



NEW SOUTH WALES

LITERACY WORKS FOR
Visual Arts

BOOK 1

Student ebook

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Visual language

This book aims to help students understand **visual language** and **visual arts conventions**.

Understanding visual language and conventions is essential for Visual Arts practice and critical and historical studies. Yet many students do not fully understand these conventions and others find the visual arts terminology confusing and challenging.

By learning about conventions of representation and visual language, students will be able to:

- analyse artworks
- use visual arts terminology and technicality
- understand the **structural frame**
- apply this knowledge in more sophisticated interpretations (see Book 2)
- prepare for senior studies of Visual Arts.

This book is not trying to meet all the syllabus outcomes or cover all content. Instead, it covers a foundational and important area of Visual Arts knowledge and understanding.



Literacy Works for Visual Arts Book 1 covers these visual qualities and conventions

Elements

colour
line
texture
tone / value
shape
form
space
pattern
sound
light
time
symbols

Principles of design and composition

contrast
balance
proportion
scale
hierarchy
rhythm and movement
unity
emphasis
variety
similarity

Each page of this book provides clear definitions, examples from real artworks and practical analysis and writing activities.



Syllabus links to outcomes and content can be found on the following pages.



See Book 2 for more literacy in Visual Arts - grammar activities, process diary recounts, interpretations and more.

NSW Syllabus links

Literacy Works for Visual Arts Book 1 relates to these areas of the NSW syllabus Visual Arts

Stage 4

Stage 5

Outcomes - Practice

4.1 uses a range of strategies to explore different artmaking conventions and procedures to make artworks

5.1 develops range and autonomy in selecting and applying visual arts conventions and procedures to make artworks

Artmaking - Practice

Students learn about:

- the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs

Students learn to:

- investigate the field of visual arts and design and approximate some conventions, activities, traditions and customs of the field to make art

Students learn about:

- the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by values and beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power

Students learn to:

- investigate and apply selected conventions, activities, traditions and customs of the field of visual arts and design to make art where meaning is shaped by values and beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power

Artmaking - Frames

Students learn about:

- belief, value and meaning in artmaking in the **structural frame**

Students learn to:

- investigate and employ a range of conventions including codes, symbols and signs and consider how communication is embedded in the material and conceptual organisation of artworks and offer a way to develop representations of ideas and interests in the world in the making of art

Students learn about:

- belief, value and meaning in artmaking in the **structural frame**
- concepts of art as a system of symbolic communication through which particular forms of aesthetic information are transmitted

Students learn to:

- employ a range of conventions including codes, symbols and signs
- consider how communication is embedded in the material and conceptual organisation of their own artworks eg the choice of paint and placement of an image relative to others in the composition
- use a range of styles that make use of the conventions of the field

NSW Syllabus links

Literacy Works for Visual Arts Book 1 relates to these areas of the NSW syllabus Visual Arts	
Stage 4	Stage 5
Outcomes - Critical and Historical Studies	
4.7 explores aspects of practice in critical and historical interpretations of art	5.7 applies their understanding of aspects of practice to critical and historical interpretations of art
Critical and Historical Studies - practice	
<p>Students learn about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> artistic practices, conventions and the networks of procedures that inform the approaches to artmaking of different artists or group of artists <p>Students learn to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore and seek to explain the artistic practices of selected artists/groups of artists identifying conventions and procedures use a range of reading strategies to evaluate critical interpretations of art investigate the works of selected artists as an aspect of their artmaking practice 	<p>Students learn about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> artistic practices, conventions and procedures that inform the approaches to artmaking of different artists, group of artists and artistic movements <p>Students learn to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek to explain the different artistic practices of selected artists and groups and different artistic movements
Critical and Historical Studies - frames	
<p>Students learn about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> belief, value and meaning about artwork from the structural frame <p>Students learn to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and seek to explain how artists and audiences can read artworks as images or texts by understanding conventions including codes, symbols and signs and how these are embedded in the material and conceptual organisation of artworks 	<p>Students learn about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> belief, value and meaning from the structural frame concepts of art as a system of symbolic communication through which particular forms of aesthetic information are transmitted <p>Students learn to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and seek to explain how artists and audiences can read artworks as images or texts by understanding conventions including codes, symbols and signs and how these are embedded in the material and conceptual organisation of artworks explain how critical and historical accounts provide a way to understand art as a system of symbolic communication through which particular forms of aesthetic information are transmitted identify and account for structural orientations to art

Colour words



The artwork below will be analysed at the end of this section.



Glowing Night, O. Bluemner, 1924.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Charles F. Ikle, 1963, www.metmuseum.org.



About the artist

Oscar Bluemner (1867-1938) was an American Modernist artist. He trained to be an architect and designer but focused on painting for most of his career. He was influenced by Cubism and the Expressionists' use of colour. Bluemner's works demonstrate his architect's understand of form, with attention to urban and natural forms and scenes, with intense and evocative colours.

Sources: *Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and www.artsy.net*

Important colour words

Colour value

Value means how light or dark a colour is. It is based on the amount of light coming from it. Some hues can have a dark value (e.g. dark blue) and a light value (e.g. light blue).

Tints

A hue can be mixed with white to make them lighter. This is called a **tint**.

Shades

A hue can be mixed with black to make it darker. This is called a **shade**.

Blue

Tint of blue
+ white

shades of blue

blue with
more black

blue with
less black

Palette

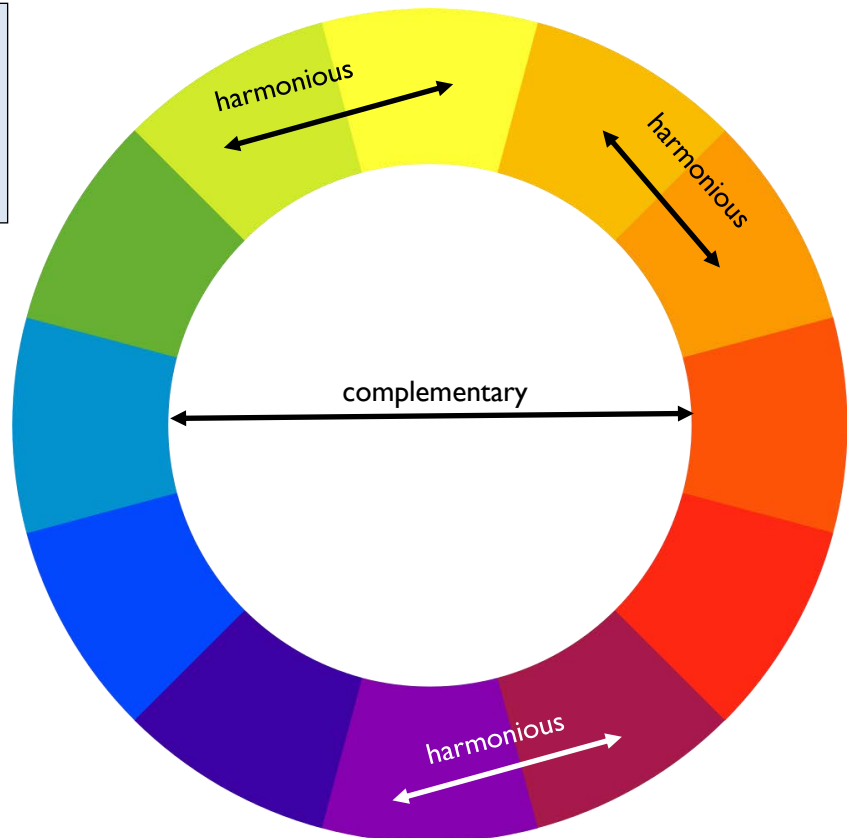
Palette is a French word that means a tray of paint colours. It also means the range of colours used in an art work.

Colour wheel

The colour wheel is a way of arranging colours that shows the relationship between primary, secondary and tertiary colours (see pages 5-6).

Harmonious colours are similar and are close together on the colour wheel e.g. red and purple. Harmony means getting along well.

Complementary colours are opposites on the colour wheel and produce contrasting or clashing effects e.g. blue and orange.



Monochromatic means one colour. The colour scheme is one main colour and different values (tints and shades) of that colour. Mono means one. Chroma comes from the Greek word for colour.



Polychromatic means many colours or multicoloured. Poly means many. Chroma comes from the Greek word for colour.

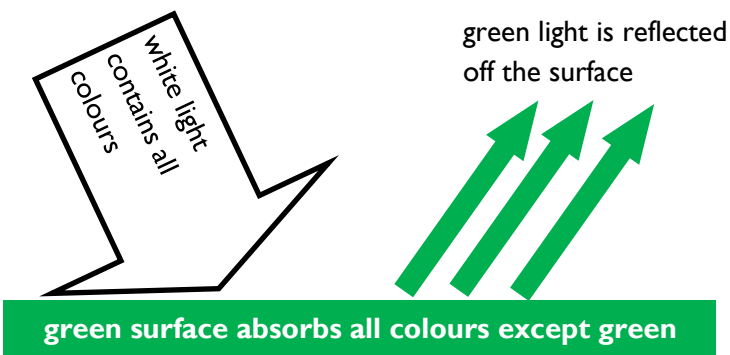



Colour hue




Colour

Colour is a visual quality of an object. Colour is created by the way light is reflected off an object. Normal sunlight (white light) contains all the colours even though it looks white. The qualities of an object make it absorb some colours and reflect other colours. We see reflected light as colour.

Hue means the name of a colour e.g. green, blue.



 The names of hues are shown in circles below. You can also see other hue names and objects associated with different colours. Draw a line to match the synonyms with the related hue in the circle. These synonyms might help you describe colours effectively.

	flame	scarlet	ivory	
	crimson	porcelain	violet	
	chalk	mandarin	pearl	
	lime	indigo	ruby	
	licorice	coal	carrot	
	mauve	tangerine	sunshine	
	sky	blood	emerald	
	lavender	leaf	lemon	
	egg-yolk	sapphire	pea	
	milk	rose	gold	
	night	wine	navy	
	ink	peach	lilac	

Primary, secondary and tertiary colours

Primary colours

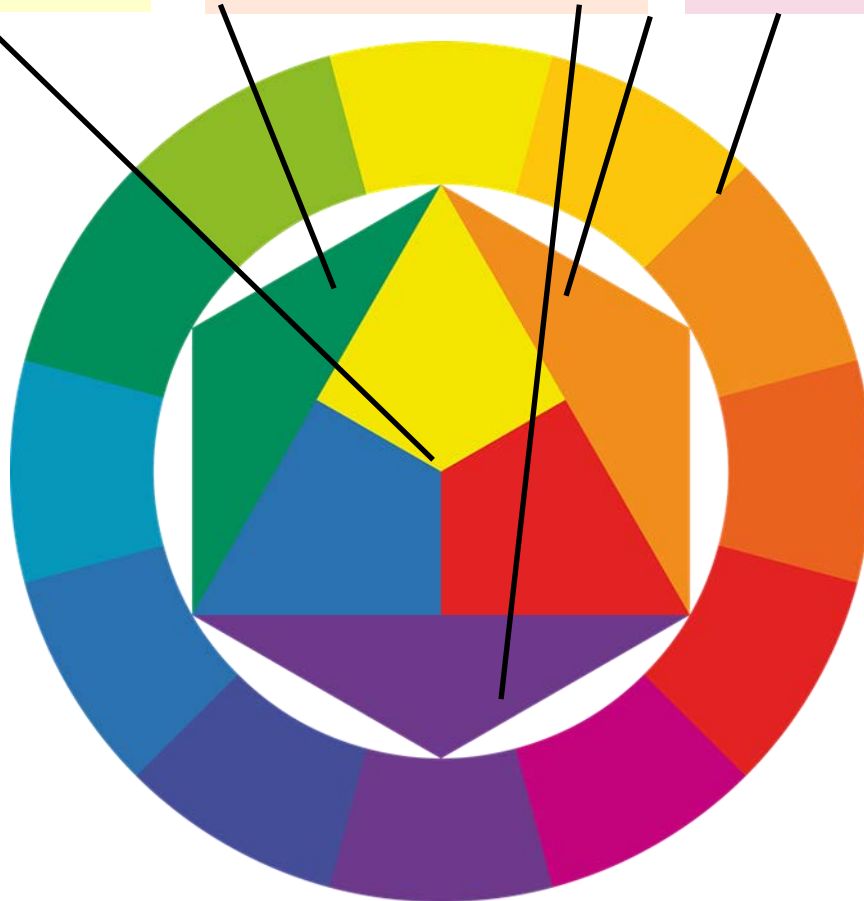
Primary colours are red, blue and yellow. These three colours are used to mix every other colour.

Secondary colours

Secondary colours are orange, green and purple. They are made by mixing equal parts of two primary colours, as shown below.

Tertiary colours

Tertiary colours are made by mixing secondary colours with a primary colour.



Choose words from the word box to add to the lines so that the information about colours is correct.

Word box

primary secondary tertiary red blue orange yellow green purple

_____, _____ and _____ colours are everywhere when we take the time to notice. All colours start with three _____ colours. The three primary colours are _____, _____ and _____. These _____ colours cannot be created by mixing other colours together.

_____ colours are orange, purple and green. They are like the children of the three _____ colours because they are created by mixing equal parts of the primary colours. Yellow and red make _____, red and blue make _____, and _____ and _____ make green.

_____ colours are the colours that are created by mixing one primary colour with a _____ colour.

Colour palette

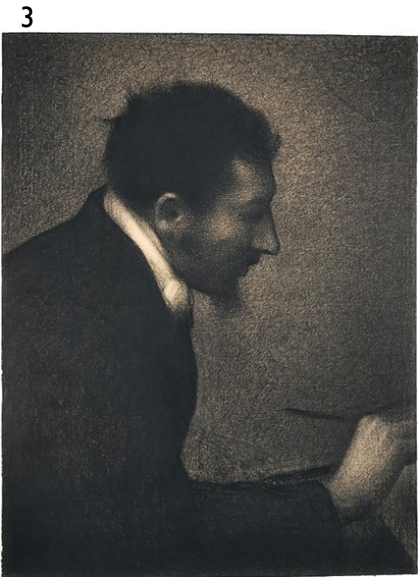
 Each art work on this page is numbered. Tick a box under the correct description of the colour palette for each art work. You can tick more than one box for each art work.



The journey of the Magi, Sassetta, 1433-35.



Sahurs Meadows in the Morning Sun, A. Sisley, 1894.



Portrait of Edmond Francois Aman-Jean, G. Seurat, 1882.



I saw the Figure 5 in Gold, C. Demuth, 1928.



Portrait of a German Officer, M. Hartley, 1914.

	harmonious	complementary	monochromatic	polychromatic
1		✓		✓
2				
3				
4				
5				



In the box on the right, write a sentence about the colour palette in each artwork. Include colour names.

e.g. Artwork 1 uses a polychromatic complementary colour palette of red and blue.

Artwork 2 uses a _____
colour palette of _____

Words for describing colour intensity

Colour intensity

Intensity means how strong the colour is. This is also called **saturation**. A strong colour has no white, gray or black added. We can think of colours along a scale, from not intense or saturated, to quite or moderately intense, to very saturated and intense.

not intense

quite intense

very intense



Snowdon after an April Hailstorm, A.W. Hunt, 1857.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harry G. Sperling Fund, 2016, www.metmuseum.org.



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dull
muted
pale
soft

watery
weak

intense
saturated
bright
pure

undiluted
rich
vibrant
strong

deep
vivid

e.g. The colours in the painting are muted and pale.

e.g. The colours in the painting are bright and vibrant.

Other useful words for describing colour involve qualities of light, warmth and clarity (how clear it is).



warm colours
(like a fire)
red
orange
yellow

silvery
glowing
shining
shiny
metallic
electric

fluorescent
iridescent
flickering
sparkling
glittery

crystal
clear
icy
transparent

translucent
watery
glassy

cool colours
(like ice)
blue
silver
green



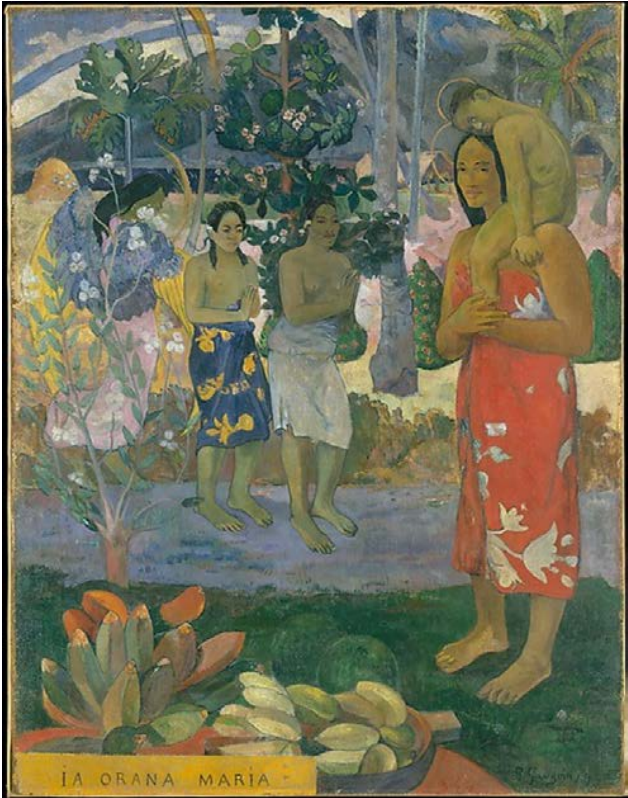
Chalcidony Oval, 2nd Century BC.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest 1942, www.metmuseum.org.


