

CHUNKED PROJECT CHECKLISTS

Small, visible steps for GCSE and A Level Art & Design projects

RESOURCE	06 - Differentiation and inclusion
SUBJECTS	Fine Art, Photography and Graphic Communication
LEVELS	GCSE and A Level
INCLUDES	Whole-project roadmap, eight stage checklists, subject pathways and lesson planner
FORMATS	Editable Microsoft Word and print-ready A4 PDF
PRINT	White background; suitable for colour or greyscale printing

Purpose

Break a substantial Art & Design project into manageable actions without reducing creative challenge. Students can see what to do now, identify evidence of completion and decide on a sensible next step.

IMPORTANT The stages are a planning aid, not a compulsory order. Art projects often loop back as ideas, research, recording and making inform each other.

Use the checklist to create independence

A long project can overload working memory because the student must hold the brief, materials, research, decisions and deadlines in mind at the same time. A chunked checklist makes the next action visible and provides a place to record evidence.

A simple classroom routine

- Preview the whole pathway so the student understands the destination.
- Select only the current stage; cover or remove later stages if they distract.
- Model the first small step and show what acceptable evidence might look like.
- Ask the student to complete, check and locate the evidence before ticking.
- Review the next action together, then reduce prompts as confidence increases.

Keep the thinking demanding

Chunk the organisation, not the creative thinking. The checklist should not decide the student's theme, artist, viewpoint, material, layout or final response. Ask for reasons and visible evidence whenever a decision matters.

USE WITH JUDGEMENT Adapt the language, number of steps and review frequency to the learner, project and current specification. Do not use every page with every student.

Useful for

Mixed-ability groups, working-memory needs, dyslexia, EAL learners, students returning after absence, students who struggle to begin, and students who rush to a final outcome without development.

Choose the smallest useful level of support

HIGH SUPPORT	Show one stage only; model the first action; check after each small step.
GUIDED	Give the stage checklist; agree the evidence; review at a planned checkpoint.
LIGHT	Use only the whole-project roadmap and one lesson target.
INDEPENDENT	Student plans, monitors and evaluates without the printed checklist.

Make it accessible

- Use short familiar verbs and read the current step aloud if helpful.
- Highlight only the current row; avoid giving a visually crowded full pack.
- Allow evidence to be pointed to, photographed, discussed or labelled before extended writing.
- Add a small image, material sample or model beside an unfamiliar instruction.
- Agree what finished means. A tick should refer to evidence, not simply effort or time spent.

Remove the scaffold deliberately

Move from modelling, to prompting, to checking, to self-checking. When a student can select and monitor the next action independently, remove that part of the checklist rather than making it a permanent requirement.

TEACHER QUESTION What is the least support this student needs to make the next successful decision?

My project at a glance

Write a target date, then shade or tick each stage as evidence develops. The arrows can move both ways: returning to an earlier stage may be purposeful refinement.

STAGE	ACTION	WHAT THIS MEANS	TARGET
1	UNPACK	Understand the starting point and set an initial direction.	__/__/__
2	RECORD	Collect first-hand images, observations, drawings or data.	__/__/__
3	INVESTIGATE	Study relevant artists, photographers, designers or contexts.	__/__/__
4	GENERATE	Produce more than one possible idea or visual direction.	__/__/__
5	TEST	Explore materials, processes, techniques and combinations.	__/__/__
6	REFINE	Review evidence and make purposeful improvements.	__/__/__
7	REALISE	Plan and make a personal response that fits the intention.	__/__/__
8	PRESENT	Select, organise, explain and evaluate the project evidence.	__/__/__

Current position

I AM WORKING ON STAGE	MY NEXT REVIEW DATE
_____	_____

Stage 1: Unpack the starting point

GOAL Understand what the project asks and choose a workable first direction.

Work through one small step at a time. Tick a box only when you can point to the evidence.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
☐	Read or view the complete starting point before selecting details.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Underline or list the important words, constraints and opportunities.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Collect three quick associations, questions or possible interpretations.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Choose an initial direction and explain why it is worth investigating.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Identify what you already know and what you need to find out.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Write one achievable action for the next lesson.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>

Pause and check

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE SO FAR	MY NEXT USEFUL ACTION

WHEN READY Move to Stage 2 and collect first-hand evidence connected to the direction.

A starting intention may change. Keep a record of why it changed.

Stage 2: Collect and record

GOAL Gather relevant first-hand evidence that can feed later ideas and decisions.

Work through one small step at a time. Tick a box only when you can point to the evidence.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
☐	Choose subjects, places, objects or experiences connected to the intention.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Record from more than one viewpoint, distance, crop or arrangement.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Use an appropriate method: drawing, photography, notes, measurement or sound.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Select the strongest records and state what makes each useful.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Label important visual qualities, details or unexpected findings.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Identify one gap and collect the missing evidence.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>

Pause and check

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE SO FAR 	MY NEXT USEFUL ACTION
WHEN READY Move to Stage 3 and investigate sources that can extend the recorded evidence.	

