

HOW TO ANALYSE A PAINTING LEVEL 2

If you follow the order and aspects given on this sheet you will have comprehensively analysed a painting. Such analysis will prepare you to meet requirements for 2.1 Discuss art works, 2.2 Examine subjects and themes, 2.3 Examine techniques used in art, and 2.4 Examine an art movement.

Note that not all the aspects are suitable to comment on for every painting. Select the aspects that seem most appropriate.

1. Recording the painting details

(your notes should always state painter, title and date)

Name of Painter: (e.g. Monet)

Title of the Work: (e.g. Rouen Cathedral in Full Sunlight)

Date it was painted: (e.g. 1874)

Size : (e.g. 84 x 63 cm)

Medium : (e.g. oil on canvas)

Stylistic Period: (e.g. Impressionism)

2. Subject and Theme

Describe the subject: (e.g. the artist Courbet meets his patron Monsieur Bruyas)

and/or Describe the content: (e.g. the stone facade of a Gothic Cathedral)

and/or Explain any ideas that the painting is expressing (political, social, personal) : (e.g. Courbet depicts himself as of equal status to his wealthy patron)

Identify underlying themes: (e.g. self-sacrifice, loyalty to nation in David's Brutus receiving the Bodies of his Sons)

Explain any background known about the work (using research to find out): (e.g. the format derives from a popular print called The Wandering Jew)

3. Composition (means the organisation of objects and/or figures within the painting)

(select only the most relevant of these)

Main organisational features:

Focal Point:

Geometrical shapes:

Symmetry?/Asymmetry?:

Methods used to lead the eye around the work:

Effects created by compositional devices: (e.g. stability, order, randomness, effect of drawing attention to particular parts of the work)

4. **Space/Depth** (how is the illusion of depth created?)

Linear perspective: (e.g. *Pissarro uses a row of trees which recede and lead the eye into the distance. The trees vanish at a point on the horizon*)

Aerial perspective: (the gradual lightening, haziness and bluish tinge that appears towards the horizon)

Overlapping of objects:

Distance from the picture plane : (sense of distance from the actual surface of the painting)

Effects created: (e.g. to create a sense of naturalism, to give an illusion of great distance, to limit picture space - in cases where recession is restricted)

5. **Colour**

Main Colours used :

Cool and Warm Colours:

Range of the palette : (means the number of colours used - a wide range or a limited palette)

Effects colour creates:

6. **Light**

Direction of the Light :

Chiaroscuro (contrasts of light and shadow) or Even Lighting :

Atmospheric Light (to create mood):

7. **Form and Effects**

Use of outline to define form:

Use of tonal modelling to create 3-d forms:

Static or moving forms:

8. **Technique**

Smooth finish:

or Thickly applied paint (impasto):

Effects: (e.g. implies texture of objects and garments such as marble, satin, creates energetic effects)

9. **Context** (*known through research and knowledge of style*)

Social/Historical:

Geographical/Cultural:

Ideological:

Artistic: Fits the artists' personal style:

Fits the style of the art period:

Subject and/or style are dependent on the commission: