



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
June 2012**

**Art and Design (Art, Craft and  
Design)**

**ARTA2**

**(Specification 2200)**

**Unit 2: Externally Set Assignment**

***Report on the Examination***

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### ***GCE Art and Design - General***

Work seen by moderators covered a wide range of traditional and contemporary approaches and the different demands of each unit were generally understood. Students engaged with a diverse range of ideas and themes. Where appropriate, many undertook fieldwork to obtain relevant source materials. Others worked directly from a selection objects or specimens. Some students were creative in the ways that they investigated and responded to images, artefacts and other materials they had found. Students often demonstrated an awareness of, and personal feelings about, important issues.

In the coursework portfolio, students developed a sound basis for working practice. In many schools and colleges, teachers provided courses in which there was a clear emphasis on exploring different approaches, materials, processes and techniques. The development of skills during the AS year was an important foundation for students' work at A2. High levels of drawing and observational skill were evident in the more successful work.

In many schools and colleges, an introductory project at the beginning of the AS year enabled students to develop greater understanding, confidence and independence as the course progressed. Students are required to produce an extended personal project in the Portfolio. Most students responded to a starting point, theme or brief provided by their teachers. Some students produced more than one project and many students included additional materials such as work produced in workshops or on gallery visits.

Where chosen contextual materials were appropriate and had been understood, they informed students' work in many different ways. When looking at works of a particular artist, or a range of work by several artists, students considered the ways in which the subject, theme or idea had been interpreted, how formal elements were used, how elements of composition, layout or design were manipulated and how media and techniques were used. In the work of some students references were made to examples of music, poetry, literature, architecture and cultural artefacts from different times and places.

Sketchbooks and workbooks continued to be used by many students. However, their content varied considerably in quality. The most successful were lively, thoughtful and well considered and clearly recorded the development of ideas. Some students presented their work on mounted sheets and carefully considered connections between images. Some students presented electronic sketchbooks.

Many students produced large quantities of work but did not develop their ideas in sufficient depth. Students should consider the level of skill and understanding they have demonstrated in response to each of the Assessment Objectives and how well they have realised their intentions.

Successful students provided evidence of a coherent journey, revealing clear engagement with source materials and ideas. Their work was focused and sustained and had a real sense of purpose. Less successful work was often fragmented and poorly executed revealing a lack of understanding and skill.

Many students chose to annotate their work and these often provided insights into their ideas and decisions. They also made clear the connections between different aspects of the work. Sometimes, annotations, statements of intent and evaluations were used to help students focus their ideas and their investigations. However, some students wrote copious notes that often provided little in the way of insights and merely repeated what was already evident in the work.

Many students used some form of ICT, either in resourcing their work or in the process of producing it. Many students have access to digital cameras or camera phones and these were often used confidently to record observations and to source contextual material. In Graphic Communication digital and electronic media were often used extensively. Adobe Photoshop was widely used by students to develop their ideas. The Internet was used to access the work of artists, designers and craftspeople.

### ***Administration, marking and moderation***

Many moderators reported improvements in administration. In the majority of schools and colleges, mark sheets were correctly completed and deadlines were met. Problems occurred when Candidate Record Forms (CRFs) and Centre Declaration Sheets (CDSs) were not completed prior to the moderation visit. Detailed comments on the CRFs were often helpful and informative.

Teachers are reminded to send both pink and yellow copies of the centre mark forms or EDI print outs to the moderator. One copy will be returned to the school or college with the samples required for the visit indicated on it.

Preparation for moderation visits was generally good and samples were organised in an exhibition or as a collection of folders. In the majority of cases, labelling was very helpful and clear. Maps indicating exactly where samples might be found, were particularly useful. Most provided a quiet, non-public space for the moderation process to take place which is essential. Many moderators commented on the warm reception they received but there were occasions when they felt under pressure to reveal marks which they cannot do. General feedback was well received and thought to be helpful.

An understanding of the assessment objectives resulted in accurate marking in the majority of schools and colleges. Problems generally occurred when teachers awarded their best student maximum marks when a lower mark was more appropriate.

Many teachers and lecturers commented on the value of standardisation meetings where examples of work at different levels can be seen. Erratic marking was often linked to non-attendance at these meetings.

### ***Assessment Objectives***

#### ***AO1***

The ability to develop ideas in a coherent and sustained manner was a key feature of the most successful work. Successful students provided sound evidence of learning from contextual materials and developed their own, personal visual language. Evidence of analytical and critical understanding was provided in different ways. Written materials often provided insights into students' knowledge and understanding and explained decisions made when developing their work. Less successful work was fragmented and intentions were not always clear.