Describing colour intensity

Colour intensity in artworks

Artists often use many different kinds of colours in an artwork. The artworks on this page have some intense colours and some that are not intense. On this page, you will practise describing colours and identifying the objects that have a particular colour and where e.g. the dress of the lady in the foreground.



La Orana Maria (Hail Mary), P. Gauguin, 1891.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Sam A. Lewisohn, 1951, www.metmuseum.org.

 **Choose an object with a particular colour. Identify the object and where it is, then choose two words from page 10 to describe the colour.**

what object? where?	choose a word	choose a word	hue
e.g. the dress of the lady in the foreground	bright	vibrant	orange
the flowers in the skirt of the lady in the middle ground			yellow
			blue
			green
the path			grey
choose another object			
choose another object			



Bouquet of Flowers, O. Redon, 1905.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs George B. Post, 1956, www.metmuseum.org.

what object? where?	choose a word	choose a word	hue
the flower in the centre front of the vase	vibrant	fiery	red
the tall flowers in the centre rear of the vase			white
choose an object			
choose an object			
choose an object			
choose an object			
choose an object			

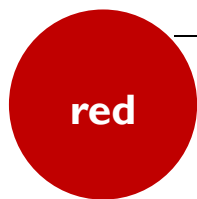
What does colour mean?

Meanings of colour

Over time, people have linked colours with events, purposes, objects and meanings. Colours mean different things in different cultures. For example, in some cultures white means death but in other cultures it means purity and life. The meanings on this page are common meanings of colour in modern Western culture, especially in Australia.

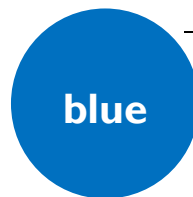


Things associated with colours and typical meanings



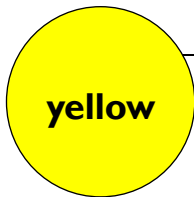
red

things	feelings and qualities
life	angry
fire	desire
blood	love
roses	rage/anger
energy	passion / passionate
	aggressive



blue

things	feelings and qualities
sky	peaceful
sea	calm
water	trust
males (boys' clothes)	melancholy / sad (e.g. I feel blue)



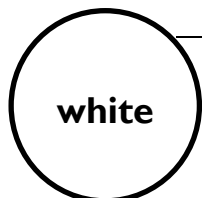
yellow

things	feelings and qualities
sunlight	warm
flowers	happy
daytime	cheerful
sand	healthy



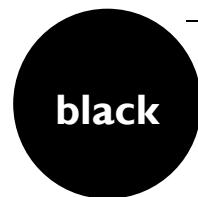
green

things	feelings and qualities
nature	healthy
environment	peaceful
life	envy, jealousy (e.g. I am green with envy)
money	
springtime	



white

things	feelings and qualities
day	peaceful
faith	pure
light	soft
snow	innocent
goodness	good
purity	clean

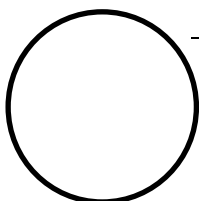


black

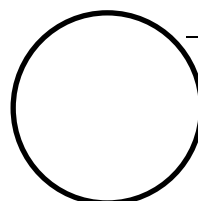
things	feelings and qualities
night	evil
shadows	depression
darkness	strength
death	sadness / grief
fashion/ style (e.g. black car, dress)	stylish
	strong
	powerful



Choose two other colours and research the things related to the colour and the meanings of the colour. You could try pink, grey, orange, brown or another colour.



things **feelings and qualities**



things **feelings and qualities**

Writing about colour meanings 1

Writing about meaning

In Visual Arts, we have to interpret artworks and express what it means. To do this, we can use 'meaning verbs' to link an element such as colour to a meaning.

e.g. The cool tinted blue colour **expresses** calmness. The meaning verb 'expresses' links the colour to a meaning. The box on the right shows meaning verbs that you can use to express meanings in Visual Arts.

Meaning verbs

means shows symbolises expresses
signifies represents suggests
creates (a ____ mood / an impression of ____)



Read the paragraph below. Choose a meaning verb from the box and write it on the blank lines so that the sentence makes sense.



Boating, E. Manet, 1874.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection 1929, www.metmuseum.org.

The warm tinted blue of the sea _____ a peaceful day on the water. The harmonious palette of blues and purple with white tints _____ peace and tranquillity. These tones contrast with the soft warm brown of the boat. The white hue of the man's shirt and trousers _____ innocence and happiness. The colours in this painting _____ the peace and harmony of a calm day on the water.



Write a paragraph about *The Sea* by Gustave Courbet. Describe the colours in the painting and what they mean using meaning verbs and ideas from the box below.

danger fear anxiety
stormy weather peace and hope



The Sea, G. Courbet, 1865.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Dikran G. Kelekian Gift, 1922,, www.metmuseum.org.

Writing about colour meanings 2

This page shows two artworks with a similar subject: dancing in the country. The use of colour creates different moods and meanings in these artworks. These are not realistic depictions of real life in the countryside. Instead, they show a particular view or perspective on a group of people.

Meaning verbs

means	shows	symbolises	expresses
signifies	represents	suggests	
creates (a _____ mood / an impression of _____)			



Peasants dancing and feasting, David Teniers the Younger, 1660.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, www.metmuseum.org.



Fill in the blanks by answering the questions and instructions in italics.

This painting shows many country people (peasants) dancing in a country setting. The peasants' clothes are (*what colours?*) _____ . These bright, vibrant colours (*choose a meaning verb*) _____ joy and happiness. The background is a house and countryside and sky. (*What colours? What mood is created?*) _____

(*What do you think the artist intended to show?*)
This artwork creates an impression of _____



The photograph below also shows people dancing. What do the colours express and show about artist's intention?



This photograph shows _____

The colours of the peoples' clothing are _____
(*What do the colours express?*) _____

(*What colours are in the setting? What mood is created?*) _____

(*What do you think the artist intended to show?*)
This artwork creates an impression of _____

Describing colour and meanings

 Examine the colours in each artwork closely. Then write two or three sentences about the colours in each artwork and the meanings created. Use meaning verbs.

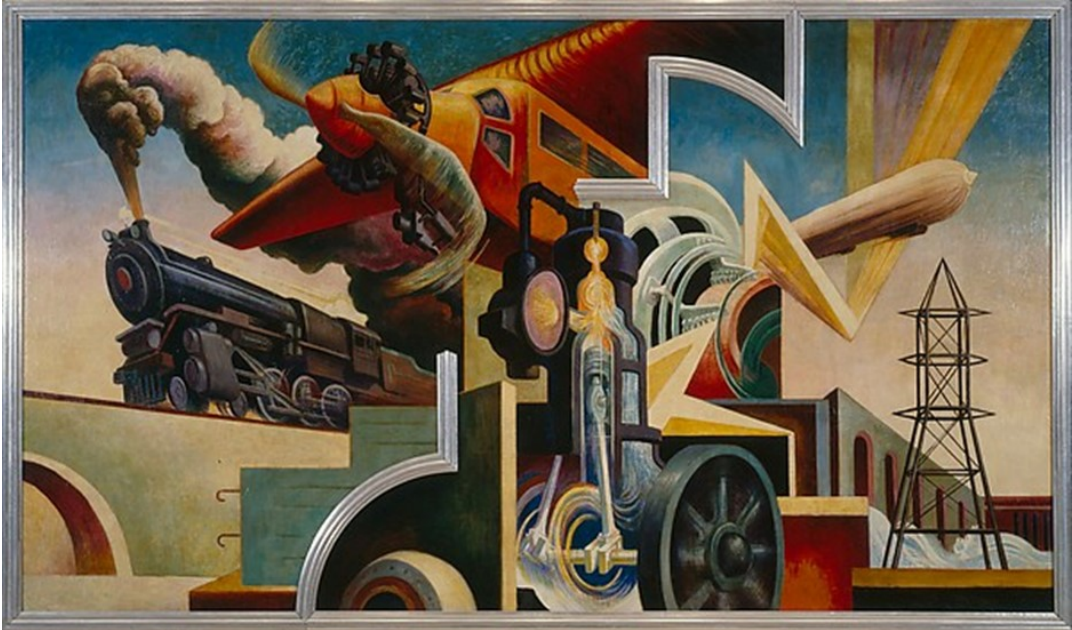
Meaning verbs							
means	shows	symbolises	expresses	signifies	represents	suggests	
creates a _____ mood			creates an impression of _____				



Fire and Rain, L. Chase, 1982.



Scaffold City, N. Lopez, 2008.



America Today.
T.H. Benton, 1930-31.

Analysis template for colour

This template can be used for analysing colour in any art work.

COLOUR ANALYSIS		Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork			Write a sentence to summarise your points
1	Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else about the style and context.				
2	Write one sentence briefly describing the subject of the artwork.				
3	How is light used in the artwork?	mostly light	mostly dark	dark and light	
4	How could you describe the overall palette of the artwork?	monochromatic YES/NO harmonious YES/ NO polychromatic YES/NO complementary YES/NO			
5	What is the warmth of the chosen palette?	mostly cool	mostly warm	warm and cool	
6	Choose the most salient (obvious or interesting) colours in the art work. The following questions relate to each colour separately.				
a	Colour: ____ Where / what object is this colour? Write two or three synonyms for each colour				Write one sentence to summarise these ideas
b	Choose three words that describe the intensity of the colour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not intense- dull, pale, muted, soft, watery, weak intense- saturated, bright, pure, undiluted, rich, strong, deep, vivid 				
c	What is the meaning of the colour?				
a	Colour: ____ Where / what object is this colour? Write two or three synonyms for each colour				Write one sentence to summarise these ideas
b	Choose three words that describe the intensity of the colour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not intense- dull, pale, muted, soft, watery, weak intense- saturated, bright, pure, undiluted, rich, strong, deep, vivid 				
c	What is the meaning of the colour?				
a	Colour: ____ Where / what object is this colour? Write two or three synonyms for each colour				Write one sentence to summarise these ideas
b	Choose three words that describe the intensity of the colour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not intense- dull, pale, muted, soft, watery, weak intense- saturated, bright, pure, undiluted, rich, strong, deep, vivid 				
c	What is the meaning of the colour?				
7	Describe the overall effect or meaning of the colours in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned.				

Line

Lines are marks that span a distance between two points. Lines can show movement or direction.

Explicit and implicit lines

Lines can be explicit (actually on the page). Lines can be implicit. Implicit or implied lines are not actually drawn on the page but are shown by the edges of forms or the eye's direction.

Explicit means clearly stated, direct and obvious.

Implicit means hidden but understood, not obvious. The word **implied** has the same meaning as implicit.

Lines can control your eye direction and how you view an artwork. The eye often follows lines.



Look at the artwork below. Notice where your eye moves over the painting. Compare your eye direction with a friend's observations.

explicit lines

implicit lines
(shown by
changes in colour
and edges of
forms)



Carey's Backyard, L. MacIver, 1939.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the New York City W. P. A. 1943, www.metmuseum.org.



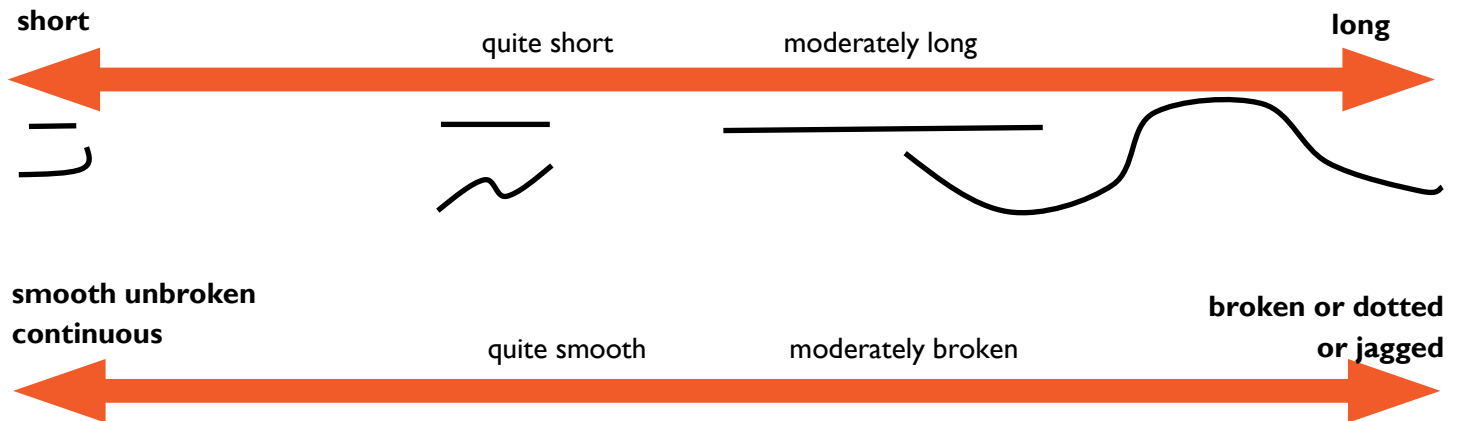
Find explicit lines and implied lines in the foreground of the painting.

Read the paragraph below about *Carey's Backyard* by Loren MacIver. Cross out the incorrect words. Finish the sentences as instructed to show how line creates meaning in this painting. Underline the meaning verbs (e.g. conveys, expresses).

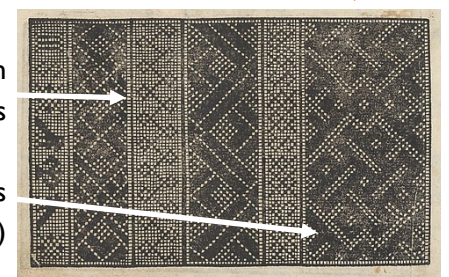
The use of line in this artwork helps the artist convey the image of a beautiful garden in the middle of the city. The city is expressed through explicit/implicit lines such as the (name objects in the painting) _____. These lines are straight/curved which show their man-made qualities and they also express movement and energy. In contrast, the artist uses both explicit/implicit and explicit/implicit lines to represent plants in the gardens. The leaves in the flowers have straight/curved lines, creating a peaceful and natural feeling. The hedge behind the chair is expressed through explicit/implicit lines. Instead of lines for the hedge, the artist uses _____ to show forms and shapes. The use of line in this painting helps to show the garden as an oasis of calm in the hectic, man-made city.

Qualities of line

This page explores two qualities of line: length (short or long) and whether the line is smooth or broken. Both of these qualities can be shown on a scale (the arrows below) showing a range of values.



Drawing of a Dragon amid Foliage, S. Quli, 1540. Turkey.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 2007,
www.metmuseum.org.



Esempio di recammi, page 2, G. A. Tagliente, 1530.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund 1935,
www.metmuseum.org.



Line length and continuity (or brokenness) have effects on the viewer. Draw a line to match the quality with its effect or meaning.

many short
lines

create a
harmonious feeling
of peace

long lines

take the viewer's
eye in one
direction

broken, jagged
lines

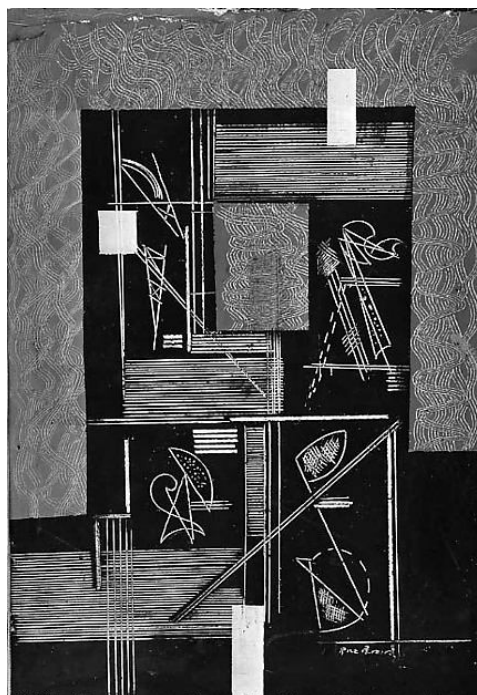
makes the viewer's
eye jump around
from place to place

smooth
unbroken lines

can represent
chaos or tension



Examine the artwork below. Write two sentences about the kind of lines you can see and their effect.



White Lines, I. Rice Pereira, 1941.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of New
York City W. P. A. 1943. www.metmuseum.org.

[illegible]



Sometimes lines in an artwork are implicit (or understood) but not actually drawn or marked. Look at these artworks and see if you can work out implicit lines created by:

- eye sight lines (e.g. people looking at each other)
- pointed fingers
- other action lines (e.g. walking paths).

The artworks below contain implicit lines of eye sight lines and pointing. Draw them on the artworks!



Two young ladies at shore, one pointing, K.Hokusai, 1760-1849.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection
1929, www.metmuseum.org.



Three peasants in conversation, A. Durer, c 1497.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1919, www.metmuseum.org.



Chaos during an earthquake, J. G. Posada, c. 1890-1910.

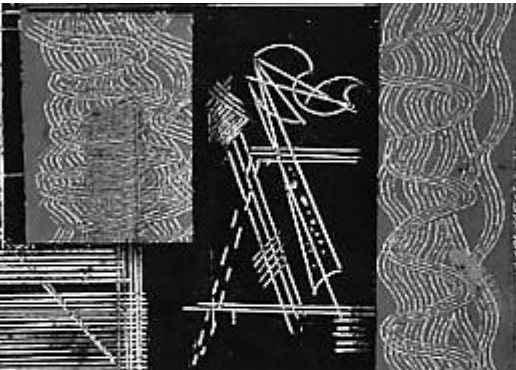
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Jean Charlot 1929, www.metmuseum.org.

