



HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mr J. E. Crowther

Ref: 163

8 March 2024

Dear Y13 Parent/Carer,

This is an update for you about your Year 13 child's Art and Design A Level. As you know, they have completed their component one and are now working on their component two. A reminder that an A Level in Art and Design consists of:

Personal Investigation (PI) - Component One = 60% of final grade

Externally Set Task (EST) - Component Two = 40% of final grade.

The Externally Set Task consists of preparatory work and a final piece/pieces made in the timed test. We recommend that students complete between 6-8 sheets (A1) equivalent of preparatory work to be sure to fully cover the assessment objectives. However, there is no specific quantity requirement from the exam board and students should focus on quality over quantity, especially where they are slow to complete tasks or work is very detailed. A smaller number of very thoughtful, well planned sheets of work of a student's OWN work can equally evidence high achievement.

Your child has been given guidance on how to approach this task. You can see an example of the support materials [here](#).

They began this task on 1 February 2024. They will start the final artwork on 2 May 2024 and complete it on 3 May 2024 and 7 May 2024. In terms of school weeks, they are roughly a third of the way through this task. By next week, they will be approaching the halfway point. They should, by the end of this week, have two completed sheets of preparatory work and the makings of a third underway.

The preparatory work is marked with the final piece/s and they are encouraged to use the preparatory work to help them in the test. The dates of test days are fixed. Once a student begins the timed test they are forbidden under NEA (Non Examined Assessment) rules from adding to, altering, or removing preparatory work from the test room and any attempt to do so can result in disqualification. Therefore all preparatory work MUST be completed by the morning of the first day of the timed test which is the 2 May 2024.

We have had conversations with students about their Personal Investigation (PI) and given general feedback on where we think they are in terms of grades. Final marks for both components will be issued in May. If your child has not been spoken to about their PI, they likely missed the lesson when this happened and should ask me next time they have a lesson with me.

I will write separately if your child is behind in their progress on this component. You can help them by ensuring they are working regularly and productively. Single drawings/designs should not take an excessive time to complete. Most can and should be completed well within one to two hours (many only 30 mins), unless especially detailed. Sometimes students take longer than they should on individual items because they:

* Are not being clock aware - they need to try and make the task fit the time, not the other way around;



*They are putting off making decisions about the next step in their work;

*They are overly worrying about the surface level finish - this can be easily rectified by putting the work on the floor and standing back from it. An assessor will not be examining work up close but typically from a distance of about three feet;

*They are allowing things to distract them while they work;

*They are working very small, so adding to pressure to fill sheets of preparatory work.

Further guidance on ways of working faster in Art and Design can be found [here](#).

You can also help by:

*Listening to their ideas;

*Encouragement - reminding them that it's perspiration, not inspiration that wins out in the long run. All ideas become boring after a while - they just have to plod on and the inspiration will return;

*Help with space, materials and access to locations for any photoshoots.

You cannot help them by doing the thinking or work for them - they have to sign a declaration that the work is their own. NEA rules are clear: the work must be the candidate's own.

All A Level students are welcome to use the Art rooms - specifically M19 in their study periods, so access to materials should not be a barrier.

The timescales for Art are tight, but the good news is that once they complete their timed test on 7 May, the entire course is complete and no further artwork will be done. Students will then be free to focus entirely on their academic subjects and preparations for the written exams. It is worth them remembering this when planning time allocation over the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Wallace
Head of Art