#### ***AO2***

An introductory project at the beginning of the AS year, often gave students opportunities to experiment with media and to develop a good basic understanding of a range of materials, processes and techniques. Students were then more able to develop their skills when responding to a starting point, idea or theme. The development of skills and understanding of handling materials enabled students to refine their ideas as their work developed. The least successful work was lacking the development of basic skills which made it difficult for students to explore ideas confidently and to demonstrate understanding in the development of their work.

#### ***AO3***

Ideas, observations and insights were recorded in many different ways, for different purposes and at different stages of the work. Digital cameras were used as a valuable sketchbook tool

and proved to be particularly useful in obtaining source materials. Drawings and colour studies often included analytical work that was detailed, considered and closely observed. They also included drawings that were vigorous, loose and expressive. Some studies were small, fine and delicate whilst others were of a much larger scale. Initial ideas and alternative ideas for compositions or layouts were often recorded in thumbnail sketches. Contact prints, printouts of computer generated materials and textile samplers also provided evidence of recording observations and ideas. Students provided evidence of reflecting on their work and progress both visually and in written materials. Some of the least successful students provided large amounts of collected images and annotations added little to understanding.

#### **AO4**

In AS, many students focused on developing their technical skills and established a good working practice that enabled them to successfully develop their ideas. The development of a personal visual language was much more evident in A2 work. Confidence and maturity was also evident in much of the A2 work. Critical understanding was clear in the choices and decisions made by students and they were able to successfully realise their intentions. Many students realised their intentions at various stages and produced a rich diversity of responses. Many students made some connections between different elements of their work as it progressed. In the least successful work, little attempt was made to link the written element to the practical work.

#### ***Externally Set Assignment***

The paper was well received by teachers and students of all abilities made full use of the breadth of opportunities provided by the starting points. Contextual materials chosen by students were usually appropriate to the development of ideas, especially in the more successful work. In most schools and colleges, students chose to realise their intentions in final outcomes rather than produce further work of a developmental nature.

Most students handled the time constraints well and made effective use of the five hour period of supervised time to develop ideas. However, in many instances considerably less work was produced for the externally set assignment when compared to the portfolio unit. Teachers and students need to be aware of this imbalance and are reminded that both units carry equal marks.

#### ***Facial Expressions***

In responding to this starting point, students often used photographs of themselves, friends and family to initiate ideas. Contextual material included works by Picasso and the bold use of colour in the work of David Choe. Responses ranged from very large paintings on canvas to distorted faces in ceramics. However, some large scale work was over ambitious and outcomes failed to demonstrate the necessary level of skills for work of such size. Some extremely interesting work was also seen which explored the inner mentality of a person. Some work was based on masks that people hide behind.

#### ***Memorabilia***

Some responses, based on objects with significance and meaning to the student's life, were very personal. Family photographs and objects were assembled, exploring vintage themes using collage and photomontage in sepia tones. Work that was three-dimensional often demonstrated selection and refinement. In some students' work, objects were arranged into memory boxes. One notable investigation entitled, 'Grandad's Shed', was based on ration books, medals and letters from the trenches, collaged into a moving and sensitive piece.

#### ***Sky High***

This starting point provided opportunities for recording the sky at different times of day and night, and in varying weather conditions. However, many outcomes involved little

development, simply portraying sky scenes and references to Turner and John Martin were popular. Some students explored natural phenomena such as auroras, hurricanes and lightning, whilst others dealt with figures flying and falling. More unusual work investigated people's sky high ambitions and class structures in society, often focusing on the monarchy. In general, most outcomes were well handled and involved a wide range of media, primarily in two-dimensions.

### ***Aboriginal Art***

Successful responses included making musical instruments and the recording of journeys made in the local environment involving maps and footprints, with reference to work by Richard Long. Less successful work was characterised by the lack of development and experimentation. It was often superficial and rarely moved beyond the obvious mimicking of dots and patterns.

### ***Geometry in Nature***

Responses included well observed drawings and an abundance of digital photographs of a wide range of carefully selected natural forms. Some students used microscopes to study cell structures and magnifying glasses for closely observed work. Outcomes tended to be two-dimensional and varied widely in approach. Responses included tessellations based on the work of M C Escher, carpet and wallpaper designs influenced by Bev Hissey and environmental installations reminiscent of Andy Goldsworthy. Notable three-dimensional work included textile pieces inspired by the work of Amila Hrustic and Norah Fok. The subject matter explored gave opportunities for less able students to develop abstract work based on patterns. However, such work often showed little progression of ideas which resulted in repetitive imagery.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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