Line width

The width of a line or a curve means how thin or thick it is.

Meanings of thin lines:
delicate (easily broken), elegant, graceful, ephemeral / transient (lasting for a short time); delicacy, elegance, grace, transience.

Meanings of thick lines:
strong, bold, confident, permanent (lasts for a long time); strength, boldness, permanence, confidence.



White Lines, I. Rice Pereira, 1941.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of New York City W. P. A, 1943., www.metmuseum.org.

- fine**

light

wispy

feathery
- narrow**

delicate

elegant

e.g. The lines in the artwork are fine, light and delicate



Inlay fragment, Egypt, 200BC-100AD.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Helen Miller Gould, 1910, www.metmuseum.org.

- wide**

broad

chunky

bulky
- coarse**

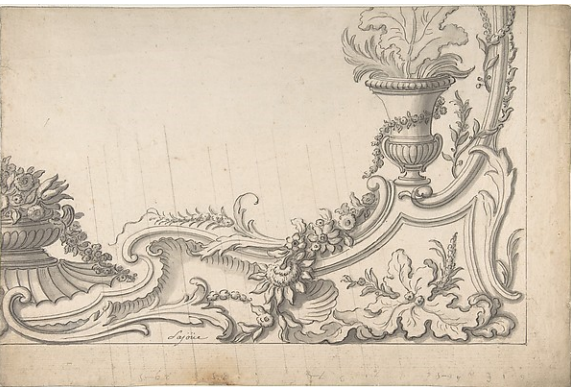
strong

solid

substantial

e.g. The zigzag lines in the inlay are broad and chunky.

Examine these two artworks. Then fill in one sentence about each. Use two words to describe the line width, then explain the meanings.



Left:
Design for the corner of a decoration on a building,
J. de Lajoue, 1730.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Edward Pearce Casey Fund, 1985, www.metmuseum.org.

The _____ lines express _____
and _____.

The _____ lines convey _____
and _____.



Terracotta stirrup jar, Mycenaean, 1300-1190 BC.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cesnola Collection, www.metmuseum.org.

Straight lines

Straight lines are not common in nature. They can express artificial, man-made mechanical meanings.

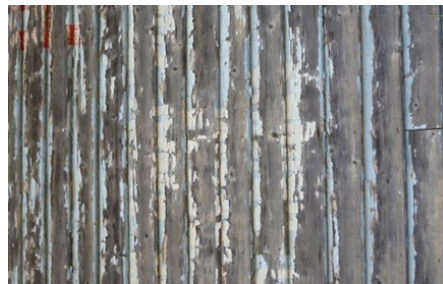
Horizontal

A horizontal line takes the eye from left to right or right to left. The horizon is where the sky meets the earth. A horizontal line expresses peace, calm and stillness. Horizontal lines can show the viewer's eye level.



Vertical

A vertical line is drawn from top to bottom or bottom to top. A vertical line represents height, growth and standing up. Vertical lines can create an active, strong and alert feeling.



Diagonal

A diagonal line is drawn on an angle. Diagonal lines create tension and movement in an art work and make it more exciting.



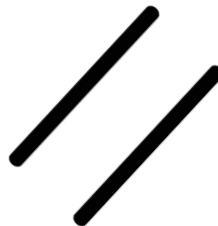
Zigzag

A zigzag means a line that moves left and right. Zigzag lines can represent fast movement, changes of direction, force, anger and conflict.



Parallel lines

Parallel lines are the same distance apart. They express fast movement and an orderly and organised feeling.



Evening Chime of the Clock,
S. Harunobu, 1766.



Label the types of lines in these two artworks.

2



Panel, 8th century, Egypt.

Meanings of straight lines



Examine the straight lines in each artwork closely. Then write two or three sentences about each.

Meaning verbs

means

shows

symbolises

expresses

signifies

represents

suggests

creates a _____ mood

creates an impression of _____



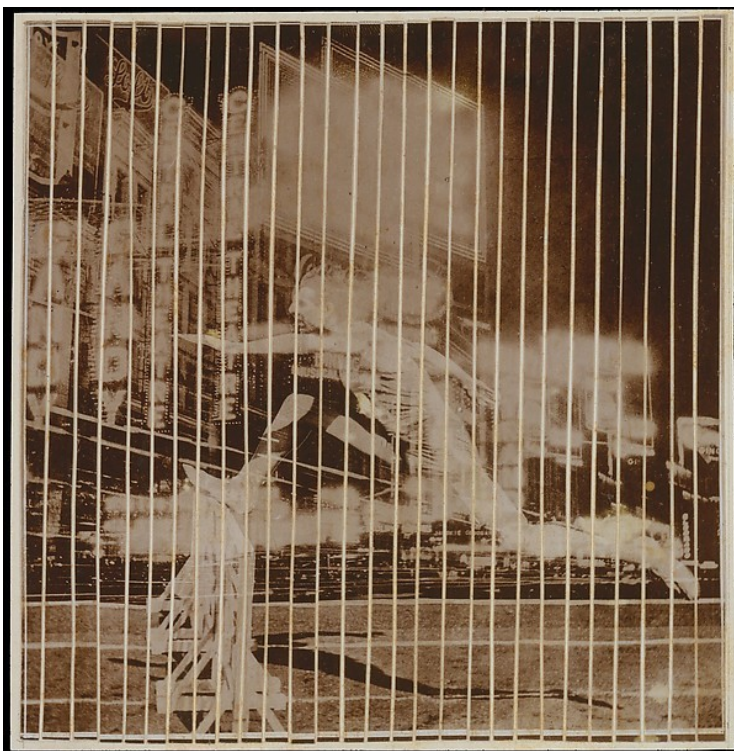
Fur Traders Descending the Missouri,
G. C. Bingham, 1845.

The _____ lines
across the water and the _____ line of
the boat's shape express feelings of



Cold City, Paul Klee, 1921.

The _____ lines _____



Runner in the City, E. Lissitzky, 1926.



In *Runner in the City*, notice how your eye moves over the photograph. Notice the vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines and comment below.

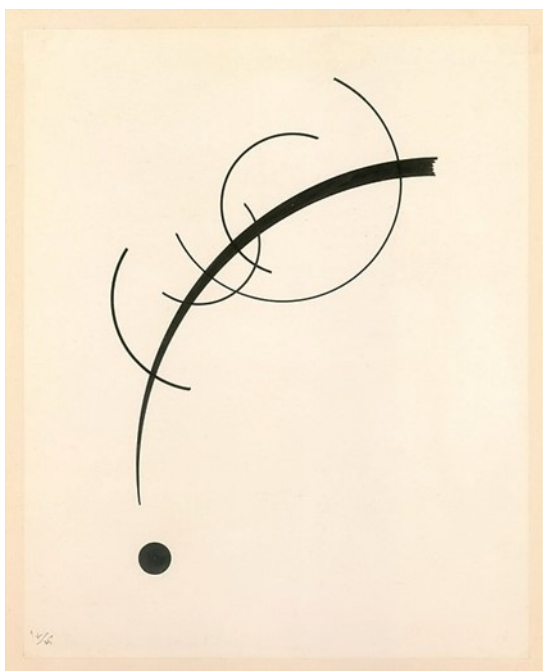
Curves

Curves or curved lines- what do we call them?

Are they curves or curved lines? Curves are part of the element of Visual Arts known as line, so we can call them either curves or curved lines. Both are fine!

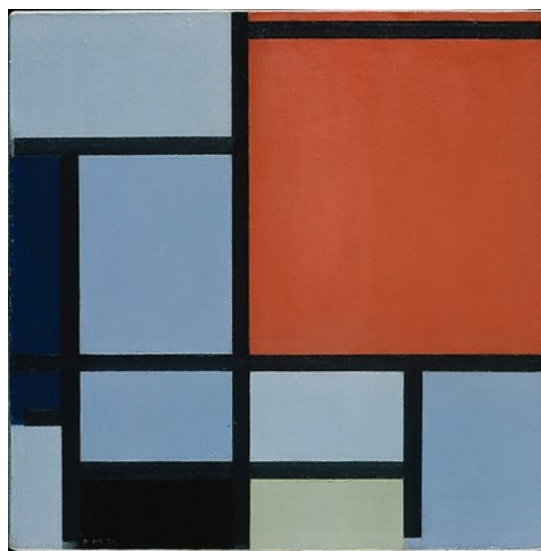


in abstract art, the meaning of line is not as straight forward. Look at these two examples of abstract artworks. What impressions do the lines give you? Look at the information in this book on the meaning of lines and consider what the lines might mean in these artworks. There really isn't a right or wrong answer because these are abstract artworks where interpretation is in the mind and eye of the viewer.



Free Curve to the Point - Accompanying Sound of Geometric Curves, V. Kandinsky, 1925.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1970, www.metmuseum.org.



Composition, P. Mondrian, 1921.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection 1998,

Curves

Curves are marks that are not straight.
Curves can be lightly curved, strongly curved, free form or spiral. Curves are **organic** because they are common in nature.

Meaning of curves
Curves are expressive, graceful, natural, feminine. They create a sense of movement, calmness and expression.

Slightly curved
Light curves can be undulating (gently rising and falling). These curves create a feeling of calm, quiet, harmony, nature and flow.



Strongly curved
Strong curves express action, power, energy and curved movement through space.



Free form curves
These curves follow random shapes and create a feeling of movement and freedom.



Spirals
Spirals create a sense of never-ending movement. Some spirals start at the centre and move outwards, or start outwards and move inwards.



Gold spiral, 7th Century BC, Etruscan.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase by subscriptions 1895, www.metmuseum.org.



Follow the instructions in the table below

Type of curve	Draw an example of each	Write the typical meanings of each type of curve
slight curves		
strong curves		
free form curves		
spirals		

Meanings of curves

 Each art work on this page is numbered. Tick a box under the correct description of the curves and write what meaning is suggested by the curves.



1. (above) Case with design of dragon among spiralling clouds, 19th century, Japan.



3. (above) *Repose*, J.W. Alexander, 1895.



2. (above) Goddess of Dance (Nrtyadevi), Nepal, 16th Century.



4. (above) *Landscape*, A.P. Ryder, 1897-98.

	lightly curved, undulating	strongly curved	spiral	what meaning or effect is created?
1				
2				
3				
4				

 Now write one sentence for each artwork about the curves and the effects that are created.

2. Line

Analysis template for line

The artwork on this page can be used as a stimulus for an analysis activity about line. The writing template can be found on page 40.



Forest Scene, J. H. Carmiencke, c. 1851.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, John Osgood and Elizabeth Amis Cameron Blanchard Memorial Fund 1978, www.metmuseum.org.



About the artwork

This drawing was created using graphite and watercolour on paper.

Johann Hermann Carmiencke (1810-1867) was born in Germany, but moved to Denmark then to America in 1851. He was part of a group of artists who made numerous outdoor nature studies of trees, rocks, or clouds in order to build their technical drawing skills and develop their powers of observation. Carmiencke became a landscape painter and mostly painted mountain ranges. *Source: Met Museum*

Describe the meaning of curves



Examine the painting below and follow the instructions to describe the use of line in this painting.



Clouds and Water, A. Dove, 1930.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Alfred Stieglitz Collection 1949, www.metmuseum.org.

Answer these questions	Finish these sentences to describe the use of curved lines in the painting.
What is the subject of this painting? What is happening?	This painting shows _____ _____
Describe the types of curves in this painting and what objects are curved. Mention the colours too.	The (what colour?) _____ waves have _____ curves. Three (what colour?) _____ sailboats have (what kind of curve?) _____ sails as they sail along the curvy horizon through the _____ waves. The (what colour?) _____ hills in the middle ground are rounded with _____ curves, expressing (what meaning?) _____ The sky fills half the canvas with _____ curves that suggest strong wind currents. There is also a _____ cloud implying a coming storm.
What do you think the artist wanted to show?	The many curved and swirling lines in this painting show _____ _____ _____

Line analysis template

This template can be used for analysing line in an art work.

LINE ANALYSIS		Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork			Write a sentence to summarise your points
1	Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else you know about the style and context.				
2	Write one sentence briefly describing the subject of the artwork.				
3	What is the weight of the lines used in the artwork?	mostly thin	moderately thick	mostly thick	
4	Are the lines explicit or implicit?	explicit lines YES/NO implied or implicit lines YES/NO			
5	What kinds of lines are in the art work?	short	moderately short /long	long	
		smooth unbroken	mostly smooth	broken jagged	
		mostly straight	straight and curved	mostly curved	
6	Describe the lines of particular things or locations in the artwork.				
a	Object / location: _____				Write one sentence that summarises the points
	Write two or three words to describe the line / curve				
b	What is the meaning of the line/curve?				
a	Object / location: _____				Write one sentence that summarises the points
	Write two or three words to describe the line / curve				
b	What is the meaning of the line/curve?				
a	Object / location: _____				Write one sentence that summarises the points
	Write two or three words to describe the line / curve				
b	What is the meaning of the line/curve?				
7	Describe the overall effect or meanings of line in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned. (2-3 sentences)				

Texture

This artwork can be analysed using the texture analysis template at the end of this section.



A Woman Fishing, G. Seurat, 1884.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1951
www.metmuseum.org.



About the artwork

Georges Seurat was a French artist who developed a technique called 'pointillism'. In this technique, short, almost dot-like strokes are used. The figures look blurry up close but the images look clear from a distance. This is a crayon drawing that is a study (a practice drawing) for his most famous painting, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*.

Texture

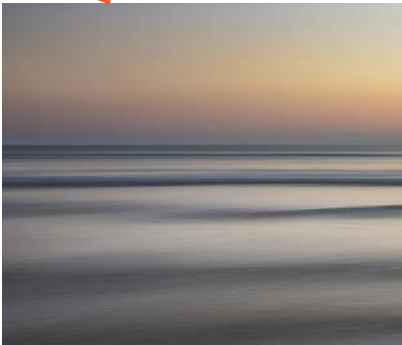
What is texture? Texture describes the surface quality of an art work. Texture stimulates the sense of touch (how it feels) as well as sight (how it looks). Aspects of texture can be considered on scales from smooth to rough, soft to hard, wet to dry, shiny to dull.

smooth

quite smooth

moderately rough

rough

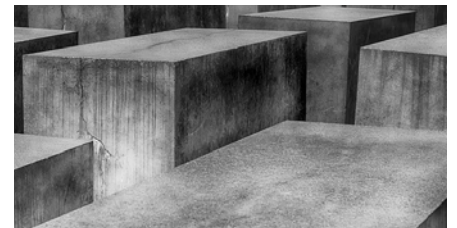


soft

fairly soft

rather hard

hard

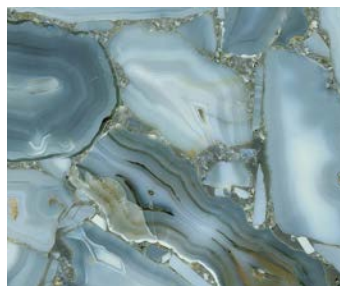


wet

a little wet

somewhat dry

dry

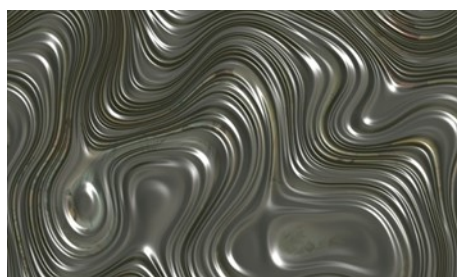
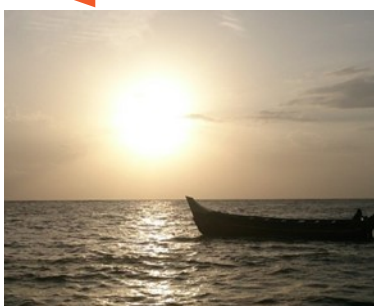


shiny

rather shiny

fairly dull

dull



Analyse texture



Draw an X on each scale to show the aspects of texture in each art work. Under the scales, write a sentence to summarise the aspects of texture shown in the scales.

These adverbs can help describe grades of texture e.g. quite dry
fairly rather somewhat
moderately a little quite



Beaded Bracelet, Egypt, c. 1504 BC.

smooth ←————→ rough
soft ←————→ hard
wet ←————→ dry
shiny ←————→ dull

The artwork has a _____ texture.

smooth ←————→ rough
soft ←————→ hard
wet ←————→ dry
shiny ←————→ dull

The _____ artwork
has a _____
_____ texture.



Nijinsky, A. Rodin, 1959.



Fragment of a tapestry, Switzerland. c. 1420.

smooth ←————→ rough
soft ←————→ hard
wet ←————→ dry
shiny ←————→ dull

The artwork has a _____ texture.

smooth ←————→ rough
soft ←————→ hard
wet ←————→ dry
shiny ←————→ dull

The artwork has a _____ texture.



Washerwoman, C. Pissarro, 1880.

