

## WRITING ABOUT ARTISTS

Who is the artist?  
Where are they from?  
When were they making their artwork? Are they a contemporary artist?  
Are they associated with any particular art movement? Are they linked with other artists?  
Why are you looking at this artist? / How do they relate to your theme?  
How do they relate to your work?  
What materials, techniques/ processes do they use?  
How do they use them? Why does this interest you? What do you think?

**Always include an image of the artist work, so that the reader can relate what you have written to visuals.**

**Aim to make at least one drawing of a piece of the artist's work. Remember always to include the name of the artwork, the date it was made and the materials used.**

Some sentences you could try

I find this artist interesting because....

This artist relates to my theme because they explore...

I think this artist worked from.... observation, imagination.

Their work is somber/ energetic/ happy... I think this is because they have....

My work links to this artist because I have.... used the same colours/materials/scale or I have explored a similar idea/concept /theme.

The artist's style is.....

This artist makes work in the style of .....

The artist is similar to.....They both make work that discusses colour/scale/textures....

I like/dislike this work because.....

## Critical Analysis

It is important to discuss a piece of artwork in depth. Once research has been carried out, you should select one example and write an analysis of it. It is useful to have made a drawing of the work, as it shows you have studied it in order to make your own version.

Here are some ideas for information you should include.

### Content and visual description

What is the piece of art you are looking at? Is it a painting, sculpture, collage?  
What is the subject or theme of the piece?

Is it 2D or 3D?

Describe the piece you are looking at in more detail using the formal elements below

**If it is a 2D piece: Describe the variety of lines, tones, textures, colours, shapes, marks, composition... quality of light.**

**If it is a 3D piece: Describe the shapes, scale, proportion, lines, movement, weight,,**

### Meaning. Mood. Message

**What do you think the work is about?**

**How does it make you feel? What is the mood? Calm, sad, happy, confused?**

**Is the work ambiguous!!**

**Does the work mean many things to you? What are they?**

**What does the work remind you of? Does it link with other images, objects you have seen?**

**What is the artist trying to say through their work? Is there a message?**

## Process

How do you think the work is made?

What materials or media have been used? What is good about their choice of materials? How do the materials help create a certain message?

What tools and processes have the artists used to make the work?

Can you see how the artist has developed ideas in other work to create this piece?

Which 2D and 3D techniques have been used to make the work?

Cutting layering, joining,...

Is this work part of a series? Is it striking out in a new direction?

What could be done to improve it? What would you have done?

## Connections and ideas

Explain how the artist work links to your work/theme?

**When you evaluate your work, such as sketches, here are some thoughts.**

**I feel my work is successful because...**

The techniques I used worked well, the pattern compliments the shape, the glue gives it a shiny surface, it is eye catching because of the bright colours, the layers give it an interesting texture, the materials join together well, etc.

**I feel my work is unsuccessful because...**

It's too large, it's too complicated, there is not enough detail, it is not very secure, the paint is too thickly applied, the image is not clear, there is no focus, etc.

**What are your strengths and weaknesses?**

Drawing, painting, printing, researching, listening, planning, analysis, sharing ideas, experimenting,

**How could you develop the work further?**

Could it be reproduced, printed, cast, made into a series, or used for another purpose etc.

**Do you feel you have met the brief?**

**Do you feel your work is linked to the theme?**

**Have you shown your ideas develop through experimentation?**

**Did the research you carried out provide you with the appropriate source materials?**

**Did the artist you look at influence your work?**

## Guidelines for Evaluation

Write at least 500 words evaluating the project. You do not need to write the questions, just write the answers e.g. you do not need to write: what have I learnt about formal elements. You start a sentence: I learnt a lot about colour and how it affects.....

Do not write descriptions of what you did: I painted with ink over pastel and then I...

Evaluate your actions: working with ink over pastels produced exciting textures. Do not write 'because the teacher told me to'. Enjoy this opportunity to talk about all the lovely work you have produced.

Remember to put your name on the evaluation.

**What did you use for reference (working from still life, photographs, drawings)?**

**What have you learnt about formal elements?**

**What did the colour theory activities teach me?**

**What media experimenting did you try? What worked well and why?**

**Were you sure why you were doing your experimenting?**

**What did you learn from your experimenting?**

**What triggered the main ideas for your final work?**

**Is the final outcome to a suitable professional standard / as well as you could have done?**

**What are the strengths of all the work you have produced?**

**Are there any weaknesses in you work and if so, how could you have improved on them?**

**Did you use your time in class / homework time as productively as you could?**

**What artists that you looked at have inspired your work in this project?**

**Did you research enough artists when developing your own work?**

**What have you learnt from doing this project?**

**What will you take forward into the next project?**

## FORMAL ELEMENTS

The elements of formal analysis are building blocks that can be combined to create a larger structure.

**Line** is the most basic building block of formal analysis. Line can be used to create more complex shapes or to lead your eye from one area in the composition to another.

**Value** is the degree of light and dark in a design. It is the contrast between black and white and all the tones in between. Value can be used with colour as well as black and white. Contrast is the extreme changes between values.

**Shapes** are created when lines are combined to form a square, triangle, or circle. Shapes can be organic (irregular shapes found in nature) or geometric (shapes with strong lines and angles such as circles, triangles, and squares).

**Forms** are three-dimensional shapes with length, width, and depth. Balls, cylinders, boxes and pyramids are forms.

**Space** is the area between and around objects. Increasing or decreasing the amount of space around an object affects the way we view that object.

**Colour** differentiates and defines lines, shapes, forms, and space. Even black and white images have a huge number of different shades of grey.

**Texture** is the surface quality that can be seen and felt. Textures can be rough or smooth, soft or hard. Textures are often implied. For instance, a drawing of a rock might appear to have a rough and hard surface, but in reality is as smooth as the paper on which it is drawn.

## The Principles

Notice how the following principles integrate the elements of formal analysis and build on one another..

**Balance** is created in a work of art when textures, colours, forms, or shapes are combined harmoniously.

**Contrast** is the use of several elements of design to hold the viewer's attention and to guide the viewer's eye through the artwork

**Movement** is the way a viewer's eye is directed to move through a composition, often to areas of emphasis. Movement can be directed by lines, contrasting shapes, or colours within the artwork.

**Emphasis** is created in a work of art when the artist contrasts colours, textures, or shapes to direct your viewing towards a particular part of the image.

**Pattern** is the repetition of a shape, form, or texture across a work of art.

**Proportion** is created when the sizes of elements in a work of art are combined harmoniously.

**Unity** is created when the principles of analysis are present in a composition and in harmony. Some images have a complete sense of unity, while some artists deliberately avoid formal unity to create feelings of tension and anxiety.

Once students have an understanding of formal analysis, they will be well prepared to put this theory into practice by making their own images based on the elements and principles of design. Whether in photography, sculpture, or painting, the theory of formal analysis will help students to compose their works of art as professional artists would.