Plympton Academy

GCSE Photography Handbook

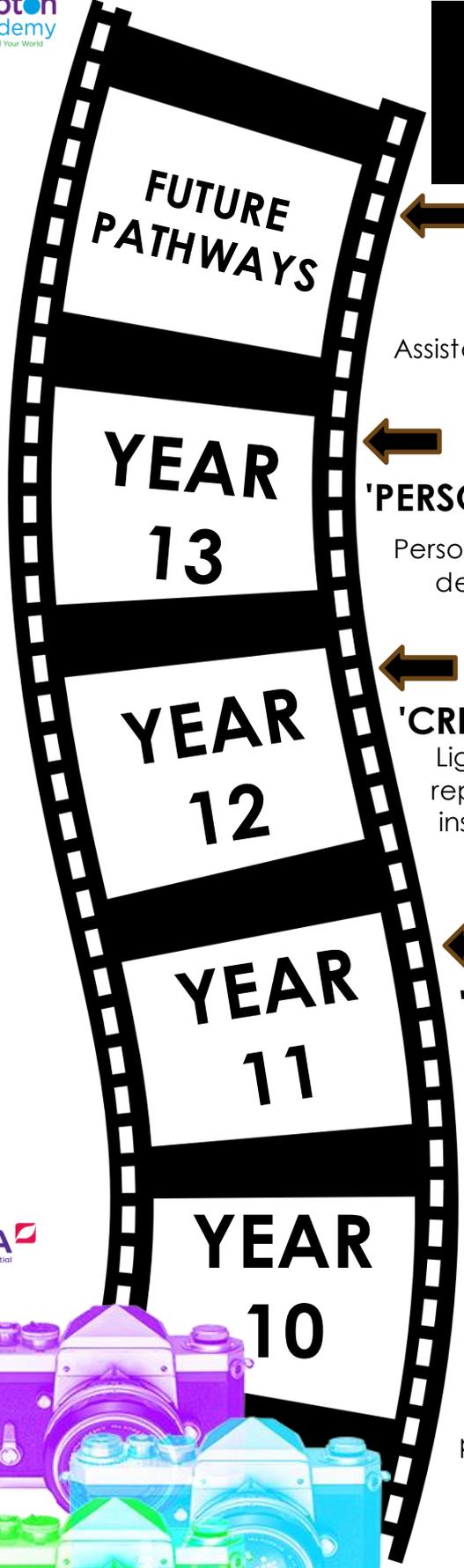**2025-2026**

Plympton
Academy
Expand Your World

Name:
Class:
Photography
Room: PP1

Plympton Academy
Expand Your World

Photography Learning Journey
KS4 and KS5

AO1-DEVELOP, AO2- REFINE, AO3-RECORD, AO4-PRESENT

FUTURE PATHWAYS

UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, EMPLOYMENT

Degree, Foundation Degree, Assistant role, re-toucher, in house photographer, content creator

YEAR 13

'PERSONAL INVESTIGATION & ESA'

Personal influence and inspiration, skill development and investigation

YEAR 12
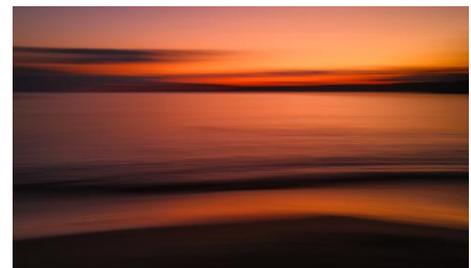
'CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY'

Lighting, mood, atmosphere, representation, influence and inspiration, skill development
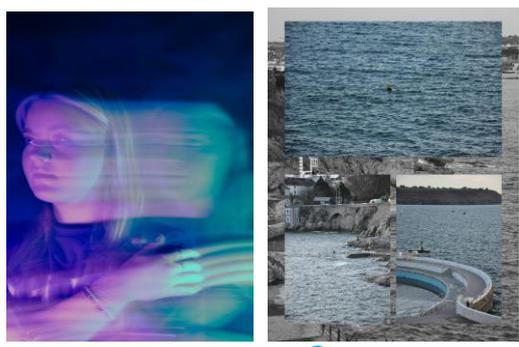
YEAR 11

'STRUCTURE & ESA'