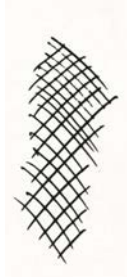
Texture techniques

This page shows some techniques that help to create texture in an artwork.

hatching



cross hatching



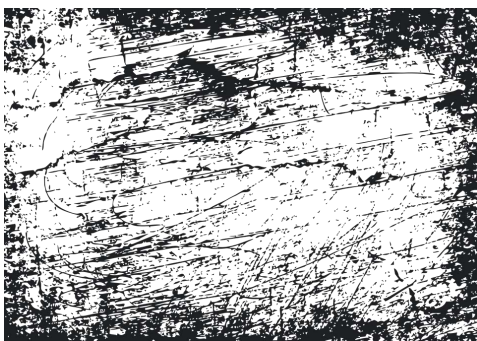
shading



sponging



scratching



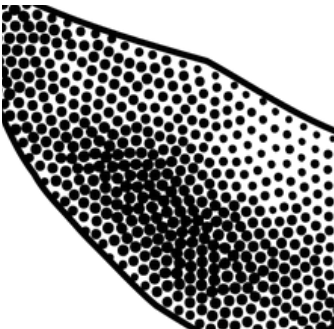
crumpling



pixellating



stippling



speckling



collage / layering



 The box below contains descriptions of these techniques for creating texture. Choose one description for each technique and write it under the image.

scrunching up a surface to create a rough texture

creating many parallel lines that cross each other

using a pencil or crayon to make darker sections of colour

using a sponge to create a soft, padded and dotted effect

assembling several different forms in layers to create texture

using many parallel or nearly parallel lines to create a shading effect


marking a surface with sharp cuts

creating a surface of dots of different sizes

creating many small squares, often using technology

using tiny dots on a surface to show texture

Identifying texture techniques

 Examine each artwork closely. In the table below, write the techniques (from page 46) that have been used to create texture in the artwork.



1. Lamp shade, [Glass], c.1901.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	



2. Angel.



3. Botanical Study, M. Delany, c. 1772.



4. Poodle, Moriz Jung, 1912.



6. Terracotta Rim Fragment, Minoan, 2300BC



5. Russian Dancer, E. Degas, 1899.


Use of light to create texture

Light can also create texture. When light bounces off an object, proportion and depth are created in an artwork.




Portrait of Charles de Flahaut, J.B. Greuze, 1763.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Edith C. Blum 1966.,
www.metmuseum.org.

The surface of a painting is flat, but use of light coloured paints and different kinds of brush strokes can create a sense of depth and texture to the surface. The artist of this painting has created textures of hair, skin and luxurious fabrics through use of colour, light and shade.

 **Use your knowledge of texture to fill in the blanks in this paragraph about the painting.**

Many textures are created in this painting. The man's coat has a _____, _____ texture. The artist has used light and shade to create the illusion of _____ folds in the fabric. In the vest, lighter colours of yellow and gold and white create a raised texture like embroidered fabric. The artist has depicted a _____, _____ collar and tie around his neck. The man's hair is actually a wig. The hair has a _____, _____ texture. The skin tone looks realistic and there is light reflecting from (what parts of his face?) _____

The sculpture below also shows texture through the use of light and reflection on different surfaces. When you write about this sculpture, refer to the words on page 42 to help you.

 **Write a paragraph that describes the texture of the sculpture. Describe the surfaces using words you have learned. Also describe how light reflects from different surfaces to create textures.**



Sculpture, Broesis, CC0 pixabay.com

Texture analysis template

This template can be used for analysing texture in any art work. Usually, you will be required to analyse many complex factors in an artwork. This page helps you focus on one element or visual quality: texture.

TEXTURE ANALYSIS		Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork			Write a sentence to summarise your points
1	Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else you know about the style and context.				
2	Write one sentence briefly describing the subject of the artwork.				
3	Is the surface texture smooth or rough?	smooth	quite smooth/ rough	rough	Write a sentence about these aspects. Name the objects/areas that you are referring to.
4	Is the surface texture soft or hard?	soft	quite soft/ hard	hard	
5	Is the surface texture wet or dry?	wet	quite wet/ dry	dry	
6	Is the surface texture shiny or dull?	shiny	quite shiny/ dull	dull	
7	Are these techniques used in the artwork?	hatching	cross hatching	sponging	
		scratching	crumpling	pixellating	
		stippling	speckling	collage	
	Are there any other techniques used?	shading	other	other	
8	How would you describe the use of light to create texture?	mostly light	dark and light	mostly dark	
9	Describe the overall effect of texture in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned. (2-3 sentences)				

4. Tone

Tone / Value

This artwork can be analysed using the tone / value analysis template at the end of this section.



A Woman Ironing, E. Degas. 1873.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O.
Havemeyer Collection 1929, www.metmuseum.org.



About the artwork

Edward Degas (1823-1917) was a French artist who was one of the founders of Impressionism. Degas did not like to be called an Impressionist but he was friends with many famous Impressionists. Impressionists used many small, thin brush strokes in their paintings and emphasised changing qualities of light. Like the Impressionists, Degas was interested in using real people and everyday urban activities as the subjects for his artworks, especially dancers and female nudes. He was interested in washerwomen and used them as his subjects on several occasions.

Tone / Value

Tone refers to lightness and darkness. Tone can also be called **value**. Contrasts in **tone/ value** create texture and emphasis.

Meaning of dark:

Dark values or tones are called shades. They can suggest sadness, depression, a 'dark' mood.

Meaning of light:

Light values or tones are called tints. can suggest happiness, brightness and a 'light' mood.

dark

light




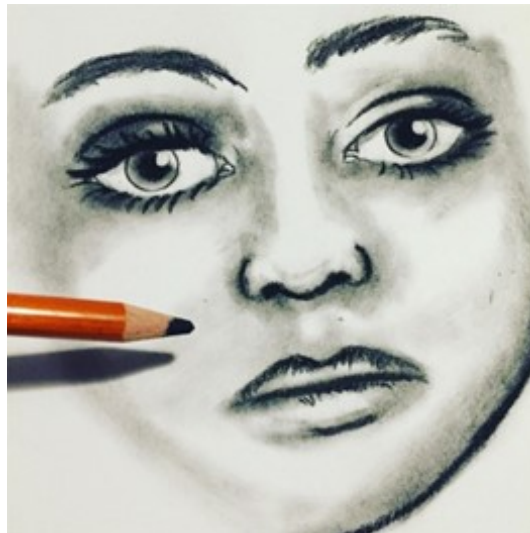
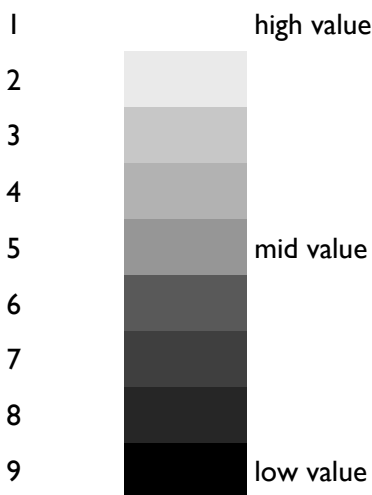
Potato Peeler, V. van Gogh, 1885.

All colours have different tones or values.
Van Gogh uses mostly dark tones (left).
Monet uses mostly light tones (right).



Haystacks (Effect of Snow and Sun), C. Monet, 1891.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H.O. Havemeyer Collection
1929, www.metmuseum.org.

 Look at this scale showing high value (light) to low value (dark). Examine this drawing of a face. Find parts of the face that have high value, mid value and low value and label them.



Other important words

highlight

area that is light because light reflects off it

shadow

where the object falls into darkness



silhouette

(sounds like sill-oo-ett)
a French word for a dark figure against a light background.

Writing about tone / value 1

 Examine this painting and draw labels and arrows to show the high, mid and low values. Follow the instructions to describe the use of tone / value in the painting.



Purple Afternoon, London,
J. Pennell, c. 1926.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York, Gift of Bartlett Arkell 1942,
www.metmuseum.org.

Questions	Finish these sentences to describe the use of tone / value in the painting.
What is the subject of this painting?	This painting shows _____ _____
Describe the way tone/value is used in this painting. Which parts are high value? Which parts are low value? What techniques have been used? What is the effect? Are there highlights and shadows?	The city is mostly (what values? light/dark?) _____. These dark tones suggest (what meaning about the city?) _____. These values contrast with the swirling clouds which are mostly (what values? light/dark?) _____. Some darker clouds create the impression of (what kind of weather?) _____. This evokes a (what kind of mood?) _____. Variations in tone are created by (what techniques?) _____. The watercolour shading of the darker tones also suggests rain. There are no strong highlights in this painting, but the lightest sections seem to be the (what aspects/parts? what does it show?) _____ _____
What do you think the artist wanted to show?	The many dark tones in this painting create a (what kind of mood or emotion overall?) _____ mood, but the lighter tones suggest (what mood or emotion ?) _____ _____

Writing about tone / value 2



Use the model description on page 56 and describe the use of tone / value in this painting.



This painting shows the start of a horse race in Rome, Italy, in the early 1800s. No jockeys or riders were used - the horses raced down a one-mile street, as part of the Rome Carnival. The race was a wild and exciting event and many people attended. Some observers reported that people were cruel to the horses sometimes.

The Start of the Race of the Riderless Horses,
H. Vernet, 1820.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Catherine Lorillard Wolfe Collection 1887, www.metmuseum.org.

Questions to Finish these sentences to describe the use of tone / value in the painting.

What is the subject of this painting?

This painting shows _____

Describe the way tone/value is used in this painting. Which parts are high value? Which parts are low value? What techniques have been used? What is the effect? Are there highlights and shadows?

What do you think the artist wanted to show?

Tone / value analysis template

This template can be used for analysing texture in any art work. Usually, you will be required to analyse many complex factors in an artwork. This page helps you focus on one element or visual quality: tone.

TONE ANALYSIS		Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork			Write a sentence to summarise your points
1	Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else you know about the style and context.				
2	Write one sentence briefly describing the subject of the artwork.				
3	How would you describe the overall tone / values in the artwork?	light	light and dark	dark	Write a short paragraph about these aspects.
4	What colours are used to create tones / values?				
5	Are there any highlights? What is highlighted? Why?				
6	Are there any shadows? Where are the shadows?				
7	What techniques are used to create tones/ values?	hatching	cross hatching	sponging	
		scratching	crumpling	pixellating	
		stippling	speckling	collage	
8	Are there any other techniques used?	shading	other	other	
9	Describe the overall effect of tone in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned. (2-3 sentences)				

Shape

This artwork can be analysed using the shape / form analysis template at the end of this section.

About the artwork

The artist, Juan Gris, is known for creating disguised images. This table has coffee cups and fruit as well as a newspaper on it and a checked tablecloth at distorted angles. A guitar is perched near the table on the left. The objects create the shape of a bull's head. The coffee cup at the centre on the bottom is the snout of the bull, and a black and white circle on the left is its eye. The French word for bull is 'taureau'. The 'eau' can be seen on label of the bottle of wine, hinting at the bull's head shape.

Source: Metropolitan Museum of New York www.metmuseum.com



Still life with checked tablecloth, J. Gris, 1915.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection 2014,
www.metmuseum.org.

Shape

2D or 3D

A **shape** can be two dimensional (2D) which means that it looks flat. A 2D shape shows height and width not depth.

This apple looks flat and two dimensional (2D)



This apple has depth and looks somewhat three dimensional

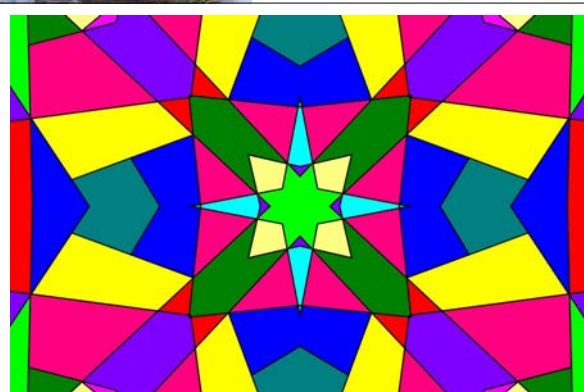


An object can be three dimensional (3D) which means that it looks solid, with height width and depth. A real object (e.g. a sculpture) is also 3D. 3D shapes are called **forms**. See page 70 on **form** for more on 3D shapes.

This is a photo of an apple. It looks very three dimensional



Looking at a real apple in front of you is truly three dimensional!



Organic
or
inorganic

Organic shapes

Organic shapes are like ones found in nature. They can be:

- **natural**
- **flowing**
- **curved**
- **fluid** (like water)

Inorganic shapes

Inorganic shapes are synthetic (man made). They usually have squares and angles. They can be:

- **geometric** (squares, rectangles, triangles, circles etc)
- **angular** (straight edges with angles)

Irregular
or
regular

Irregular shapes

Irregular means not regular. (ir - means not) Irregular shapes do not have a constant or predictable pattern. The image above has an irregular design of flowers and fluid shapes.

Regular shapes

Regular shapes have a typical or predictable pattern. The geometric design above has a mostly regular and consistent pattern.

blurry
edged or
hard
edged


Blurry edged

The boundaries might not be well defined or they may be furry or blurry. We can describe a shape with blurry edges as 'blurry edged'. The shapes in the water are blurry edged but the flower edges are quite hard edged.

Hard edged

The edges or boundaries could be well defined, clear and sharp. We can describe a shape with hard edges as 'hard edged'. The geometric shapes above are hard edged.

Identifying qualities of shapes

 Each art work on this page is numbered. In the table below, write the word that best describes the shapes in the artwork in general or overall. Name the shapes you can see.



1. CC0. realworkhard pixabay.com



2. *Static-dynamic gradation*, P. Klee, 1923.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Berggruen Klee Collection 1987, www.metmuseum.org.



3. *Untitled*. CC0. mcpdigital pixabay.com



4. *Ink Landscapes with Poems*, G. Xian, 1688.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Douglas Dillon 1981

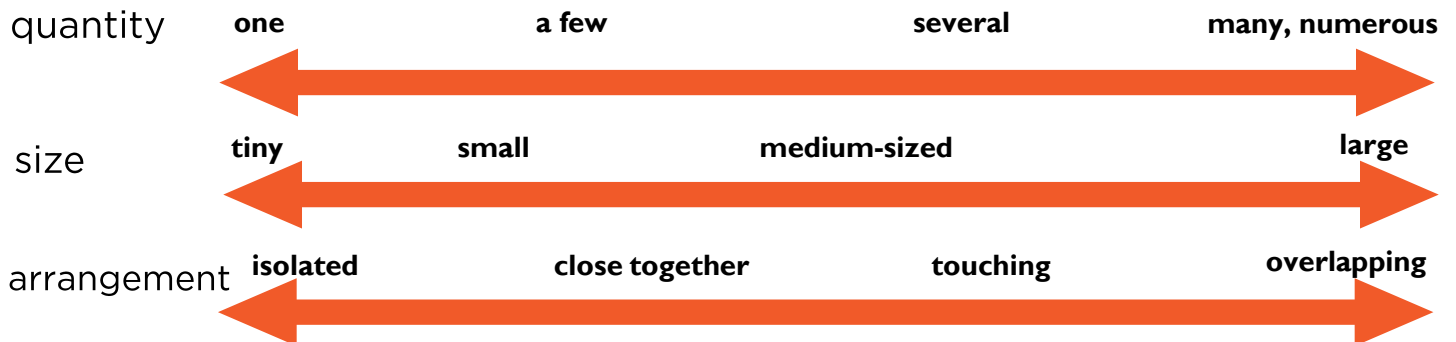


5. *Prayer Book*, Baselyos, late 17th century. Ethiopia.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Louis V. Bell Fund 2006

	2D or 3D?	organic or inorganic?	regular or irregular?	blurry edged or hard edged?	Name the shapes you can see
1	3D				
2					
3					
4					
5					

More qualities of shapes

Other qualities of shapes include quantity (how many?), size (small, medium or large) and arrangement (if they are isolated on their own, close together, touching or overlapping). These qualities can be seen on the scales below.



Expert writers in Visual Arts know how to describe qualities by packing information into a noun group. A noun group includes description before the main noun and after the main noun.

noun group			
The design has	many small	circles	that are close together.
	<i>before the main noun</i>	<i>main noun</i>	<i>after the main noun</i>
	e.g. what are they like? how many? what size?		any more information?

 **Examine this artwork. Then fill in the table to describe the large oval (the watermelon). Then describe the pomegranates (the smaller fruit at the front).**



Still-Life with a Watermelon and Pomegranates, P. Cézanne, 1900-1906.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection 2002esnola Collection, www.metmuseum.org.

noun group			
This painting shows			
	e.g. what is it like? how many? what	main noun	any more information?

noun group			
Also on the table are			
	e.g. what is it like? how many? what	main noun	any more information?

How would you describe the shapes of the two jars or vases located behind the fruit? _____

Positive and negative shapes

A positive shape is the actual shape of the object. Negative shapes are the spaces between objects or the background behind a shape. Negative space is the empty space of the work.

In artworks, negative and positive shapes are both important. A black object on a white background is called a silhouette (sounds like sill-oo-ett).

The positive shape is the fern.

The negative shape is the black background.

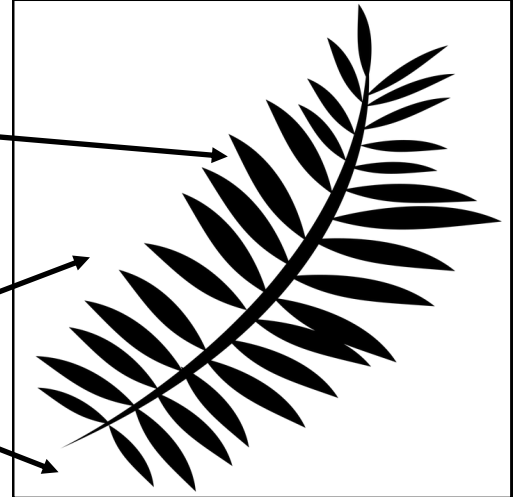


Botanical Specimen: Fern, British, 1855-60.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Simon Lowinsky 2003, www.metmuseum.org.

The positive shape is the fern.

The negative shape is the white background.



