

PORTFOLIO TO A STAR TEACHER TOOLKIT

DYSLEXIA-FRIENDLY WORKSHEETS

Accessible classroom sheets for GCSE and A Level Art & Design

INCLUDES	Teacher guidance, seven subject worksheets, a learner-preference sheet, one-question cards, lower-text alternatives and an editable template
SUBJECTS	Fine Art, Photography and Graphic Communication
DESIGN	Arial type, short instructions, left-aligned text, strong contrast, generous spacing and clear response areas
PRINTING	White A4 pages for colour or greyscale printing; editable in Microsoft Word

CORE PRINCIPLE Dyslexia-friendly design reduces avoidable reading and memory demands while preserving the thinking, practical challenge and subject knowledge of the task.

Independent teacher resource. It is not produced or endorsed by an examination board. Teachers should apply the current requirements of their own specification.

TEACHER GUIDE

Dyslexia-friendly is not one fixed format

Dyslexic learners do not all experience the same strengths, difficulties or visual preferences. Begin with clear inclusive design, then ask the individual which adjustments help them read, organise ideas and record evidence.

Use the worksheets flexibly

- Read the task aloud and allow the student to follow the same wording on the page.
- Give one section at a time when a full page creates overload.
- Accept concise notes, labelled drawings, bullet points, speech-to-text or a recorded verbal response when these show the required thinking.
- Provide word banks and sentence openings without requiring the student to copy them repeatedly.
- Allow sufficient processing time and check understanding by asking the student to explain or demonstrate the next action.
- Use coloured overlays, tinted digital backgrounds or coloured paper only when they match the learner's stated preference.

Assessment Objectives remain unchanged

COMMON AO LINK	ACCESSIBLE SUPPORT
AO1	Support access to sources, artist research and meaningful connections without reducing the quality of ideas.
AO2	Structure experiments and refinements so material decisions remain visible and purposeful.
AO3	Offer accessible ways to record observations, intentions and insights, including visual and spoken evidence where permitted.
AO4	Chunk planning and evaluation while retaining the requirement for a coherent personal response.

Access arrangements and acceptable evidence depend on the qualification, centre and individual learner. Follow current school, college and examination-board procedures.

TEACHER REFERENCE

Six checks for an accessible worksheet

1 TEXT	Use a familiar sans-serif font, a comfortable size, left alignment and sufficient line spacing. Avoid long passages in capitals, italics or underlining.
2 LANGUAGE	Use short direct sentences and familiar action verbs. Explain unavoidable technical vocabulary beside the task.
3 LAYOUT	Keep generous white space. Separate sections clearly and avoid unnecessary decoration, dense grids or several tasks competing on one page.
4 NAVIGATION	Number the sequence, repeat essential reminders and make the start point and finish condition obvious.
5 RESPONSE	Provide enough writing space and allow suitable alternatives such as bullet points, labels, diagrams, speech-to-text or verbal rehearsal.
6 CHOICE	Offer editable text size, digital zoom, background tint, overlay or reading tools according to individual preference rather than assumption.

WHEN SPACE IS TIGHT Reduce the amount of wording before reducing the font size. Split a task across pages or reveal one section at a time.

Common problems to remove

- Long instructions written as one paragraph
- Several different fonts, text colours or decorative headings
- Important information communicated by colour alone
- Large amounts of copying before the student can begin the task
- Tiny answer spaces that imply every response should be the same length

STUDENT PREFERENCE SHEET

How I read and record best

Complete this with the student. It records useful preferences; it is not a diagnostic assessment.

Review date:

Name:

Date:

Reading and viewing

☐ Standard white paper	☐ A coloured overlay
☐ A tinted digital background	☐ Larger text or zoom
☐ A reading ruler or line guide	☐ A quieter workspace

Preferred colour or setting: _____

Instructions

☐ I read them myself	☐ Read them aloud to me
☐ Show me an example	☐ Give one step at a time
☐ Let me repeat the task back	☐ Keep a checklist beside me

Recording my ideas

☐ Short sentences	☐ Bullet points
☐ Labels on images	☐ Mind map
☐ Speech-to-text	☐ Recorded verbal response

One thing that helps me begin

PHOTOCOPIABLE STUDENT WORKSHEET / ALL SUBJECTS

Write a clear annotation

Choose one piece of work. Complete each short section using words, bullet points or labels.

Task:

Name:

Date:

1

What can you see?

