**Analysing an artist's work**

**How to analyse an artist's work**

**Analysing an artist's work means studying the elements that make up an artwork. You can show your understanding by answering questions about the work.**

In order to achieve higher marks in [**Assessment**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/art/aos/ao41.shtml) **Objective 1**, you need to show that you understand the work of artists, designers and craftspeople.

The following headings and questions can help you to structure a piece of writing and understand a piece of artwork. Always remember to use your own words so that you are expressing what you think.

**Top Tips**

• When analysing a work of art it is really important to analyse the art work, not the artist

• Always write down the name of the work, date and the artist so you don’t forget

• Try to be like a detective questioning the artwork - ask it tough questions

**Grade C**: Answer at least one question from each section

**Grade B**: Answer at least two questions from each section

**Grade A**: Answer as many as you can that are relevant to the piece of work.

**Form**

**This means looking at the formal elements of an artwork.**

* What is the medium of the work?
* What colours does the artist use? Why? How is colour organised?
* What kind of shapes or forms can you find?
* What kind of marks or techniques does the artist use?
* What is the surface like?
* What kinds of textures can you see?
* How big is the work?

**Context**

**This refers to how the work relates to a particular time, place, culture and society in which it was produced.**

* When was it made? Where was it made? Who made it?
* Who was the work made for?
* What do you know about the artist?
* How does the work relate to other art of the time?
* Does the work relate to the social or political history of the time?
* Can you link it to other arts of the period, such as film, music or literature?
* Does the work relate to other areas of knowledge, such as science or geography?

**Content**

**The content is the subject of a piece of work.**

* What is it? What is it about? What is happening?
* Is it a portrait? A landscape? Abstract?
* What does the work represent?
* The title - what does the artist call the work?
* Does the title change the way we see the work?
* Is it a realistic depiction?
* Have any parts been exaggerated or distorted? If so, why?
* What is the theme of the work?
* What message does the work communicate?

**Process**

**Looking at process means studying how the work was made and what techniques were used.**

* What materials and tools were used to make the piece?
* What is the evidence for this?
* Do sketchbooks provide any clues as to how the work developed?

**Mood**

**Mood means looking at how the artist has created a certain atmosphere or feeling.**

* How does the work make you feel?
* Why do you think you feel like this?
* Does the colour, texture, form or theme of the work affect your mood?
* Does the work create an atmosphere?

**Stuck?** Here are a few starter sentences to get you going. Remember never write out the question!

In the work I can see ….

I think the work is about …

The artist uses …

The work makes me feel …