 **Examine the artwork below. The artist has created interesting contrasts in positive and negative shapes. Follow the instructions to describe the shapes in this artwork.**

These flowers are called irises. One flower is an iris. The iris plant includes a purple, pink and white flower and long slender leaves.

(Describe the main shapes: organic, inorganic, geometric, curved etc). This artwork has _____

There are both positive and negative shapes in this artwork. There are (how many?) _____ irises. (How many?) _____ are white on a black background and (how many?) _____ are black on a white background. (What other geometric shapes can you see? how many are there? where are they?)

The leaves of the irises create visual interest because they change from positive shape to negative shape. (How does this happen? where are the leaves that change from positive to negative shape?)

(What is the effect of the use of positive and negative shapes?) _____



Stencil with Pattern of Irises on a Geometric Background, Japan, 19th century.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs Horace Havemeyer 1942, www.metmuseum.org.

Form 3D shapes

Form describes a three-dimensional object in space. Form is mostly related to sculpture. It has volume, length, width and height. This page covers more important words for describing shapes and forms.

representational

Representational forms can be recognised for what they are (e.g. a person, a tree), even if they are not exactly true to life.



Spinario (Boy Pulling a Thorn from His Foot). P. J. A. Banacolsi, 1501.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs Charles Wrightsman 2012, www.metmuseum.org.

biomorphic

bio means life or living.
morphic comes from 'morphe' - Ancient Greek for 'form'
-ic makes the word a describer / adjective



Biomorphic forms are abstract but look like living things such as plants and bacteria.

Geometric forms

Geometric forms are pyramids, cubes, spheres and ovoids (made from ovals).

abstract

Abstract forms have to be interpreted by the viewer. There are no obvious links to real things in the world.



CC0 toscano_25 Omar Rayo pixabay.com

anthropomorphic

anthropos means human being (in Ancient Greek)
morphic comes from 'morphe' (Ancient Greek for 'form')
-ic makes the word a describer / adjective



Anthropomorphic forms look like humans. They might also be animals with human characteristics.



distorted

means
twisted out
of shape

Antigraceful, U. Boccioni, 1913.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Lydia Winston Malbin 1989, www.metmuseum.org.

elongated

means
stretched
out, longer



Sculptural Element from a Reliquary Ensemble: Head,
Gabon, 19th Century.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection 1979, www.metmuseum.org.

Identifying aspects of form

 Each art work on this page is numbered. Tick a box under each aspect of form if the artwork has this feature.



1. Anthropomorph with leg broken off, India, 1500BC.



2. Wife of Lot, S. Drory, 2013.



3. Adam, A. Rodin, 1910.



4. Barque Sphinx, Egypt, 664 BC.



5. Sculpture.



6. Ceramic monkey head vessel, Mexico. 14th-15th Century.

	representational	abstract	biomorphic	anthropomorphic	distorted	elongated
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Choose two artworks and write a sentence describing the form of each. Start with ‘This sculpture is..’

Shape / form analysis template

This template can be used for analysing texture in any art work. Usually, you will be required to analyse many complex factors in an artwork. This page helps you focus on one element or visual quality: shape/form.

SHAPE AND FORM ANALYSIS		Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork			Write a sentence to summarise your points
1	Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else you know about the style and context.				
2	Is the artwork 2D or 3D? What is the subject of the artwork?				
3	What kind of shapes can you see? Name them if you can. How many are there? What size are they?				
4	What words describe the shapes?	organic	inorganic	geometric	Write a short paragraph about these aspects.
		irregular	regular	other	
		hard edged	blurry edged		
5	How are the shapes arranged?	isolated	close together / touching	overlapping	
6	Identify any positive and negative shapes				
7	What other words are relevant to the shapes / form in this artwork?	representational	abstract	distorted	
		biomorphic	anthropomorphic	elongated	
		other	other	other	
8	Describe the overall effect of shape and form in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned. (2-3 sentences)				

Physical and visual space

Space is the distance or area around, above and within an object or artwork. It also relates to the sense of depth or perspective in an artwork.

Physical space
Physical space is real space in the world. Physical space is three-dimensional with width, height and depth. You can move around it. Your pen and book on the desk in front of you are three dimensional (3D).

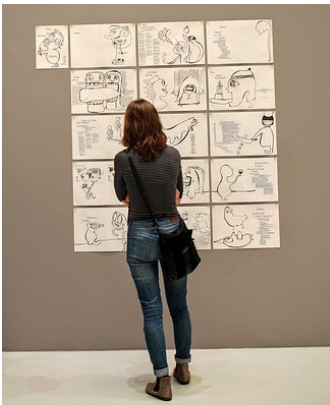
Visual space
Visual space refers to space within a composition. Many artworks are two dimensional (2D), which means that they are flat (height and width only). Artists use many techniques to create an illusion of depth (as if it is 3D).



Look at photos of people viewing artworks. Does the artwork use physical space (real 3D in the physical world) or visual space (2D)? Cross out the incorrect answer.



physical space / visual space



physical space / visual space

Tick the box if the form of art is in real 3D space

sculpture	architecture
painting	jewellery
weaving	photography
drawing	ceramics
stencilling	installations



Words to describe visual space

middle ground
the area of the artwork that seems to be in the middle



background
the area of the artwork that seems to be furthest away from the viewer (at the back)

foreground
the area of the artwork that seems to be closest to the viewer

La Orana Maria (Hail Mary), P. Gauguin, 1891.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Bequest of Sam A. Lewisohn, 1951, www.metmuseum.org.

Analysis of space

The artwork on this page can be used with the template for analysing space at the end of this section.



The Siesta, P. Gauguin, 1892-94.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection 2002,



About the artist

Paul Gauguin (1848 - 1903) was a French artist. His style is post-Impressionist. He was influenced by the Impressionists' use of light and colour. However his style was different from the Impressionists. He is known for his experimental use of colour and for playing with perspective. His work is also influenced by Primitivism (a movement that was inspired by tribal art, involving exaggerated body proportions, symbolism and geometric designs). He lived in Polynesia for many years and this painting is from his time in Tahiti.

A siesta is an afternoon rest during the heat of the day.

Aspects of visual space

Artists who create artworks in 2D, such as paintings, drawings, sketches, stencils, photographs, create the illusion of space and depth in their artworks. The next few pages explain some words to describe visual space.

empty

quite empty

moderately crowded

crowded

Space can be uncrowded and open. This creates a sense of empty space or a void. It can suggest a feeling of calm and peacefulness.



Crowded space is very full and busy. It can create an energetic or chaotic impression.

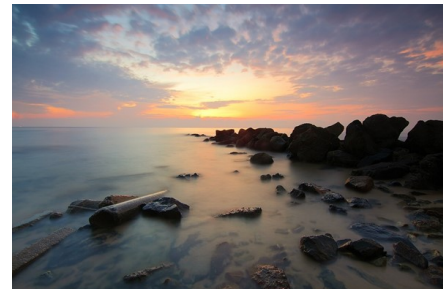
shallow

fairly shallow

quite endless

endless

Space can seem shallow, as if there is not much depth or distance between the closest and furthest points in the artwork.



Space can seem endless or deep, as if it stretches on for a long way or endlessly.

closed

open

A closed use of space means that the artwork exists within boundaries like a frame e.g. still life and portraits.



An open use of space means that the artwork seems to continue beyond the boundaries of the frame e.g. landscapes.



Describing visual space



Draw an X on each scale to show the aspects of texture in each art work. Underneath, write a sentence to describe the aspects of visual space shown in the scales.

Adverbials can help you grade your description e.g. quite crowded

fairly rather somewhat
moderately a little quite



Above Venice, J. S. Sargent, 1880-82.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of Mrs Francis Ormond 1950, www.metmuseum.org.

empty ←————→ crowded
shallow ←————→ deep
closed ←————→ open

This artwork creates a/an _____
space.

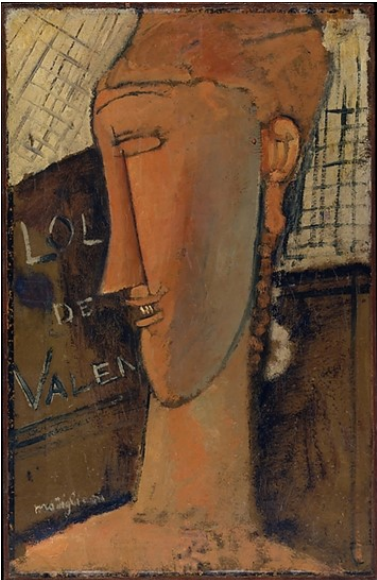


Left Landscape, A. B. Durand, 1850.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan 1911, www.metmuseum.org.

empty ←————→ crowded
shallow ←————→ deep
closed ←————→ open

This artwork creates a/an _____
_____ space.



Left
Lola de Valence,
A. Modigliani, 1915.

CC0. The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York,
Bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton
de Groot 1967,
www.metmuseum.org.

empty ←————→ crowded
shallow ←————→ deep
closed ←————→ open

This artwork creates a/an _____
_____ space.



Right Coney Island,
J. Stella, 1914.

CC0. The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York,
George A. Hearn Fund
1963, www.metmuseum.org.

empty ←————→ crowded
shallow ←————→ deep
closed ←————→ open

This artwork creates a/an _____
_____ space.

Positive and negative space

Positive and negative space is similar to positive and negative shape (see p68). Positive space is the main object of interest in an artwork. Negative space is the area around the main object. Positive or negative space can be white/light or black/dark. Both positive space and negative space are created and considered carefully by the artist.

 **Read this model of a description of positive and negative space in an artwork. Then follow the model and analyse the artwork below.**



Under a Cloud, A. P. Ryder, 1900.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Alice E. Van Orden 1988,
www.metmuseum.org.

Describe positive and negative space.	
What parts are the positive and negative space?	The sailboat and the cloud are the positive space because they are the main objects in the artwork. The light sky occupies the negative space.
Describe positive and negative space in more detail.	The sailboat and cloud are dark silhouettes and the lighter space surrounding them is the negative space. The dark space of the water echoes the dark positive space of the sail and cloud.
Describe the effect of positive and negative space on the mood/ overall meaning.	The strong contrast between positive and negative space emphasises the boat's vulnerability and isolation in the darkness.



Dandelions.
F. H. Evans,
1920s.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection 1966,
www.metmuseum.org.

Describe positive and negative space.	
What parts are the positive and negative space?	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Describe positive and negative space in more detail.	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Describe the effect of positive and negative space on the mood/ overall meaning.	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>

Perspective

Perspective comes from the Latin word 'perspicere', to see through. Perspective means how the eye sees something. Perspective in Visual Arts relates to how we show a three dimensional image on a flat surface. This page shows some ways that artist have used perspective (or not) throughout history in different cultures. These are only a few of the ways of using perspective. You can find out more about linear perspective on pages X-X.

1. flat perspective

The people and objects are drawn as if they are flat, often in profile. Objects and the background are independent. There is no sense of depth.



1. Harvest scene. Ancient Egypt.

2. no fixed perspective

The viewer is not positioned in one place. Instead, the viewer is positioned at multiple points.



2. Bugaku dancers. Japan.

3. linear perspective

Linear perspective is the dominant way of showing depth in Western Art. Parallel lines appear to draw together and meet at the horizon. Objects closer to the viewer are larger than objects further away (such as in the artwork on the right).



3. The Boulevard Montmartre on a Rainy Day, C. Pissarro. 1897.

4. amplified perspective foreshortening

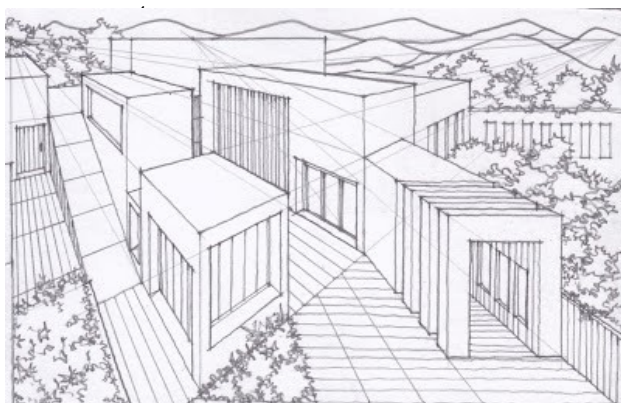
Objects close to the viewer are extremely large or exaggerated.



4. Fist

5. multiple perspectives/ multi-point perspective

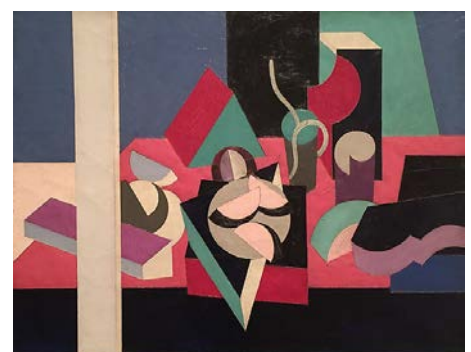
An object is viewed from multiple points of view - from the side, from above, from below - all in the same artwork.



5. Multipoint perspective drawing.


6. no linear perspective

Some modern artists (e.g. Cubists) did not use linear perspective. There is no sense of realistic depth. Instead there are multiple, irregular perspectives.



6. Objects on a Table, P. H. Bruce. 1920.

What kind of perspective?

 Each art work on this page is numbered. In the table below, tick a box under the heading that best describes the perspective in the artwork. You can tick more than one box. Write notes on the table about why you made that choice.



1. Map of Alexandria, George Braun / Frans Hogenberg, 1575.



2. Still Life with a Guitar, J. Gris, 1913.



3. The House of Bijapur, K. and C. Muhammad, India, 1680.

4. Corridor in the asylum, V. van Gogh, 1889.



5. The last judgement, Italian, 1385.

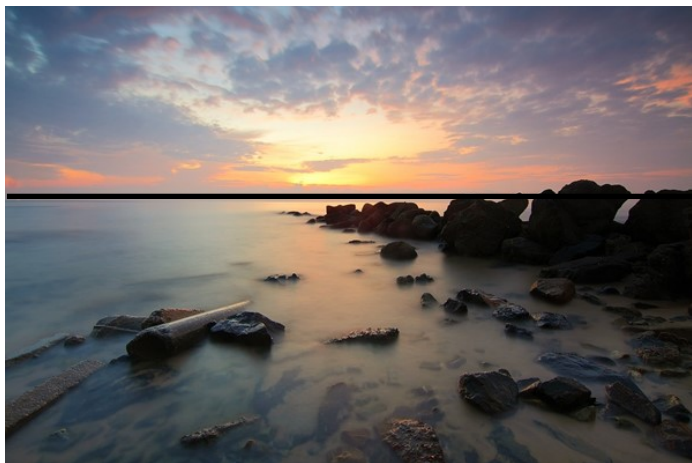


	flat perspective	no fixed perspective	linear perspective	amplified perspective / foreshortening	multipoint perspective	no perspective
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Linear perspective

Perspective means how you look at something. Perspective in Visual Arts creates the illusion of depth.

Linear perspective creates an illusion of space on a flat surface by using lines. Linear comes from the word 'line'.



horizon line

The horizon line may be a real line on an artwork or an imagined or implied line.

(horizontal means from left to right)

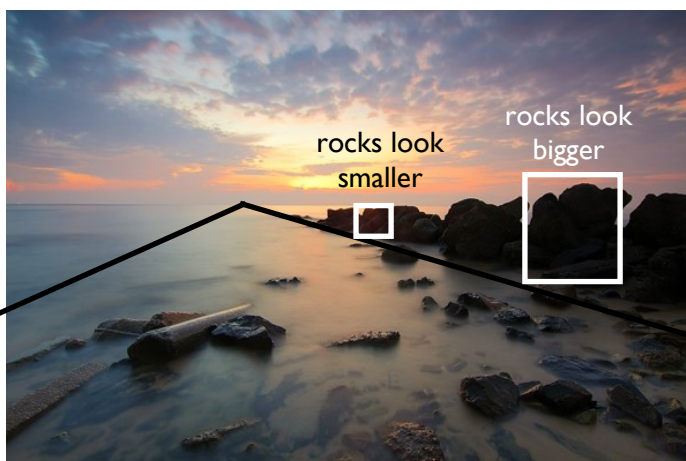
parallel lines are lines that are an equal distance apart

When we are looking at something, parallel lines get closer together (**converge**) as they move further away (**recede**). This can be shown in these train tracks (on the right). In real life, the train tracks are parallel, but our eyes seem to make it look like the parallel lines get closer together and meet on the horizon line. The point where they meet is called the **vanishing point**. We can draw imaginary lines on an artwork to show how parallel lines get closer together and meet on the horizon.



Trace the sets of parallel lines. Continue the lines until they meet (the vanishing point).

This phenomenon (how parallel lines seem to get closer together and **converge**) is called **linear perspective**.



Size

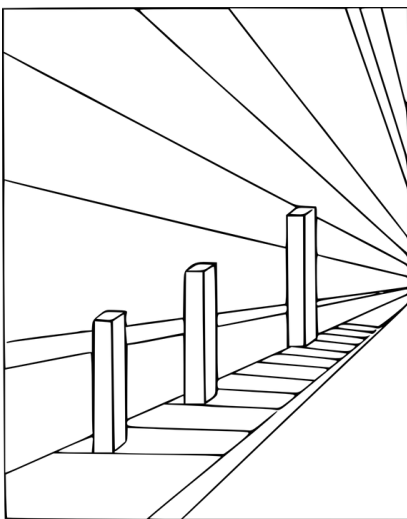
Another feature of perspective is that close objects seem bigger than objects that are far away, like these rocks. In real life, the rocks are the same size.

