



Supporting your Child with GCSE Revision: Art

What is GCSE Fine Art?

Fine Art is a practical, creative and exploratory subject. Students are assessed not simply on how well they can draw, but on how they develop ideas, investigate sources, experiment, record observations, refine their work and create personal outcomes.

AQA expects students to increasingly develop their own strengths, interests and lines of enquiry, using first-hand experiences and relevant secondary sources. Fine Art may include drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, installation, mixed media and other approaches

AO1 - Develop Ideas - Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.	AO2 - Refine & Experiment - Refine work by exploring ideas and experimenting with media, materials, techniques and processes.
AO3 - Record - Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.	AO4 - Present a Personal Response - Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions.

How the GCSE is Assessed

Component 1 - Portfolio (60%)

Students submit a portfolio representing their course of study. For first assessment in 2027, AQA requires a minimum of one sustained project. Our extended Natural Forms project provides a sustained creative journey with evidence across all four assessment objectives.

Component 2 - Externally Set Assignment (40%)

AQA provides a starting point. Students have a preparatory period to research, experiment and develop their response, followed by 10 hours of supervised time to produce the final outcome.



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What Does a Strong Fine Art Student Do?

- Works consistently rather than leaving everything until the deadline
- Experiments with materials, techniques and ideas
- Uses first-hand observation and photographs as well as appropriate secondary sources
- Responds to feedback and makes purposeful changes
- Expands creative decisions and makes increasingly independent choices
- Shows a clear journey from initial idea > investigation > experimentation > refinement

THE KEY MESSAGE : GCSE Fine Art is about the creative journey, not just the finished piece.

Year 11 - Our Current Projects

Extended Project - Natural Forms

Students undertake an extended project exploring Natural Forms. The theme gives students a broad starting point from which to investigate observation, structure, texture, pattern, growth, decay and other aspects of the natural world.

Possible starting points include:

- Plants and flowers
- Shells and rocks
- Animals and birds
- Bones
- Natural textures
- Organic structures
- Microscopic patterns
- Growth and decay
- Nature and human-made forms

The emphasis is on developing a connected body of work. Students research artists and other sources, make first-hand observations, experiment with media and techniques, record their thinking and gradually develop more personal outcomes.





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Mini Project - Natural Forms: Student Choice

Students then choose a more focused area of interest under the Natural Forms umbrella. The purpose is to encourage an increasingly personal line of enquiry.

ANATOMY	INSECTS	BOTANICAL FORMS
ANIMALS	BONES	MARINE LIFE
MICROSCOPIC FORMS	NATURAL PATTERNS	NATURE & DECAY

Students do not have to choose one of these examples - the aim is to find a subject that genuinely interests them.

How Can Parents / Carers Support at Home?

Encourage regular work. Short, regular sessions are much more effective than trying to complete everything the night before a deadline.	Ask Questions. Try: "What are you exploring?", "What have you tried?", "What could you change?", "What are you going to try next?".
Help them find first-hand sources. Encourage photography, sketching from life, visits to parks, gardens or museums and looking closely at natural forms.	Encourage experimentation. A failed experiment is not wasted work if the student can explain what they learned from it.
Help with organisation. Check sketchbooks, folders, materials, deadlines photographs are accessible	Talk about Art! Ask what they notice, like, dislike or find interesting. Encourage them to explain their choices.



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Home Support Checklist

- I know what my current project is about
- I have my materials/sketchbook ready
- I am keeping up with my deadlines
- I have first hand photographs/observations
- I am experimenting
- I can explain what I am developing next

Most importantly: encourage curiosity, independence and perseverance. You do not need to be an art specialist to support a Fine Art student.