Name one visible feature: colour, line, tone, texture, shape, composition, focus, viewpoint, type or layout.

You could start: I can see...

2

What did you do?

Describe one material, camera, editing or design choice.

You could start: I used...

3

Why does it matter?

Explain the effect, meaning or reason for the choice.

You could start: This creates... / This helps to...

4

What happens next?

State one change, test or refinement that follows.

You could start: Next, I will...

FINISHED WHEN Your annotation names visible evidence, explains one decision and identifies a useful next step.

PHOTOCOPIABLE STUDENT WORKSHEET / AO1

Research an artist or designer

Use one carefully chosen artwork or design. Focus on visual evidence and connections rather than copying a biography.

Source:

Name:

Date:

1

Identify the source

Record the maker, title, date and where the image or information came from.

You could start: Maker / title / date / source:

2

Notice three things

Choose visible features such as colour, material, light, composition, viewpoint, typography or surface.

You could start: I notice...

3

Explain one effect

What mood, meaning, message or viewer response is created? Point to the evidence.

You could start: The use of... creates...

4

Make a connection

Identify one idea or process you could test in your own work. Do not simply copy the outcome.

You could start: This could inform my work by...

FINISHED WHEN The research contains accurate source details, close visual observation and a specific personal connection.

PHOTOCOPIABLE STUDENT WORKSHEET / AO2

Record a practical experiment

Complete this while the experiment is fresh. A labelled photograph or material sample may replace some writing.

Experiment:

Name:

Date:

1

Purpose

What are you trying to discover, compare or improve?

You could start: I am testing...

2

Materials and method

List the important media, surface, tool, setting or process.

You could start: I used...

3

Result

Point to one area that worked and one area that needs attention. Explain using visible evidence.

You could start: The most useful result is... because...

4

Next action

State one informed change. Change one variable at a time when possible.

You could start: Next, I will change...

FINISHED WHEN The experiment has a clear purpose, identified materials, an evidence-based judgement and a practical next step.

PHOTOCOPIABLE STUDENT WORKSHEET / PHOTOGRAPHY

Review a contact sheet

Circle or mark the photograph you are discussing. Use the camera-language prompts only when they match the image.

Shoot:

Name:

Date:

1

Select

Which photograph best connects to your intention? Record its file number.

You could start: I selected image...

2

Describe the evidence

Choose from framing, viewpoint, focus, light, exposure, movement, colour or timing.

You could start: The image uses...

3

Explain the effect

How does the choice guide attention, communicate meaning or create atmosphere?

You could start: This makes the viewer... / This suggests...

4

Plan the next shoot

State one specific retake, variation, edit, crop, sequence or printing test.

You could start: In the next shoot, I will...

FINISHED WHEN You have selected with a reason, referred to visible photographic evidence and planned a purposeful next action.

PHOTOCOPIABLE STUDENT WORKSHEET / GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

Review a design layout

Use for a poster, cover, identity, packaging or information design. Attach or place the chosen version beside the sheet.

Brief:

Name:

Date:

1

Purpose and audience

What must the design communicate, and who needs to understand it?

You could start: The design is for... It needs to...

2

Reading order

What is noticed first, second and third? Refer to scale, position, contrast or spacing.

You could start: The visual hierarchy begins with...

3

Design language

Comment on one relevant choice: typography, image, colour, grid, alignment, white space or brand consistency.

You could start: The use of... communicates...

4

Refinement

Identify one change that would improve clarity, audience suitability or production quality.

You could start: I will improve... by...

FINISHED WHEN The review links visible design choices to the brief, audience and a justified refinement.

PHOTOCOPIABLE STUDENT WORKSHEET / PROJECT PLANNING

Plan the next practical session

Use this at the end of a lesson or before independent work. Keep actions small enough to complete and check.

Project:

Name:

Date:

1

My aim

What should be visible or completed by the end of the session?

You could start: By the end, I will have...

2

First action

Write the smallest useful action that will help you begin.

You could start: First, I will...

3

Then and next

Write two further actions in the correct order.

You could start: Then... / Next...

4

Materials and help

List what you need and identify the exact point where teacher support may be required.

You could start: I need... / I may need help with...

FINISHED WHEN The plan has a visible outcome, three manageable actions and the required materials or support.

PHOTOCOPIABLE STUDENT WORKSHEET / EVALUATION

Evaluate an outcome

Use after a practical study, design, shoot or final response. A short accurate judgement is more useful than a long vague paragraph.