Creating linear perspective

As we discovered on the previous page, linear perspective is the eye's perception of depth (things that are close and far away). The eye tends to see parallel lines getting closer together as they move further away. The place where the parallel lines meet is called the **vanishing point**.



Trace the real or implied parallel lines in these images. Find and label the vanishing points.



Corridor in the Asylum. Vincent van Gogh. 1889.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller 1948, www.metmuseum.org.



Perspective through size

Some artworks do not have an obvious horizon line or linear perspective like these. Instead, the objects that are closer to the viewer are bigger than objects that are far away.



In the photograph, circle and label the people closest to the camera (largest), those in the middle (medium-sized) and those furthest away (smallest).



Techniques for creating perspective

This page explains five techniques for helping to create linear perspective.

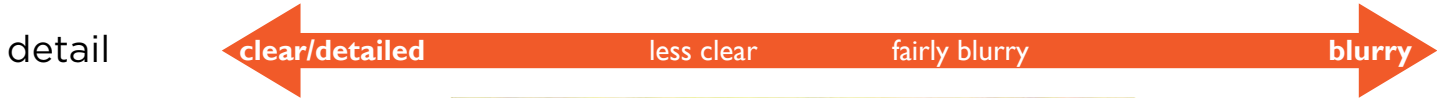


high: further away

low: closer

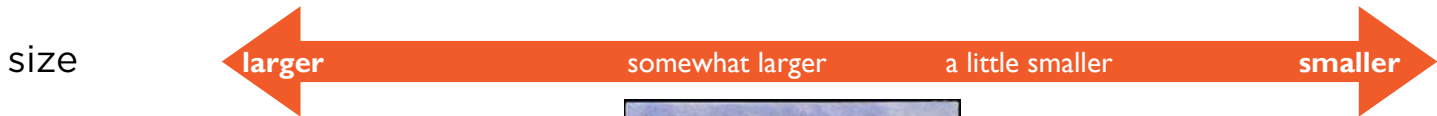
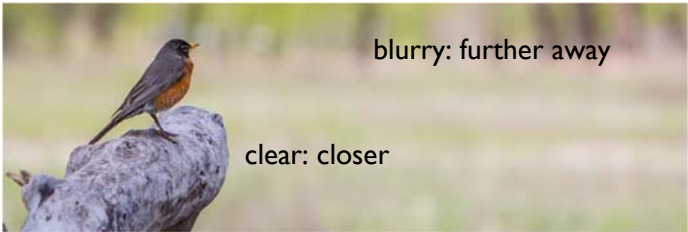


Still Life: Balsam Apple and Vegetables.
J. Peale, 1820. CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Maria DeWitt Jesup Fund 1939, www.metmuseum.org.



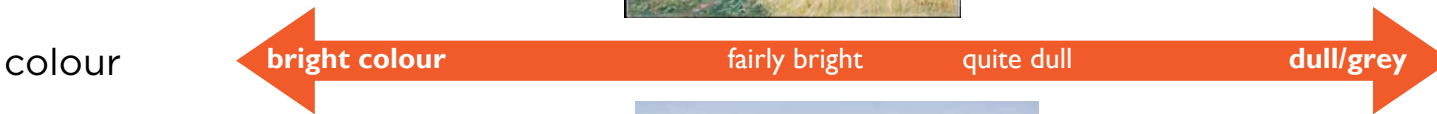
blurry: further away

clear: closer



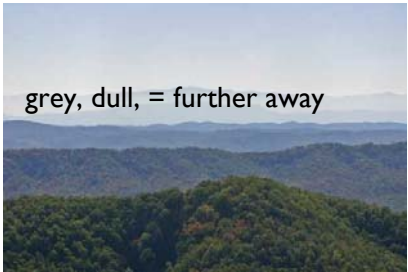
larger tree: closer

smaller trees: further away



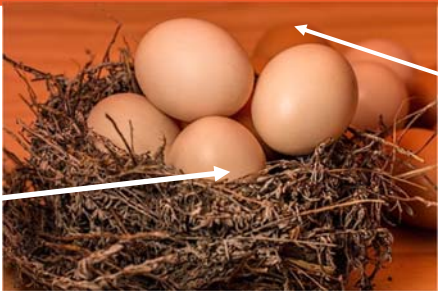
grey, dull, = further away

brighter green = closer



front: closer

at the back: further away



Techniques for perspective

 **Explain the techniques for creating perspective. Read the explanation of the still life and use it as a model to analyse the landscape and write an explanation below.**

State the main techniques used to create perspective	In <i>Still Life: Balsam Apple and Vegetables</i> by James Peale (1820), perspective has been created through the techniques of placement, detail, colour and overlap.
Explain techniques in detail, one after the other. Give examples.	Placement: Objects closer to the viewer, the red tomatoes and green zucchini are lower in the frame than the large cabbage further away from the viewer. Detail: The vegetables at the front have more detail than the leaf of the cabbage and the red fruit at the back. Colour: The vegetables at the front are red and yellow, brighter colours than the darker greens at the back. This creates a sense of perspective. The grey and dull colours of the wall at the back also creates a sense of depth. Overlap. The vegetables are all overlapping, with some at the back and others further behind.
Explain the effect overall.	The artist has created the impression of beautiful, natural vegetables. The sense of perspective helps to create rich and realistic images to celebrate the colours and textures of everyday objects like vegetables.

Below: *Still Life: Balsam Apple and Vegetables*, J. Peale, 1820.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Maria DeWitt Jesup Fund 1939



Right:
Landscape
No. 25.
M. Hartley,
1908.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Alfred Stieglitz Collection 1949



Describe the use of perspective in the painting	
State the main techniques	In (name of artwork) _____ by (name of artist) _____, perspective has been created through the techniques of (name techniques) _____
Explain techniques in detail, one after the other. Give examples.	Technique _____: (how is it used to create perspective?) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Explain the effect overall.	_____ _____ _____



Teaching suggestions

When you are trying to analyse aerial perspective and distance, imagine that you are taking a photograph and that the artwork is what you are photographing. To create the same viewpoint, where would the photographer have to be located: higher, lower, on the same level, close or distant?



About the artworks

Intimacy, Theo Van Rysselberghe, 1890.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Walter and Leonora Annenberg Acquisitions Endowment Fund 2015, www.metmuseum.org.

Spring Morning in the Heart of the City, Childe Hassam, 1890.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Ethelyn McKinney 1943. www.metmuseum.org.

Aerial perspective and distance

This page has some ideas for understanding the meanings of different kinds of perspective. Aerial perspective means where the viewer imagines himself or herself to be (e.g. above or below the subjects in the artwork).

close or distant



Close and **distant** perspective can be like social relationships. If you stand close to someone, you want to be emotionally close to them. If you look at an object close up, you are interested in it. If you are far away, it feels more impersonal and detached.

close	distant
intimate	cold
friendly	impersonal
personal	isolated
warm	disinterested
interested	open
domestic	free

bird's eye view

Positioning the viewer above the scene can make the viewer seem powerful and all-knowing. In film and media, this is called a high angle shot.



eye level view



Positioning the viewer at the same eye-level as the scene can create a sense of equality. We are part of their world. We can relate and feel what they feel.

worm's eye view

Positioning the viewer below the scene (a low angle) gives the subject of the image power over us. We feel wonder and awe at the subject.



 **Compare the use of perspective in each artwork to show close and distant relationships. Use words from the word box above.**



Left:
Intimacy.
T. Van Rysselberghe,
1890.



Right:
Spring Morning.
C. Hassam, 1890.

The perspective in *Intimacy* is close/distant while *Spring Morning* is close/distant. Explain the view and the effect in each artwork. _____

Analysis template for space

This template can be used for analysing space in an art work.

SPACE ANALYSIS		Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork		Write a sentence to summarise your points
1	Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else you know about the style and context.			
2	What kind of space does this artwork occupy?	physical (3D)	visual (2D)	
3	What sense of visual space is created? <i>Use adverbs to describe shades of meaning e.g. quite, fairly, a little, relatively, somewhat.</i>	empty	crowded	
		shallow	endless	
		closed	open	
4	How are positive and negative space used?	What parts are the positive space? / negative space?		
5	What type of perspective is created?	flat perspective	no fixed perspective	
		linear (vanishing point?)	amplified / foreshortening	
		multipoint	no linear perspective	
6	If there is linear perspective, what techniques are used?	placement (low/high)	detail clear/blurry	
		size (larger/smaller)	colour (brighter/duller)	
		overlap (front/back)	other	
7	What is the aerial perspective and distance?	generally close	generally distant	
		bird's eye view / eye level view / worm's eye view		
8	What effects are created overall through perspective? <i>Tick all the words that are relevant</i>	close intimate	impersonal distant	
		personal interested	disinterested	
		sense of depth / reality	abstract / unreality / distorted	
		chaotic crowded	open free	
	Any other effects?			
9	Describe the overall effect of space in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned. (2-3 sentences)			

Pattern

Pattern refers to the decorative quality of an object or surface. Pattern is related to texture so see the section on Texture on pages 41-52.

A pattern is a visual quality that is **repeated** or **imitated**.

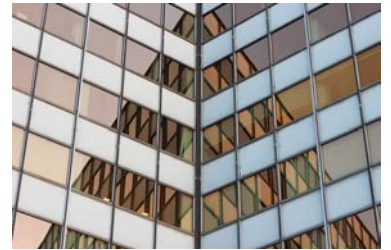
A pattern can create a sense of **unity, balance, harmony, contrast or movement**.

organic
natural

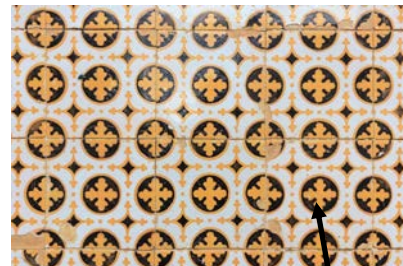
Patterns in nature are quite chaotic and do not repeat exactly.



inorganic
man-made geometric



irregular
random
uneven
non-identical



regular
repeating
even

A **motif** is a small part of the pattern that repeats.

continuous

A continuous pattern keeps going (continues) outside the artwork, even in an imaginary way.



structural

The composition of the artwork may be formed by a structural pattern.



Reconstruction of a geometric decoration.
Ancient Egypt. c. 1390-1352 BC.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Rogers Fund 1917 www.metmuseum.org.

decorative

The pattern can be decorating a part of the artwork
e.g. dots on this hat.



Detail from The Siesta. Paul Gauguin. 1892-94.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection 2002,
www.metmuseum.org.

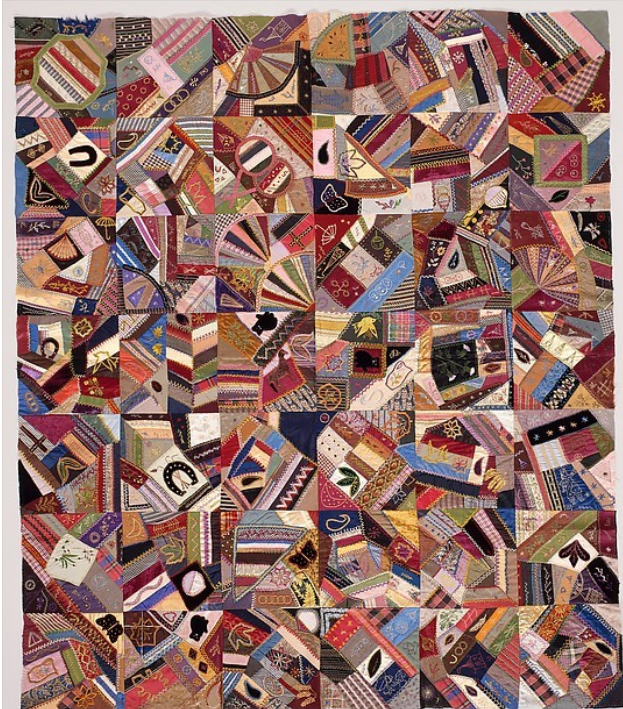
Other images pixabay.com

Describe these patterns

 Examine the patterns in these artworks. Write a sentence about each artwork using the structure provided and words from the previous page.



1. Left
La Berceuse (Woman Rocking a Cradle),
V. van Gogh, 1889.



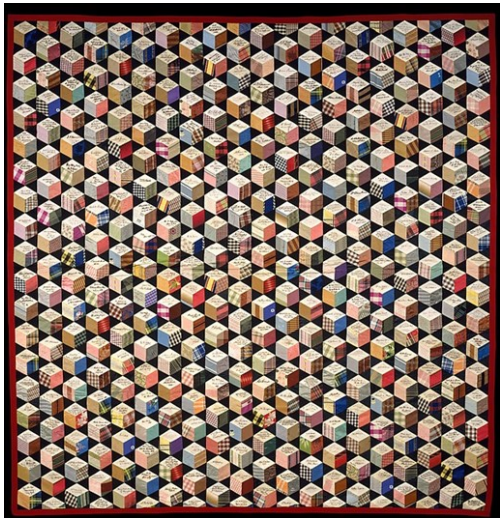
2. Right
Quilt top. Anonymous.
1885.



3. *Head of a Buddha*, India,
Late 5th - early 6th century



4. *Bowl*, Iran, 9th century.



5. *Tumbling Blocks with Signatures*,
A. Harris Sears, 1856.

What object/thing?	where?	form/forms	what kind of pattern?	that has what kind of effect?
e.g. The leaves	on the beige background	form	an organic, regular, decorative pattern	that has a harmonious effect. (other effects: chaotic, orderly, peaceful etc)

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Patterning techniques

Patterns are created by repeating and changing certain visual qualities including: shape, size, colour, texture, direction.

hearts

same shape
same size
same texture

different
direction, colours



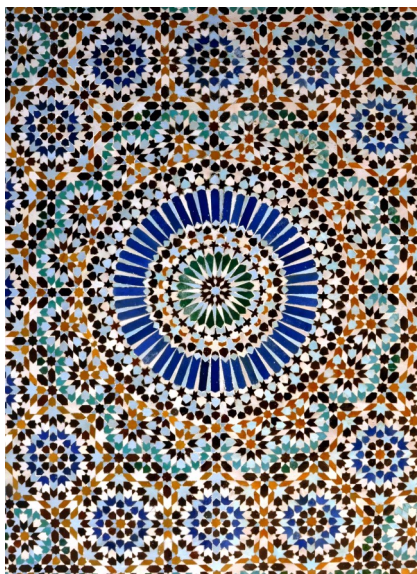
spiral/curls

same texture,
direction

different sizes,
colours



Analyse the patterns in the artworks below. Write a sentence to explain what visual qualities create the pattern - what changes and what repeats? You only have to mention the most important visual qualities.



1. Islamic mosaic pattern, pixabay.com



2. Evening dress, Myrbor, 1924.



3. Self-portrait in a Straw Hat, V. van Gogh, 1887.



4. Glass inlay. Egypt, 100BC.



5. Bottle, USA, 1920.

e.g. **The pattern is formed by (what shapes? doing what? how?)**

The pattern is formed by small textured hearts of the same size but different colours facing different directions.

Sound

Sound is an important part of many art installations and artworks, particularly artworks that use film and multimedia. One type of art, called sound art, uses sound as a medium. In an artwork, sound could include music or background noises or sound effects. This page describes some ways of describing sound.

sound media

What thing or people are creating the sound?

Is it:

- electronic / artificial / recorded?
- natural / live?
- diegetic? (visible or on the screen e.g. a sound made by an object)
- non-diegetic? (not visible e.g. background music)
- noise from the environment?
- words / lyrics?

volume

how loud or soft?

- mostly loud
- mostly soft
- soft and loud

pitch

are the sounds low or high?

- mostly low sounds
- mostly high sounds
- low and high sounds

tone colour or mood

what is the quality of the sound or the effect?

- harsh
- clashing (discordant)
- smooth and mellow
- brilliant and bright
- distorted and aggressive



Read the review below of an art performance that includes sound. Underline all the words that describe sound. Then look at the boxes above and tick at least one word from each box to describe the use of sound.

Last week, I went to see a performance that was partly a music concert and partly an art installation. It was called AquaSonic. The artists were from Denmark. They sat in water tanks and played music and sang underwater. The tanks were lit from behind in dark and moody colours (dull green and blue and yellow) with lots of shadows and a dark background. The performers had to hold their breaths for a long time. They used strange musical instruments like gongs, drums and bells and a special violin that could be played underwater. The sounds were very strange, like they were from another world. The music was soft, slow and low pitched and did not have any strong melodies. AquaSonic performers created a sad and mellow dream-like mood in their performance. Then the performers came out of the tanks and blew through plastic tubes into tall, clear containers of water to make bubbles. The bubbling water made different sounds, from slow 'blob blob' noises to faster 'bubble bubble bubble' sounds. It was very funny because they sounded a bit like farting or burping noises. AquaSonic was weird but interesting and atmospheric. The artists' intention is to celebrate the importance of water in our lives and to help use, see and hear water in a new way. The performance certainly achieved this aim.



Sound analysis template

This template can be used for analysing sound in an art work.

