (using objects to give us information) • Body language • Any other elements that you can think of
GENRE	Is this work an example of a particular art movement? Which one? What are the key characteristics of this movement?
COMPARE	How does this piece compare with an artwork created by a different artist from the same art movement? How does this piece compare with an artwork created by a different artist from the same year? How does this piece compare with an artwork created by a different artist from the same country? How does this piece compare with an artwork created by a different artist who works in the same discipline (e.g. paint, clay, photography etc.)
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	Find out what was happening in the world at the time the work was made. For example: what technology was being developed, did this influence the artist? Any Religious influences? Political (e.g. war, women's rights)? Social (e.g. class, changes in popular music)? Cultural (e.g. traditions)?
INFLUENCE	Find out what were the key influences on the artist in order for him/her/them to produce this artwork e.g. the work of other artists, some of the historical contexts covered in the questions above?
RESPONSE	What is your overall response to this piece of art? Does it have a particular effect on you? What? Do you like it or dislike it? Why? Do you think that the artwork is successful? Why?
INFLUENCE	What elements of this artwork could influence your own work in the future? How might you apply this?