Outcome:

Name:

Date:

1

Intention

What did you want the work to communicate, explore or achieve?

You could start: My intention was...

2

Most successful feature

Point to one visible area and explain why it is effective.

You could start: The strongest feature is... because...

3

Limitation or challenge

Identify one aspect that did not work as intended. Explain the evidence without dismissing the whole outcome.

You could start: One limitation is...

4

Learning and next use

What did you learn, and how will it influence another decision or project?

You could start: I learned... so next time I will...

FINISHED WHEN The evaluation connects intention, visible evidence, a balanced judgement and future learning.

LOWER-TEXT SUPPORT / WORD BANK

Choose a word, then point to the evidence

Students do not need to use every word. Select a small group that matches the task and read unfamiliar vocabulary aloud.

FINE ART	line: gestural, controlled, broken tone: light, dark, high contrast colour: warm, cool, muted, saturated surface: smooth, rough, layered, translucent
PHOTOGRAPHY	framing: close-up, cropped, centred, off-centre focus: sharp, selective, soft light: natural, directional, diffused, backlit viewpoint: high, low, eye level
GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION	type: serif, sans serif, display, body text layout: grid, margin, alignment, white space hierarchy: scale, weight, contrast, position audience: clear, playful, formal, youthful
EVALUATION	effective, clear, controlled, relevant, refined, limited, distracting, inconsistent, unfinished, appropriate

Short sentence openings

NOTICE	I can see...
METHOD	I used...
EFFECT	This creates...
CONNECTION	This relates to...
JUDGEMENT	This is effective because...
NEXT STEP	Next, I will...

REMEMBER The specialist word is useful only when it matches something visible and helps explain a decision, effect or meaning.

LOWER-TEXT SUPPORT / CUT-OUT CARDS

Answer one question at a time

Cut along the dashed lines. Give only the card needed at the current stage, then combine answers later if a longer response is required.

1 What am I making?

Name the task or intended outcome.

I am making...

2 What can I see?

Point to one colour, line, texture, shape, image or layout feature.

I can see...

3 What did I use?

Name the material, tool, camera choice or design method.

I used...

4 What effect does it create?

Explain what the choice makes the viewer notice, feel or understand.

This creates...

5 What worked?

Choose one successful feature and give a reason.

This worked because...

6 What happens next?

Choose one small, practical improvement or development.

Next, I will...

The learning intention remains the same. The lower-text version reduces reading load and reveals the reasoning in smaller stages.

DO NOT LOWER THE CHALLENGE Change how the task is presented and recorded, not the quality of observation, analysis, decision-making or practical evidence expected.

EDITABLE TEACHER TEMPLATE

Build a dyslexia-friendly worksheet

Replace the example wording. Keep no more than four main prompts on one page, or provide the prompts separately.

Worksheet title:

Name:

Date:

1**Short action heading**

Write one direct question or instruction.

You could start: Add an optional sentence opening.**2****Short action heading**

Write one direct question or instruction.

You could start: Add an optional sentence opening.**3****Short action heading**

Write one direct question or instruction.

You could start: Add an optional sentence opening.**4****Short action heading**

Write one direct question or instruction.

You could start: Add an optional sentence opening.**FINISHED WHEN** State the visible completion check in one sentence.

RESOURCE NOTES

Before printing or sharing

- Ask the learner which adjustments help; do not assume that all dyslexic students want the same font size, paper colour or recording method.
- Keep the white master for economical printing. Offer an individually preferred overlay, paper colour or digital background when useful.
- Read instructions aloud, model the task and retain the printed prompt so the student does not have to rely on memory.
- Check that digital versions can be zoomed and used with text-to-speech or speech-to-text tools where available.
- Adapt wording to the current project and qualification while keeping the accessible layout and adequate response space.

Use alongside Resources 01-03

Resource 01 simplifies annotation prompts. Resource 02 develops critical vocabulary. Resource 03 provides visual instructions. Resource 04 combines accessible presentation, manageable questions and flexible ways to record Art & Design thinking.

Further guidance

British Dyslexia Association: Dyslexia-friendly training and reasonable-adjustment guidance - bdadyslexia.org.uk

GOV.UK: Accessible communication formats and Designing for users with dyslexia - gov.uk

These sources inform the general design principles in this pack. Individual support should follow the learner's assessed needs and the policies of their school or college.

Classroom-use notice

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