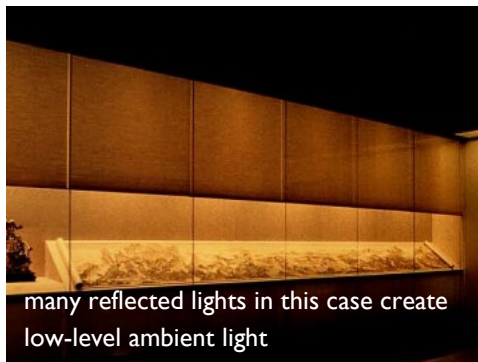
SOUND ANALYSIS		Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork			Write a sentence to summarise your points
1	Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else you know about the style and context.				
2	Write one sentence briefly describing the subject of the artwork.				
3	What words describe the sound media? Name the media if you can e.g. female voices, drums etc.	natural / live	artificial / electronic / recorded		
		diegetic (visible)	non-diegetic (not visible)		
		music / lyrics	sounds / sound effects		
4	Describe the volume (loud and soft sounds)	mostly soft	soft and loud	mostly loud	
5	Describe the pitch (low and high sounds)	mostly low	low and high	mostly high	
6	Describe the rhythm (slow and fast sounds)	mostly slow	slow and fast	mostly fast	
7	Describe the tone colour (quality or effect of the sound)	harsh	clashing (discordant)	smooth and mellow	
		brilliant and bright	distorted and aggressive	other	
8	Describe the overall effect or meanings of sound in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned. (2-3 sentences)				

Light

Light is related to the element of tone / value (see page 60). Characteristics of light on this page relate to the way an artwork is displayed and how clear the light is. If you are asked to interpret light in an artwork, use the pages on tone/value as well.



diffuse natural light enters the gallery from the ceiling skylights



many reflected lights in this case create low-level ambient light

Types of light rays

focused light

a spotlight or beam of light shining brightly on something

direct light

shines on something, creating a bright and glary effect

diffuse light

a broad light beam; the light rays scatter in many directions lighting the entire object or area; creates a softer light and less glare

ambient light

reflections from different sources create a constant, low level light (often used to prevent old and precious objects from fading)



a spotlight



two direct, focused spotlights light the dress brightly and create two shadows

What is the lighting of the artwork and the environment?

Is the artwork light and the environment dark?

Is the artwork dark and the environment light?



a light artwork in a darkened room

Natural or artificial

Is the lighting natural (from the sun) or artificial / electric / projected?

Reflective qualities

reflective. shiny, sparkling, bright

or

warm, muted, dull, atmospheric



Patterns of light and shade

Are there any shadows?

Are there patterns of light and shade?



natural light creates geometric patterns of light and shadow

What colour?

Is the light...
bright white,
yellow,
fluorescent
red, blue etc?



Light analysis template

This template can be used for analysing light in an art work. Also look at the analysis template for tone/ value on page 60.

LIGHT ANALYSIS	Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork			Write a sentence to summarise your points
1 Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else you know about the style and context.				
2 Write one sentence briefly describing the subject of the artwork.				
3 Is the light natural or artificial?	natural	artificial		
4 What words describe the type of light rays? Name the source of the light if you know it (e.g. sunlight, a spotlight etc)	focused / direct	diffuse / ambient		
5 Describe the lighting of the artwork and the environment	artwork is light / dark	environment is light / dark		
6 Describe any shadows and patterns of light and shade	there are shadows	there are no shadows	patterns yes/no	
7 Describe the colour or colours of the light	bright white	yellow	other	
8 Describe the quality or effect of the light	brilliant and bright	flashing / flickering	fluorescent	
	soft and muted	ambient	other	
9 Describe the overall effect or meanings of light in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned. (2-3 sentences)				

Time

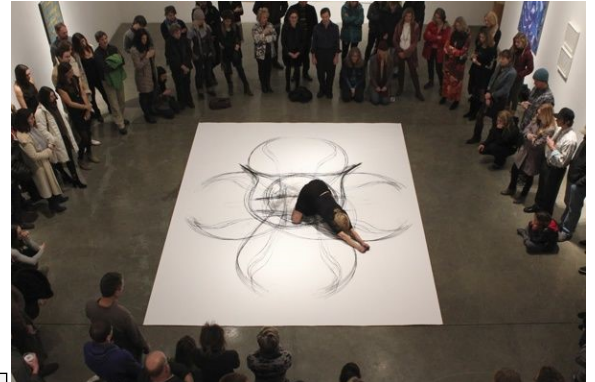
Time means how long something lasts or how long it takes. Another word for time is **duration**. The idea of time in art also relates to rhythm and movement, so also see page 134.

actual time

An artwork happens in real time, such as a live performance.
or

implied time

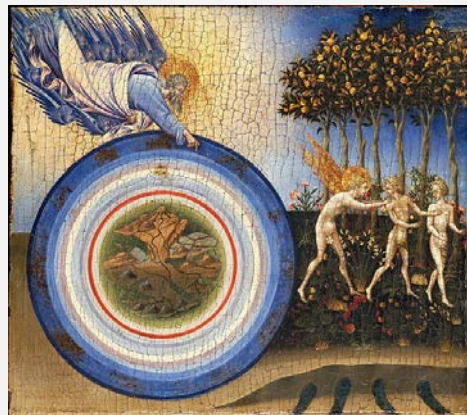
The artwork does not happen in the real world, live, but a sense of time is created as an illusion (e.g. a video showing time passing).



The image above shows an art work being created in **actual time**, as the audience watches. All the other artworks on this page are **implied time**.

linear time

An artwork unfolds from start to middle to end, in sequence. The time is **chronological** (like a clock) or **sequential** (in sequence). This Bible story artwork shows events in time from left to right. Creation happens first (on the left) then, later, Adam and Eve are thrown out of the Garden of Eden.



The Creation of the World and the Expulsion from Paradise. Giovanni di Paolo. 1445.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

abstract time

An artwork may not be set in any particular time and there may not be a particular sequence or order.

symbolic time

Symbols are used to show time passing or aspects of time e.g. an angel to represent the death of the artist (see below).

cyclical time

An artwork shows a repeated sequence or cycle that repeats. Examples of cyclical time are the seasons or the hours of a day.



The Four Seasons. A. Bosse.
Mid 17th Century CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection 1957,



The Angel of Death and the Sculptor. D.C. French, 1889-93.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 2007,
www.metmuseum.org.

moment in time

Some artworks are like a snapshot one moment in time. The carving on the left shows a chief playing a musical instrument. It is like he is frozen in time.



Seated Chief Playing Thumb Piano, Angola, Before 1869. CC0.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1988,
www.metmuseum.org.

Long or short duration

Time in an artwork can be long (hundreds of years, a lifetime) or short (a few seconds).



Time analysis template

This template can be used for analysing time in any art work. Usually, you will be required to analyse many complex factors in an artwork. This page helps you focus on one element or visual quality: straight lines and curves.

TIME ANALYSIS	Write notes or tick the words that apply to the artwork		Write a sentence to summarise your points
1 Name the artwork and the artist and time period, and anything else you know about the style and context.			
2 Write one sentence briefly describing the subject of the artwork.			
3 Is the time actual or implied?	actual	implied	
4 What words describe the use of time?	linear	abstract	
	symbolic	cyclical	
	moment in time	other	
Describe how events unfold in time? How is time shown (e.g. sequence, left to right?)			
5 Describe the duration of time in the artwork <i>Time any events in a live performance using a stopwatch (if relevant)</i>	short	moderately long	long
6 Describe the overall effect or meanings of time in the artwork. Write anything special that has not already been mentioned. (2-3 sentences)			

Symbols

What is a symbol?

A symbol is an object or shape that represents or means something beyond itself. For example, a dove is not just a bird; it means peace. Symbols mean different things in different cultures at different times.

Words to describe symbols:

symbolic (a quality of a symbol)

symbolise (what a symbol can do - a verb)



Look at these common symbols and write the meaning next to it. Where would you typically find each symbol? How is it used?

1.



2



3



4.



5



6





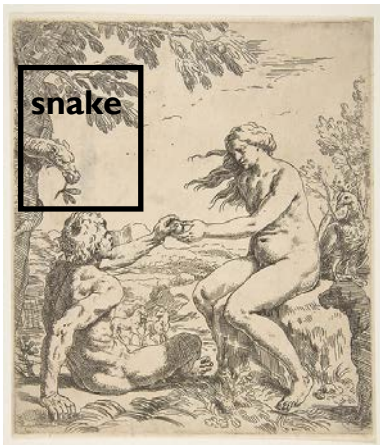
Guess the meaning of these animals in Medieval and Renaissance art. Draw a line to match the animal and its meaning.



unicorn

Finish these sentences:

In Medieval and Renaissance art: the winged lion symbolised _____,
the unicorn symbolised _____,
the snake symbolised _____, and
dogs symbolised _____.



snake

character,
strength and
loyalty

strength
and
holiness

temptation and evil

purity and
harmony



dog

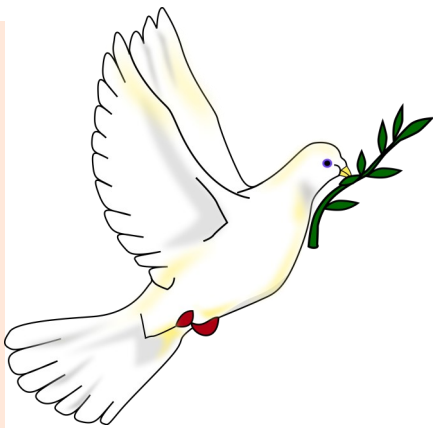
Meanings of symbols

Meaning verbs

When can use **meaning verbs** to link a symbol with its meaning e.g. represents.

e.g. A white dove **represents** peace.

In this sentence, the verb '**represents**' links the thing (a dove) with its abstract meaning or interpretation (peace). Successful Visual Arts students use a range of meaning verbs to express and interpret what art means.



Meaning verbs

- means
- symbolises
- expresses
- signifies
- represents
- connotes

Choose a meaning verb from the box and write it on the line

- 1 A tick _____ a correct answer.
- 2 An apple _____ health.
- 3 A dog _____ loyalty.
- 4 A lion _____ strength.
- 5 A fly _____ decay or garbage.
- 6 A pig _____ over-eating.
- 7 A butterfly _____ new life.
- 8 A white horse _____ victory.
- 9 Gold clothing _____ wealth and glamour.
- 10 A mirror _____ vanity.
- 11 A toy _____ childhood and innocence.
- 12 An open book _____ education.
- 13 The owl _____ wisdom.
- 14 A fist _____ anger and aggression.
- 15 Dark clouds _____ a storm or danger.



Choose 5 sentences from the list on the left and rewrite them using this sentence pattern:

The artwork shows _____, representing _____
e.g. The artwork shows a white dove,
representing peace.



Think of three other symbols that you know about and what they mean. Write three sentences about the symbols using meaning verbs.

Contrast

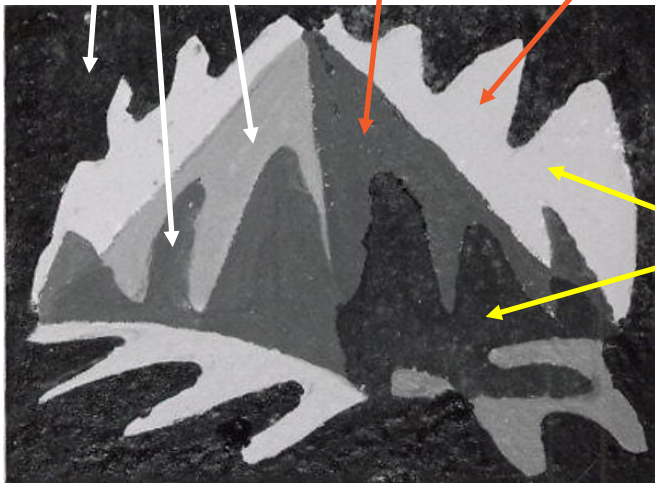
Contrast relates to **differences** in how the elements are used in an artwork. Some ways the elements can create contrast are shown below.

Contrast can draw attention to a particular aspect of an artwork. Contrast may also create interest, excitement, variety, chaos or drama (emotion and involvement) .

colour	line	tone	texture	shape/form	space
black / white; different colours; one colour on a monochromatic background; polychromatic colours	changes in line; differences in line; thick vs thin lines; horizontal, vertical and diagonal line; straight / curved lines	difference in black and white tones; bright / dark; highlights; patterns showing different tints and shades	smooth / rough qualities; natural / man-made; shiny / dull; hard / soft; wet / dry etc.	changes in shapes; small / large size ; geometric vs natural; irregular shapes; patterns of changing shapes	2D vs 3D; crowded / empty; shallow / endless perspective; multipoint perspective; changes in perspective

contrasts in colour and tone (black white grey)

contrast in shapes - pyramid and curved freeform



Untitled, A. Dove, 1942.


CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of William C. Dove 1984, www.metmuseum.com



Woman dispensing poison, [Stained Glass Window], Paris, France, 1245-47.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters collection 1973, www.metmuseum.com

Note: **dispensing** means giving out a dosage like medicine

 Here are two sentence patterns that can help you write about contrast. Look at the examples about *Untitled* and write your own sentence about *Woman dispensing poison*.

1. Contrast is created by (how? what elements?) _____

Example: **Contrast is created by** different tones of black, greys and white, using positive and negative space, curving free form shapes and a geometric pyramid in the centre.

Contrast is created by _____

2. This artwork has contrasting (what elements?) _____ **which create** (what effect?) _____

Example: **This artwork has contrasting** curved and geometric shapes, light and dark tones and positive and negative shapes **which create** interest and drama.

This artwork has contrasting _____

which create _____


Variety

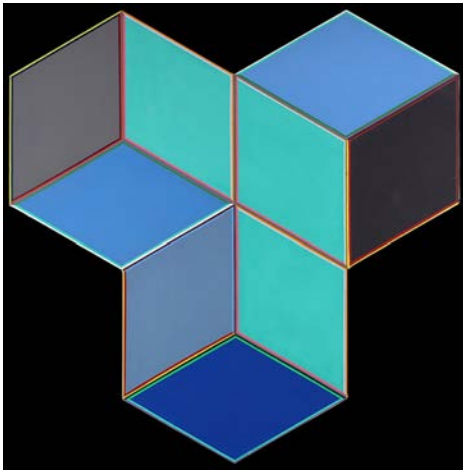
Variety means the use of an element in different ways e.g. different colours, variations in shapes, contrasts in line thickness, changes in patterns etc. Variety helps to make an artwork **interesting** and **dynamic** (which means changing).

Variety is similar to the idea of **contrast**, as things that contrast often create variety.

Words to describe variety:

interest, interesting, different, change, changing, varying, variation, varied, contrast, contrasting, diverse, diversity, assorted, assortment

 **Examine each artwork and describe how variety is created. Consider line, shape, form, colour, tone, texture, pattern and anything else you notice. Use the sentence starters, hints and questions to help you.**



Untitled, A. Loving, 1971.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Maddy and Larry Mohr 2011, www.metmuseum.org.

(Hint: you can refer to shape, form (perspective), colour and line)

Untitled has a variety of (what element? what aspects of the element is varied? describe how it is varied) _____

In *Bridge Over a Pond of Water Lilies*, Monet has created variety through (what element or elements? what kind of variety?) _____



Bridge Over a Pond of Water Lilies, C. Monet, 1899.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection 1929, www.metmuseum.org.



Nude Woman with Upraised Arms, G. Lachaise, 1926.

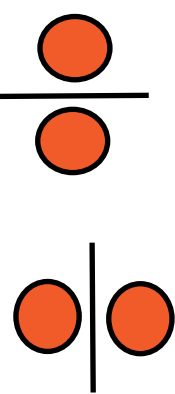
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Scofield Thayer 1982, www.metmuseum.org.

(Write your own sentences about *Nude Woman with Upraised Arms*. Use a range of words to describe variety from the box above). _____

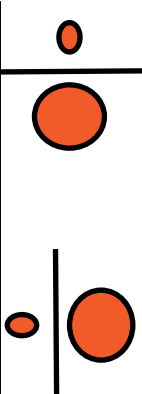
Balance

Balance relates to **how elements are shared across the artwork**. In each area/part of the artwork, what is the visual 'weight' (how many objects are there, of what size etc)? Balance creates a sense of **unity, harmony, order and stability**. A lack of balance creates an **uneasy, uncomfortable or disturbing** feeling (i.e. off balance).

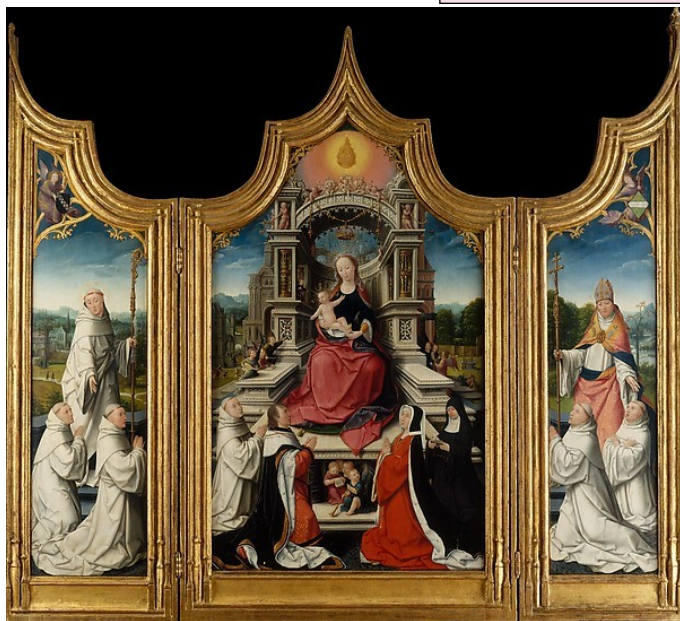
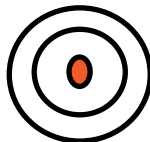
Symmetry is where sides or areas are equal or have approximately the same amount and 'weight' of elements. Symmetry can be top/bottom (horizontal) or left/right (vertical). An artwork with symmetry is called **symmetrical**.