First-hand recording should have a purpose; quantity alone does not show development.

Stage 3: Investigate relevant sources

GOAL Use artists, photographers, designers, movements or contexts to develop understanding.

Work through one small step at a time. Tick a box only when you can point to the evidence.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
☐	Choose a source that is genuinely relevant to the project intention.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Record full source details and acknowledge images or ideas that are not your own.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Identify precise visual, technical or conceptual features in the source.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Explain how those features affect meaning, mood, audience or function.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Make a practical study or focused test to understand how an effect works.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	State what you will borrow, reject or transform in your own work and why.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>

Pause and check

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE SO FAR	MY NEXT USEFUL ACTION

WHEN READY Move to Stage 4 and use the research to generate several personal possibilities.

Research is not just biography. Show the connection between the source and your decisions.

Stage 4: Generate possibilities

GOAL Develop several visual directions before committing to one outcome.

Work through one small step at a time. Tick a box only when you can point to the evidence.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
☐	Combine first-hand evidence with at least one relevant research finding.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Produce quick thumbnails, mock-ups, contact sheets or compositional trials.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Change one important variable: scale, crop, viewpoint, layout, colour or material.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Include at least one idea that moves beyond the most obvious solution.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Compare the possibilities against the intention, audience or purpose.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Select one or two directions to test further and give a reason.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>

Pause and check

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE SO FAR 	MY NEXT USEFUL ACTION
WHEN READY Move to Stage 5 and test the materials or processes needed by the selected direction.	

A checklist can require alternatives, but it should not decide what those alternatives look like.

Stage 5: Test materials and processes

GOAL Find out what works through purposeful practical experiments.

Work through one small step at a time. Tick a box only when you can point to the evidence.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
☐	Choose a test question, such as which surface, lens, process or type treatment works best.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Change one important variable where a fair comparison is useful.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Label the material, setting, process or sequence used in each test.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Record what happened, including mistakes or unexpected results.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Judge the test against the intention rather than simply saying that you like it.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Choose what to keep, adapt, combine or reject and explain why.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>

Pause and check

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE SO FAR 	MY NEXT USEFUL ACTION
WHEN READY Move to Stage 6 and make a purposeful refinement using the test evidence.	

Do not hide unsuccessful tests. Explain what they taught you and what changed next.

Stage 6: Review and refine

GOAL Improve the developing work through evidence-based decisions.

Work through one small step at a time. Tick a box only when you can point to the evidence.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
☐	Place the current work beside the intention, research and strongest tests.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Identify one aspect that communicates successfully and explain why.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Identify one limitation or unresolved problem using visible evidence.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Choose a purposeful change rather than restarting without explanation.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Make the change and record before-and-after evidence where possible.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Judge whether the refinement improved meaning, appearance, function or control.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>

Pause and check

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE SO FAR 	MY NEXT USEFUL ACTION
WHEN READY Repeat Stage 5 or 6 if needed, or move to Stage 7 when the response is ready to realise.	

Refinement can occur throughout a project; it is not a single final correction.

Stage 7: Plan and realise the response

GOAL Make a personal response that brings the strongest decisions together.

Work through one small step at a time. Tick a box only when you can point to the evidence.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
[]	Write or sketch the intended outcome, audience, scale, format and presentation.	Page, image, file or date
[]	List the materials, equipment, files and preparation needed.	Page, image, file or date
[]	Break production into a safe and realistic sequence of actions.	Page, image, file or date
[]	Complete a final rehearsal, proof, mock-up or technical check where useful.	Page, image, file or date
[]	Make the response while recording significant decisions and changes.	Page, image, file or date
[]	Check quality, control and connection to the project intention before finishing.	Page, image, file or date

Pause and check

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE SO FAR	MY NEXT USEFUL ACTION

WHEN READY Move to Stage 8 and select, organise and evaluate the complete project evidence.

The final response should emerge from the investigation, not appear as an unrelated finished piece.

Stage 8: Present and evaluate

GOAL Organise the evidence so another person can follow the project and understand its decisions.

Work through one small step at a time. Tick a box only when you can point to the evidence.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
☐	Select evidence that shows investigation, experimentation, recording and response.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Remove unnecessary repetition while keeping important turning points and mistakes.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Arrange pages, files or boards in a sequence that makes development clear.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Check that sources are identified and work that is not your own is acknowledged.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Explain the most important decision, refinement and personal connection.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>
☐	Evaluate the outcome against the original or revised intention and identify a next step.	<i>Page, image, file or date</i>

Pause and check

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE SO FAR	MY NEXT USEFUL ACTION

WHEN READY Use the whole-project roadmap and your current specification, then submit or display the work in the required format.

Presentation should clarify the process without disguising gaps in the evidence.

