

History of Art A Level

Preparation work: Pre-course Reading, Research and Tasks

Pre-reading and research will introduce you to some of the topics and skills you are going to study on your A Level History of Art course. If you complete the tasks below, they will also help you to be more confident when you start your course. Remember though, that no one has studied this subject in school before, so we will be on a hugely exciting journey of discovery together. Our History of Art community is a very strong one at Godalming and we are really looking forward to welcoming you to the department.

Specification:

A good place to start to look at the Pearson A level specification and familiarise yourself with what you will be studying on the course:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/history-of-art-2017.html>

Task 1:

ARTIST RESEARCH

Produce a short (two sides of A4) exploration of one of the following artists or architects:

- Elisabeth Vigée-le Brun
- Faith Ringgold
- Caravaggio
- Frank Lloyd Wright
- Pablo Picasso

1. Look out for information on when and where they lived, how they trained to become an artist, the styles they are associated with and the materials or techniques that they preferred.
2. Select and add three works by your chosen artist and write a brief paragraph on why you find each interesting. (Note that you don't have to like it: this course is not a study of tastes or preferences, but an academic exploration of how and why art and architecture has always played such a fundamental role in our lives and how it has shaped humanity.)

Task 2:

EXPLORING STORIES IN ART

Select one of the following stories or subjects and find five examples of it in art.

- The Last Supper
- The goddess Venus
- Dance or dancing
- The Annunciation
- Animals

1. Each of your examples (which can be either painting or sculpture) should have been made in a different century.
2. Put them on a page and identify each with the date, name of the artist (if known), materials used and size.
3. Think about how and why they are so different if they tell a similar story?

Websites for Further Research and Reading:

One of the great things about History of Art is that it is all around us. Once you have completed this course, you will be able to date and explain the buildings in your home town and to understand how and why art keeps changing. You will have gained an insight into art and architecture from Japan to the USA and from the Ancient Greeks to contemporary Britain. There are masses of great programmes to watch on TV or online to inspire you. You might like to try these for starters:

- www.smarthistory.org This is effectively our electronic course text book and we will use it a great deal while you are learning with us. It offers a huge range of short five-minute videos on art from across the globe. Dive in anywhere you like and explore...
- New York's enormous **Metropolitan Museum** has resources as broad and deep as its collection. You might like to dip into their timeline here: <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah>

Books to Read:

- **Ways of Seeing** by John Berger
- **Thinking about Art** by Penny Huntsman

Please don't worry about spending money on new books. We have a superb library at college which you can use and borrow once you join us. Before then, you might prefer to spend time enjoying the huge range of videos and podcasts that are freely available online.

Podcasts:

The Art Detective podcast by Janina Ramirez: <https://www.podbean.com/podcast-detail/7zd28-4a399/Art-Detective-Podcast>

Films to Watch:

- **Civilisations:** A global history of world culture, with episodes narrated by Simon Schama, Mary Beard and David Olusoga. *Available free on BBC iPlayer*
- **A History of Art in Three Colours:** Presented by Cambridge art historian, James Fox, this three-episode BBC4 series looks at how gold, white and blue have been used over time. *Available free online*
- **Modern Masters:** Presented by Alistaire Sooke, exploring the life and work of Matisse, Picasso, Dali and Warhol. *Available free online*
- **Travels with Vasari:** BBC series, presented by Andrew Graham-Dixon, exploring the great stories and characters of the Renaissance. *Available free on youtube*

Progression Opportunities

Why choose History of Art A Level:

As History of Art A Level offers an insight into the global culture of both past and present, it is relevant to a huge range of careers. Can you think of anything you pick up or look at today which does not have both words and images? Developing your visual literacy on this course will open your eyes to careers in Advertising, PR, Branding, Marketing, Fashion and Design as well as the wide range of careers in the Museum world such as conservation, exhibitions and education.



You will also get used to working through large quantities of research, selecting information, writing well and making team presentations. These skills set you up for careers in avenues such as diplomacy, consultancy and communication.

We hope you enjoy completing these tasks and look forward to you joining the course.