Asymmetry is where the two sides are **asymmetrical** or not symmetrical. (The prefix a- means not.) Areas of the artwork have an unequal amount or weight of elements but they may still seem balanced. Asymmetry creates a casual, relaxed feeling, or a sense of creative freedom.



Radial symmetry is where the elements and objects are arranged from inside to outside, like a wheel. Radial symmetry draws the viewer's focus to the centre.



The Le Cellier Altarpiece, J. Bellegambe, 1509. CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Friedsam Collection 1931, www.metmuseum.com



Portrait of the Artist, M. Cassatt, 1878. CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Edith H. Proskauer, 1975, www.metmuseum.com

 Look at the model paragraph about balance in *The Le Cellier Altarpiece*. Adapt the model to write your own paragraph about *Portrait of the Artist*.

What type of balance is created?	In 'The le Cellier Altarpiece', balance is created by symmetry.
How are elements shared across the artwork? What is repeated or varied?	The centre figures are the Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus sitting on a symmetrical throne with an arch and two sides. There are two kneeling figures on each side of the central figures in the centre panel. They are not exactly identical as two are men (on the left) and two are women (on the right). The wing panels show two kneeling and one standing figure. All the figures are of similar size and they are facing the same way, towards the central figures but they are wearing different clothes.
Describe the effect of balance.	The formal symmetry creates a sense of order, harmony and stability of religious faith.

Proportion

Proportion relates to the size of parts of a whole, for example, the size of a head in relation to the rest of the body.

disproportionate (not proportioned)
human figure



Parts that are disproportionate are **distorted**.

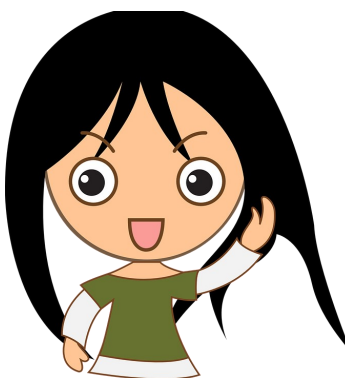
The arms and feet are **disproportionately** small. The nose is **disproportionately** long.

Marble female figure, Cyclades (Greece), 2600-2400 BC
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of Christos G. Bastis. 1968. www.metmuseum.org.

Proportion creates a sense of **unity** (like it all belongs together) and **harmony** and a sense of **calm**. When objects are out of proportion, it can **attract attention** and **focus**. Objects that are out of proportion can be humorous or they can make the viewer curious or feel uncomfortable or uneasy.



In the cartoon below, what aspects of the body are in proportion and which are disproportionate (or distorted)?



Look at the two artworks below. Write two sentences about each artwork that describe the use of proportion in each artwork.



Horse, Han dynasty 206BC- AD 220,
China.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of George D. Pratt 1928. www.metmuseum.org.



Girl in a Sailor Blouse,
A. Modigliani, 1918.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of Charles Ikle 1960, www.metmuseum.org.

Scale

Scale is the size of an object in relation to other objects. Often scale is compared with the human body or with the size of an object in real life.

Larger objects or things attract attention and are seen as more important. They tend to seem closer to the viewer, creating a sense of perspective.

small scale (smaller than life size)


A smaller scale object looks like a toy and makes humans seem like powerful giants.

large scale (larger than life size)

Large scale objects create a sense of drama and interest. A large object makes a human feel small.



Ron Mueck is an Australian artist who creates large scale sculptures.

 **Examine these two artworks. Then write two sentences about each to show how scale has been used. How is scale created? What is the effect on the viewer?**



Under the Wave off Kanagawa, K. Hokusai, 1830-32.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H.O. Havemeyer Collection 1929,
www.metmuseum.org.



Slinkachu. CC0 wikimedia commons

Hierarchy

Hierarchy means that some elements or aspects of an artwork seem more important than others. Hierarchy involves where your eye goes to first, then second, then third. Hierarchy is related to emphasis and contrast and scale. Some of the elements that create hierarchy are shown in the table below.

The word **hierarchy** comes from the Greek word 'hierarkhia' meaning 'sacred ruler'. A hierarchy has ranks or levels of authority and power, from most important to least important.

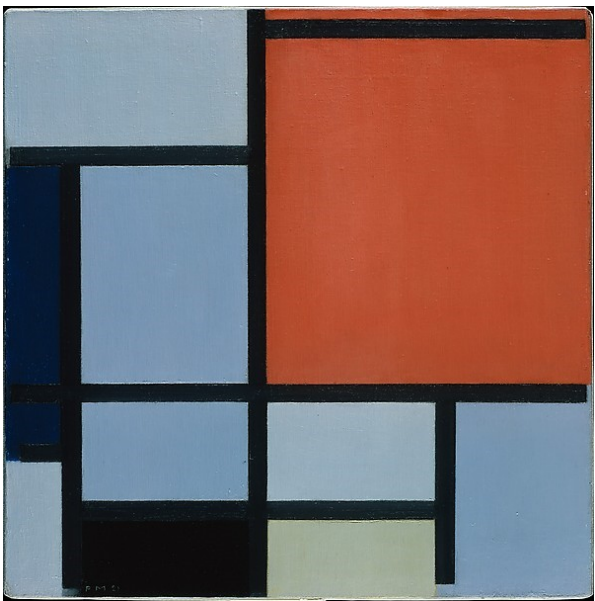
colour	line	shape/form	tone	space
a contrasting colour can seem more important; negative space or positive space can highlight an important feature	lines can point to the most important element or feature	larger shapes and forms are usually more important than smaller shapes and forms	a hierarchy can be organised from dark to light tones or from light to dark tones	objects can be placed in a prominent position; a different or contrasting shape can seem more important; the centre of a circle is most important; the start and end of a line are most important; if an object is isolated (by itself) it has more importance in the hierarchy



In some art traditions, hierarchy of size shows the most important gods and people as larger than common people.

Detail from Nakht and Family, Egypt, 1400-1390 BC.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1915, www.metmuseum.org.



This artwork creates a hierarchy through size and colour. The large red square is more important than the blue rectangles and squares.

Composition, P. Mondrian, 1921.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection, 1998, www.metmuseum.org.



Crown of the Andes, Colombia, 1660.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, Acquisitions Fund and Mary Trumbull Adams Fund,

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Analyse the crown made of gold and emeralds on the left. Write about how hierarchies are created through size, shape, space (placement) and colour.

Rhythm and movement

Rhythm is a term that comes from music, meaning the beat or the pulse. Rhythm in an artwork is created when elements are repeated or copied. Rhythm can be **regular** or **irregular** (not regular).

Movement suggests motion in an artwork. **Kinetic** movement is actually moving (e.g. a mobile) or pretending to move (like a blur). Other artworks attract the viewer's gaze from one element to another so that there is an illusion that something is moving. Movement can be **energetic**, **gentle** or **flowing**. No movement at all is **still**.

colour	line	tone	texture	shape/form	space
repeated colours or a colour repeating in different places creates rhythm; blurred colours suggest movement	the eye will follow a line or curve which creates a sense of movement; repeated lines create rhythm	variations in tone create a rhythm (e.g. dark to light to dark); tone can also create depth (a sense of movement and perspective)	variations in texture can create a rhythm as the eye searches for similarities and differences	repeated shapes and forms create rhythm; pointing, running, moving shapes create movement	a sense of depth creates movement



Speed and Strength,
R.T. McKenzie, 1936.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Gift of the Society of Medalists 1936,
www.metmuseum.org.



Head of a Woman, G. Lachaise, 1924.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
www.metmuseum.org.



Reproduction of the 'Ladies in Blue' fresco, E. Gilleron, 1927.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Dodge Fund 1927, www.metmuseum.org.



Here is a sentence pattern that can help you write about rhythm and movement. Look at the pattern and the example, and write your own sentences about two artworks above.

Example: *Speed and Strength*.

This artwork has a regular rhythm and energetic movement created by repetition of four male figures in an identical running posture. Movement is also created by the men, the birds and the dog running in the same direction from left to right.

This artwork has a _____ rhythm and _____ movement created by _____.
Movement/rhythm is also created by _____

Head of a Woman: _____

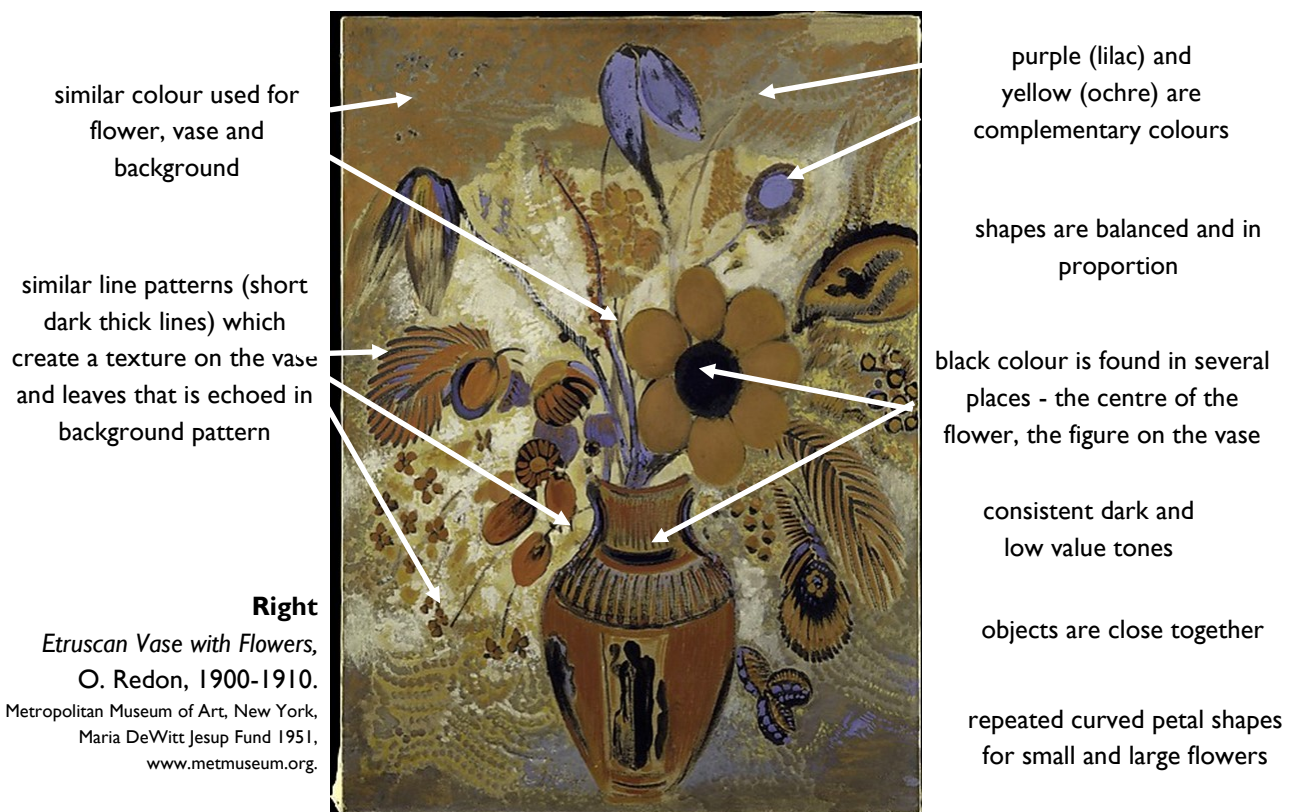
Reproduction of the 'Ladies in Blue' fresco: _____

Unity

Unity means that things belong together and combine to make a whole. Unity comes from the Latin word 'unus' which means one. An artwork with unity is **unified**. Unity is similar to the idea of **harmony**. An artwork is **harmonious** if elements work together for a pleasing effect. The table below shows some of the ways that elements can create unity and harmony.

Unity does NOT mean that everything is identical and the same. An artwork that is too repetitive can seem boring, dull and lifeless. There is always some **variety** in an artwork, that is, some things that are varied or different to create visual **interest**.

colour	line	tone	texture	shape/form	space
colours are repeated; tints and shades of the same colour are used; colour harmony can be created by complementary colours and colours next to each other on the colour wheel	there are lines of similar weight, length, direction, pattern	similar tones are used e.g. many dark tones or many light tones	similar or repeated textures	shapes are similar size or in proportion or balanced; shapes may be repeated; shapes may be touching or overlapping	space is balanced; objects are close together, connected or similar



 **Write a paragraph about how unity is created in *Etruscan Vase with Flowers*. Include points from the analysis above and try the suggested sentence patterns.**

Unity is created by _____
 (Describe the element) _____ which creates harmony and a sense of unity.

Similarity

Similarity refers to elements that are similar, the same or related to each other. If two shapes are exactly the same, they are **repeated**. If two shapes are almost the same, they are **varied**. Similarity creates a **consistent** design that is **coherent** (makes sense as a whole). This table shows some of the ways that elements in an artwork can be similar.

An artwork needs some similarity as well as some contrast and variety. If there is too much similarity, the artwork could be dull and predictable. If there is not enough similarity, the artwork could be chaotic and unclear.

colour	line	tone	texture	shape/form	space
similar colours are used or a harmonious palette; tints or shades of a colour; patterns of colour	lines of similar weight, length, direction; patterns of lines	similar tones e.g. mostly light or mostly dark	textures are similar e.g. mostly smooth or mostly rough	similar shapes e.g. all geometric shapes or organic shapes; similar sizes; patterns of sizes	objects that seem to belong together; groupings of objects in a similar or evenly spaced position; similar placement



eyes and ears are a similar
bronze colour

pattern of geometric shapes
for teeth and patterns of
evenly spaced lines on body

similar black wood for tail and horns;
similar curved shapes of similar thickness
and dull texture

similar black wooden material for
tail and horns;
similar curved shapes

Buffalo figure, [silver, iron, wood], 19th Century, Republic of Benin, Africa.

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Anne d'Harnoncourt and Joseph Rishel 2002, www.metmuseum.org.



Mada Primavesi, G. Klimt, 1912-13

CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Andre and Clara Mertens 1964, www.metmuseum.org.



Describe how similarity is created in *Mada Primavesi*. Discuss all the elements in your answer.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal black ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

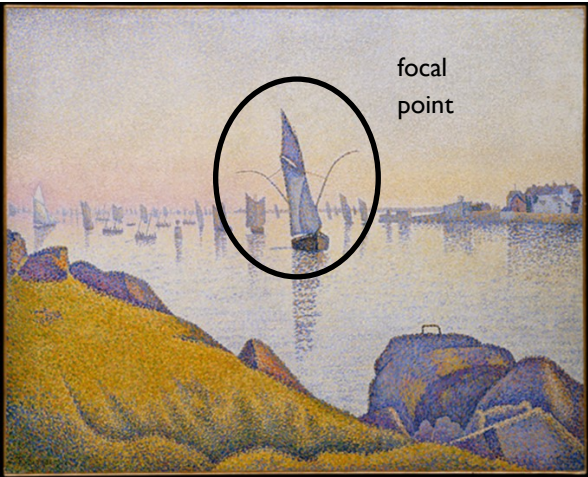
Emphasis

Emphasis is the aspect or part of the artwork that captures the viewer's attention. **To emphasise** means to **highlight** or make something **important, significant** or **prominent** (standing out or obvious). The table below shows some of the ways that emphasis can be created.

The focal point is the point of focus, that is, where the eye is attracted to. Often artists use line to pull the viewer's gaze to a certain point. Sometimes there is one focal point, but there may be **multiple focal points**.

colour	line	tone	texture	shape/form	space
a bright, saturated colour may creates emphasis; contrasting colours create emphasis e.g. one blue dot on a yellow background	the viewer's eye will follow a real or implied line to a focal point; thick lines draw the eye	contrasts of tone can create emphasis (e.g. a light area on a dark background)	a variation in texture attracts attention	the eye is attracted to an irregular shape or something unique or special; large shapes may be emphasised	an object close to the viewer is emphasised; an isolated object (on its own) is emphasised; the eye is drawn to the centre and from left to right

The focal point is this sail. It is emphasised due to shape - it is bigger and the vertical lines draw the eye up. The focal point is approximately in the centre of the canvas (space).



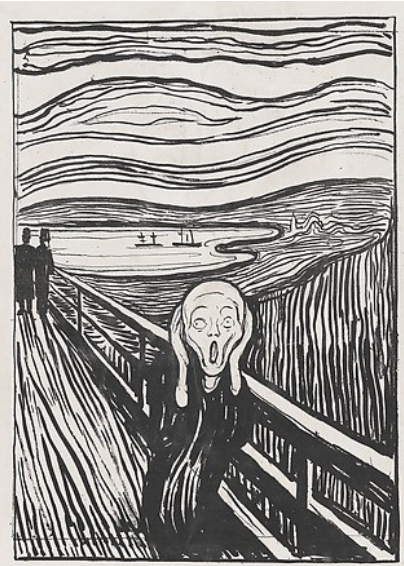
Evening Calm, Concarneau, Opus 220, P. Signac, 1891.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection 1975,
www.metmuseum.org.

The focal point is the red shape. The bright red colour draws the eye. There is a second focal point on the left. Lines take the eye upwards and from right to left to the two figures.



Improvisation 27 (Garden of Love II), V. Kandinsky, 1912.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Alfred Stieglitz Collection 1949,
www.metmuseum.org.

 **Describe the use of focal point and emphasis in this artwork. Identify which elements create emphasis. Use the sentences above as models for your writing.**



The Scream, E. Munch, 1895.
CC0. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Scofield Thayer 1982,
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The resources on this page are references for this book and also useful further reading on Literacy in Visual Arts.

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