A n a l y s i n g A r t w o r k

**Part 1**

**Initial Response**

What do you bring to the artwork? Record what your **initial thoughts and feelings** are.

**Introduction**

What is the name of the artwork, the artist and when was it made?

Why have you chosen to look at this artist/artwork and what relevance does he/she have to your project?

**Visual**

What is your first reaction to the artwork? What was the first word that came into your head when you saw it? What did you notice first? Do some parts of the artwork draw your attention more than others?

**Emotional**

Does it make you feel a particular way? Describe why or how it makes you think like that?

**Memory/ Experience**

Does it remind you of anything? Why? Have you seen or experienced something like this before? When or where eg at home, at a place you have visited, on TV?

**Part 2**

**Contextual Understanding**

Before you complete this section you must carry out **research** into the artist’s **life and work**. This will help you to **examine the influences which shaped the creation and reading of a work of Art.** Make sure you write this in your own words and that your responses are full of your own personal insights and interpretations of the facts. You must answer some of the questions from each category.

**The Artist**

Find out the artists name, dates they lived and the country he/she lived or worked in. Who/ what was the work made for? Was it commissioned for a friend or made for a particular location?

**Background**

PERSONAL CONTEXT: Can the background of the artist tell us why the work was created?

How has the artist’s work been affected by events that happened in his/her life?

Was the artist influenced by any personal relationships and how?

WIDER CONTEXT:

How does the work link with the social, cultural or political history of the time? Do you think these circumstances have influenced how it was made? Does it reflect the ideas or values of the time? Are there ways of telling when it was made? Is the date significant? Eg a time of war or social/technological change?

**Associations & Influences**

Is the artist associated with an art movement and why? What type of genre would you associate the work with? *(portraiture, history painting, landscape, still life etc).* Does it fit into more than one type or can it not be classified? How does it link to other art of the period? *(literature, film, music, fashion, design, theatre*) Which other people have influenced this artist? How does it link to other disciplines such as religion, science, technology, culture, technology or psychology?

**Ideas & Intentions**

**Summarise** what you have learnt with **thoughtful, personal and informed responses.**

* Write what **you know** the artist is trying to communicate in his/her work? What is the artist trying to say or represent? Does it have a symbolic or moral meaning? Do you think the work is successful in communicating the artists ideas?

**Part 3**

**Formal Elements**

This section allows you to investigate the artwork by examining **how the it has been made**. This is done by you looking and visually analysing what you see.

Carefully consider which Formal Elements to analyse and talk about the work in depth. Remember to **ANALYSE** (examine in detail in order to discover meaning) NOT DESCRIBE (explain superficially how it looks) Try to **use what you have learnt in the Contextual Understanding** section to help you answer the questions.

**Label**

Label your chosen piece of artwork with artists name, title, date, place, materials and size.

# Subject Matter (What is the work about?)

What is in the work? Does it have a focal point or emphasis? What objects/images has the artist depicted in the Art?

Is there a narrative? What is happening and where is it set? Does the Art tell a story? Where does the story come from? How are objects/images used to show/tell the story? Does it depict an event or a social issue? Has something happened or is it about to happen? What point is the artist choosing to make? What do you think?

*Visual Study Suggestion: Explore subject matter by producing a line study (no tone).*

# Composition (How is the work arranged?)

How are the different objects arranged in the painting? How is the background arranged? How important is the background? How is the foreground arranged?

Is the work symmetrical/ asymmetrical? How does this contribute?

Is there a central object? How are the other objects arranged around this?

How does the artist draw your eye to the most important parts of the painting?

Is it random or carefully designed?

*Visual Study Suggestion: Analyse the composition with a line drawing (no tone).*

# Materials/Techniques/ Processes

What material(s) has the artist used? Has the artist used mixed media? How has he/she used the materials together?

How has the artist applied the materials? What tools have been used?

Are there any key techniques that he/she has used? What processes have been used to create the artwork?

*Visual Study Suggestion:* Do a visual analysis of part of the work experimenting with appropriate materials/techniques. You may want to focus on one area such as texture, colour or application of materials.

# Colour

Has the artist used colour emotionally or descriptively?

What are the dominant colours? How are they organised?

Does the artist use harmonious or complementary colours?

How does the use of colour differ in the foreground & background?

How does the artist’s choice of colour affect the mood/feel of the artwork?

*Visual Study Suggestion: Produce a colour study of the artwork.*

**3D** Also answer questions above

How does the use of colour affect the sculpture’s form and/or surface?

*Visual Study Suggestion: Produce a colour study of the artwork.*

# Mood/Atmosphere/ Environment

What mood/atmosphere does the artwork create? List at least 8 words to describe the mood/atmosphere. Back these up with evidence. What do you think the artist wants you to think or feel when you look at the work?

How does the artist create this mood atmosphere? Think about composition, colour and the choice of subject matter. How would it affect your senses if you could leap into the Art? What would you be able to see, hear, smell etc. If there was a person in it, how would you feel to be around them?

# Shape/Form

**2D**

How has the artist shown shape in the painting? Has he/she used lines, tone or colour to show shape/form?

*Visual Study : Analyse the way the shapes are organised by doing a tonal drawing of the painting.*

**3D (Form = 3D shape)**

What kind of forms is the sculpture made up of?

Is it figurative, organic, geometric?

Is it carved, modelled or made up from found objects?

How does the form change when looking at it from different angles?

*Visual Study Suggestion:Analyse the way the forms are organised by doing a tonal drawing of the sculpture.*

# Space

**2D**

How is the illusion of space created in the painting? Does it use linear perspective? Does it use atmospheric perspective?

How are the objects arranged in the painting to give a sense of space or distance? How has positive or negative space been used?

Is colour used to give a sense of space or distance? Is space deep or shallow and flat?

*Visual Study Suggestion:* Analyse the way the space is organised by doing a tonal drawing of the painting.

**3D**

What are the shapes and boundaries of the work?

Look at the negative space. Does the sculpture create interesting areas of negative space?

*Visual Study Suggestion: Analyse the way the space is organised by doing a tonal drawing of the sculpture.*

# Size/Shape

What size/shape is the artwork?

How does this affect the way it is viewed? Does it make the viewer feel small and powerless or giant and monumental?

How does this affect the mood/atmosphere of the work?

# Pattern

Describe the patterns used in the artwork.

Is the pattern organic, geometric, repetitious, regular or irregular?

*Visual Study Suggestion: Produce a study of different sections of the pattern or the whole pattern.*

# Surface & Texture

Describe the surface texture of the artwork (e.g. rough, smooth, soft, hard, shiny)

How does the surface texture affect the overall appearance of the artwork? Can you see evidence of the artists hand, such as brushstrokes? Do the marks affect the work? Eg are they expressive, energetic or calming?

*Visual Study Suggestion: Do a visual analysis of the surface texture in appropriate materials.*