

Art A Level Frequently Asked Questions (answered by the U6 Art Prefect and Art teachers)

Should I only take art if I want to take it further at University or as a future career?

If you want to take a creative path after school then A level art will help you develop essential skills for the future. To name a few, you will improve your time management skills, your ability to meet deadlines and develop deeper thinking and problem-solving skills that will enable you to become a more flexible thinker and key team player. You can apply these to a number of subjects and future career paths. Art's major advantage is the wide range of transferable skills that it offers which future employers will be looking for in their successful candidates at interview. Even if you want to follow a path not directly related to the creative industry, it is still a valuable subject which is structured very differently to the other A levels. It is always a lesson where you can work practically to develop a more independent and confident working practice which will be very useful when it comes to life at University or within employment.

How is the course structured?

In the first 2 terms of Art A Level you will spend time becoming familiar with the course requirements, expectations and assessment. Your confidence will build through a wide range of practical experiments, exploring a variety of art, materials, techniques and concepts. You will develop mastery in connecting, extending, refining and communicating ideas in order to reach the higher levels. In the final term of L6 and first terms of U6, these initial ideas will be expanded further, taking a more personal direction that will form a body of visual and written work which includes an essay and exciting practical outcome(s). In February of U6, the exam board releases a choice of titles from which you choose the most interesting for you to explore. You use all the skills that you have learnt to work as independently as possible towards a final outcome. This final outcome is completed within 15 hours under exam conditions at the end of April/ beginning of May.

How will I be assessed?

Like GCSE Art, your body of practical and written work will be marked holistically, using the four main Assessment Objectives (AOs). These are AO1: Developing ideas, AO2: Exploring and Refining, AO3: Recording and Reflecting Critically and AO4: Presenting a Personal Response

Will there be any trips?

Unfortunately, this year we have been unable to run trips, however, we fully intend to start them back up once the current restrictions are lifted. Pupils have previously visited Turner Contemporary in Margate, Tate Modern in London for contextual inspiration and explored the visual stimuli of places such as Whitstable and Dungeness. We also actively encourage you to visit exhibitions and locations in your own time to ensure that you broaden your experience beyond the classroom. By gathering a wide range of first-hand observations, you can use them to shape your personal journey and explorations and provide valuable material for discussion in personal statements and interviews.

Do I have to be able to draw realistically in order to take A level Art?

Art at TWGGS is much more focused on creatively experimenting with different techniques and materials whilst exploring a wide range of ideas, concepts and inspirational artists. Art A level will require a passion to be curiously creative. If you love researching, investigating, problem-solving and communicating in visual and written forms, then this is the subject for you. It does help to enjoy a range of artistic styles (painting, drawing, collaging, photography etc) but there is no requirement to be a master of these at the start of lower sixth.

Will Art take over all my time?

As long as you are organised and allocate time to art it will not take over your whole life! Art can be a time-consuming subject but it does not have to be the only thing you spend your time on. You are allocated free periods in Sixth Form and these are really useful to keep up to date with practical work and documentation. It really helps to make a simple plan of the practical work you

have completed in lessons in the order you created it as this will keep you up to date with what you have been working on and spark ideas for future art. Keeping a mini sketchbook with you in your bag really helps.

What is the course workload like?

As Art A level is a coursework subject (like GCSE), this means you are not working towards a final written exam. To me, this is a huge benefit as you will have less written exams to revise for in exam season and mocks. However, it does require you to put in effort throughout the two years as every piece of work will potentially form part of your final grade. If you start the Sixth Form putting in a lot of effort and hard work into your subjects you will be able to complete coursework efficiently. By getting into the habit of working at a high standard from the start, it will make your life a lot easier later on in the year when you will have a lot of other work to focus on! You can always go back and edit parts of your work later on (as you will have improved throughout the course) but if you aim to develop the high-level structure from the start you will not get overwhelmed by all the content.

What other A levels go well with art?

Possibly you do not yet know what you would like to do beyond school. As long as you are choosing subjects you really enjoy it does not matter what subjects make a suitable mix. My choices are Art, English Literature, Psychology and Religious Studies and I have been able to bring in aspects of my other subjects into my concepts within art. For example, last year I was learning about Buddhism in RS and I based a whole sculpture on elements I learnt in what I had thought was a completely unrelated subject to art. Choosing art is not restricted by your other choices but I would say that taking English has really helped with my documentation as written communication plays an important part of Art A level. This has also been an advantage in terms of my English essays as I have gained an extended use of vocabulary that I would not have normally acquired if I didn't take Art.

Will I get help in forming a portfolio of work for University?

During the U6 there will be opportunities to build an exciting portfolio with the wide range of experimental evidence that you will have created during the previous four/five terms. Your teachers will be able to guide you with how to best display your work to stand out at an interview. Working in a variety of scales and media will enhance your portfolio and offer an insight into your ability to innovate and generate a broad range of ideas.

I know A Level requires you to be more independent as the course develops, but will the teachers help me if I am stuck?

Yes definitely, they want you to do well and enjoy the subject as much as you want to! They provide 1-2-1 tutorials throughout the course. They will always be there to provide you with resources to support your documentation as well as spending the time with you to develop possible new ideas within your personal investigations and extend and refine those you have already. Art is my favourite subject at A level and something I intend to pursue at University and later on for my career. I definitely recommend carrying on this subject if you are creative or enjoyed GCSE.

Can I take Art A Level if I have not opted for it at GCSE?

Studying Art at A Level is a big leap from GCSE. Fortunately, A Level pupils are given twice the amount of lesson time to be able to explore in greater depth. Preferably, you will have achieved a level 7 (or above) in an alternative, creative subject. You will need to provide evidence of your passion for Art, your ability to develop ideas, analyse, experiment and record. Initially, you may find it hard work to find your feet and your flow. Most of the others in the class will have taken GCSE Art and will be used to the high level expectations and pace as you research, explore, experiment, question and document ideas, concepts, artists and media. You will need to be prepared to use your independent study time to extend your work and build your understanding in greater depth to help you bridge the gap. The great thing is that we have A12 for you all to use

during independent study time so that you have the opportunity and facilities to be able to fully extend ideas outside of lesson time too.

What size are the A Level classes?

Guided by recent A Level Art groups, the average class size has been 14 pupils.