One stage at a time

Use this reduced version when the full project pathway is distracting. The teacher or student writes only the current stage and replaces the sheet when it is complete.

CURRENT STAGE	_____
FINISHED MEANS	_____
CHECK-IN	Date / lesson: _____

My five small actions

1 []	_____
2 []	_____
3 []	_____
4 []	_____
5 []	_____

When I am stuck

I HAVE ALREADY TRIED	THE HELP I NEED IS
_____	_____
FINISH Point to the evidence, tick the stage, then choose or ask for the next stage.	

Fine Art: pathway checklist

Use these prompts to adapt the eight-stage pathway for drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed media or related practice.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
[]	Record first-hand subjects through purposeful drawings, photographs or studies.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Investigate how relevant artists use visual language, materials and meaning.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Test surfaces, scale, mark-making, colour, tone, texture or construction.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Generate compositions that transform rather than simply copy the source material.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Review how material choices support the intended mood, idea or experience.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Refine control, selection and presentation while keeping useful process evidence.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Realise a personal response that connects investigation, recording and making.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>

Questions for the next decision

- Which visible quality matters most: line, tone, colour, texture, form, space or composition?
- What does this material allow me to communicate that another material would not?
- Where can I show a purposeful change between the first idea and the realised response?

KEEP IT PERSONAL Use the checklist to remember the process, then make choices that fit your own intentions.

Photography: pathway checklist

Use these prompts for lens-based work, digital manipulation, moving image, installation or photographic sequences.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
[]	Define the subject, intention and practical or ethical considerations before shooting.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Make first-hand shoots with deliberate changes to viewpoint, framing, light or timing.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Keep contact sheets and identify strong, weak and unexpected frames.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Investigate how relevant photographers construct meaning through visual and technical choices.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Test exposure, focus, depth of field, shutter, sequencing, editing or presentation.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Plan and complete a refined shoot that responds to the earlier evidence.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Edit, sequence and present images so the selection supports the intended meaning.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>

Questions for the next decision

- What should the viewer notice first, and how will framing or focus achieve that?
- Which technical choice is purposeful rather than accidental?
- Would a single image, sequence, series, book, screen or installation communicate most effectively?

KEEP IT PERSONAL Use the checklist to remember the process, then make choices that fit your own intentions.

Graphic Communication: pathway checklist

Use these prompts for branding, advertising, illustration, information design, packaging, publication or digital outcomes.

TICK	SMALL STEP	EVIDENCE / DATE
[]	Identify the brief, audience, purpose, message, format and practical constraints.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Collect and analyse relevant visual research, existing communication and audience clues.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Generate several concepts before selecting a visual direction.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Test typography, hierarchy, grid, image, colour, scale and production method.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Apply the idea consistently across the required formats or touchpoints.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Check legibility, accessibility, reproduction and suitability for the intended context.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>
[]	Present mock-ups and explain how the final design answers the brief personally and effectively.	<i>Where can I show this?</i>

Questions for the next decision

- What must the audience understand or do, and what should they notice first?
- Does every type, image and colour choice support the same communication idea?
- How will I test the design at its real size, format or viewing distance?

KEEP IT PERSONAL Use the checklist to remember the process, then make choices that fit your own intentions.

Now / Next / Later

Complete this at the start of a lesson or short working period. Keep NOW small enough to finish or review within the available time.

NOW	The one action I am doing first: _____
NEXT	What follows if NOW is complete: _____
LATER	An idea to hold without doing yet: _____
EQUIPMENT	What I need before I begin: _____
CHECK-IN	Time or point when I will pause: _____

End-of-lesson review

EVIDENCE I CREATED	WHAT I FOUND OUT
_____	_____

Choose the next level of support

[] SHOW ME Model the action	[] PROMPT ME Give a clue	[] CHECK ME Review my choice	[] I CAN DO IT I will self-check
NEXT LESSON My first action will be: _____			

Before printing or sharing

- Select only the pages that match the current student, project and stage.
- Edit the small steps so they refer to the actual brief, materials and available lesson time.
- Keep the challenge in the creative decision; use the checklist to reduce organisational load.
- Accept different forms of evidence where appropriate, including visual, practical and spoken evidence.
- Review whether the checklist is still needed and remove prompts as independence increases.

Use alongside Resources 01-05

Resource 01 simplifies annotation prompts. Resource 02 develops critical vocabulary. Resource 03 provides visual instructions. Resource 04 offers dyslexia-friendly worksheets. Resource 05 supports multilingual learners. Resource 06 helps students plan, monitor and complete extended Art & Design projects in manageable stages.

Further guidance

Education Endowment Foundation: Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning; scaffolding guidance; and evidence-based strategies for pupils with SEND - educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk

AQA: current GCSE and A Level Art & Design specifications and assessment-objective guidance - aqa.org.uk

The checklist language is an independent teaching aid. Teachers should check the current requirements of their own examination board and centre.

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