

FACTFILE: GCE ART AND DESIGN

GUIDE TO WRITTEN INVESTIGATION



Guide to writing the A2 written investigation

What is the written investigation?

The written investigation is an A4, word-processed essay of 1000–2000 words. It explains your research and exploration into a context which inspires and informs your practical work. You should include photographs or illustrations of your own work or other work only when it is necessary to illustrate a point.

The subject of your writing must be related to **credible** artists/designers/craftspeople; this means professional and publicly recognised by experts. You could also focus on visual analysis, or a discipline, art movement, theme, subject, or genre. Your teacher will guide you on making a suitable choice.

How should I approach the written investigation?

- Use the theme and the suggestions on the stimulus paper provided at the beginning of your A2 Year of study as a starting point for your investigation.
- Consider what sources are available to support your investigation (primary and secondary)
- State what you intend to investigate - this may evolve and become more focused as your work progresses
- Link your written work to the theme and allow it to inform your practical work.

- Keep a record of all the ideas and sources you use so you can reference them in your essay.
- Use critical appraisal (explained in the specification) as well as informed personal analysis.
- Use the language of Art and Design and formal visual elements while discussing and analysing artworks and techniques.
- Annotate and reflect on your learning in your practical work; these annotations might be relevant in your essay.
- Discuss your written investigation with your teacher as it develops, so that they can validate it as your own work. However your work must be your own, and your teacher can only give you general feedback.

What skills does the written investigation assess?

- The written investigation allows you to demonstrate skills to:
 - visually interpret art, design and craft works
 - use appropriate, craft and design language
 - evaluate, discuss and compare evidence
 - develop and support persuasive argument and counter-argument.
 - use sources effectively e.g. books, web, journals
 - develop your own opinions and build knowledge and understanding

What sources may I use to support my written investigation?

Primary sources:

First hand experience of Artworks gives you a fuller appreciation of:

- the scale of the work
- detail that cannot be seen clearly in a photograph
- the three-dimensional form of an artefact and its tactile qualities
- how well it fulfils its function, and
- the way a work is displayed in a space

You can gain first hand experience through;

- Exhibitions
- Galleries
- Museums
- Design and craft artefacts
- Sculpture parks
- The built environment
- Visits to buildings (for architectural research)
- Performances or shows
- Interviews (include only relevant comments and use direct quotations)

Secondary sources:

- Books
- Journals
- Catalogues
- Websites
- Apps
- Photographs

You must provide a detailed list of all visits and sources used so make a note of these details as your work progresses.

Will I be assessed on the content or the quality of my written communication?

You will be assessed on both. The quality of your written communication is very important. You will be expected to present your work in a form that:

- follows conventional referencing guidelines
- uses correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
- uses specialist vocabulary appropriately
- communicates ideas clearly
- is carefully structured and presented
- can be easily followed by the reader, and
- does not exceed the 2000 word limit.

The content is equally important. A framework for analysing artworks, practitioners and movements is given in pp.28-29 of the specification.

Talking about contemporary art

Talking about contemporary art can sometimes be difficult. It can be hard to interpret the meaning as there may be few visual clues. The following prompts may be useful:

- Try to see the work first hand so you can describe your experience of the work
- Does the title give some clues to the meaning of the work or is there written information in the museum or gallery?
- Has the artist provided any clues to the meaning of the work?
- What is the context of the work? time, place circumstances?
- What elements are present other than visual? e.g. sound, temperature, smell, movement etc?
- How have critics or members of the public reacted to the work?