Landscape, nature, multiple exposure, repetition, photographer analysis, alternative influence
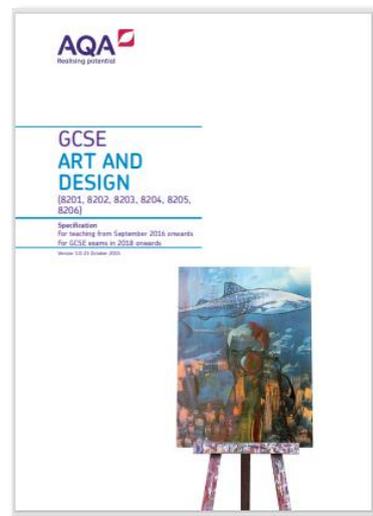
YEAR 10

'IDENTITY'

10 Rules of composition, photographer analysis, portraiture, studio, still life, digital and physical manipulation

AQA
Realising potential

COMMUNITY   COURAGE   COMPASSION   CURIOSITY

AO1: <u>Develop</u> ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.

AO1

DEVELOP

GCSE
ART AND
DESIGN
(8201, 8202, 8203, 8204, 8205, 8206)

Your AQA Assessment Objectives

Your coursework projects x2 (60% of your total grade) will be marked against these criteria

Your ESA (Your exam unit 40% of your total grade) will be marked against these criteria

AO2: <u>Refine</u> work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.

AO2

REFINE

AO3: <u>Record</u> ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.

AO3

RECORD

AO4: <u>Present</u> a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

AO4

PRESENT

JCQ Rules for GCSE Photography (Portfolios & Exams)

General Regulations for Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)
(From JCQ *Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*, 2024)
- **Supervision**:
- Work must be completed **under teacher supervision** (not entirely at home).
- Students may work independently, but teachers must monitor progress.
- **Authenticity**:
- Students must sign a declaration confirming the work is their own.
- Teachers must confirm authenticity before submitting marks.
- Plagiarism (e.g., downloading images without credit) is malpractice.
- **Use of Research / Secondary Sources**:
- Students can use existing images for inspiration, but they must **annotate and reference** clearly.
- Copying without acknowledgment is not allowed.
- **Teacher Feedback**:
- Teachers can guide, but not give detailed corrections or re-draft work for students.
- Feedback must remain **general, not prescriptive**.
- **Deadlines**:
- Schools must set and enforce internal deadlines to meet final submission dates.

Photography Portfolio Rules (AQA GCSE Art & Design: Photography)
- The **portfolio is worth 60%** of the GCSE.
- It must include:
- A sustained project evidencing the creative process.
- A selection of further work (experiments, trials, mini projects).
- Evidence must cover the **Assessment Objectives (AO1–AO4)**.
- Work may be presented in:
- Sketchbooks, mounted sheets, digital presentations, or a combination.

Externally Set Assignment (Exam Component)
- Worth **40% of GCSE**.
- Students get an **exam paper** (starting point/theme).
- A **preparation period** of several weeks → students develop work like a portfolio.
- A **10-hour supervised exam** (usually over 2 days) → students produce their final outcome.

Exam Conditions:
- Students must work in **formal exam conditions** (quiet, supervised, no phones).
- They can use their preparation materials.
- They must not receive help from teachers during the 10 hours.
- Only permitted materials/resources may be used.

JCQ Malpractice Rules (relevant to Photography)
- Plagiarism (uncredited copying of photos/artists).
- Collusion (working together on individual portfolio work).
- Using AI-generated images or stock photos without acknowledgment.
- Taking unauthorised materials into the exam.

Submission & Marking Rules
- Teachers mark portfolios using AQA assessment criteria.
- Marks are **internally standardised** within the centre.
- Marks and a sample of work are submitted to the exam board.
- All work must be available for moderation by the exam board.

JCQ Guidance on using AI- Students are not permitted to:
- Submit AI-generated images as original photographs.
- Rely on AI text/image generators (e.g., MidJourney, DALL·E) to create portfolio pieces.
- Use AI to write evaluations, analysis, or annotations

AQA | GCSE Photography Assessment Sheet

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Student Name:		Class:	

Marks	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3	Assessment objective 4
	Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.	Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.	Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.
24 Convincingly 23 Clearly 22 Adequately 21 Just	An exceptional ability to effectively develop ideas through creative and purposeful investigations. An exceptional ability to engage with and demonstrate critical understanding of sources.	An exceptional ability to thoughtfully refine ideas with discrimination. An exceptional ability to effectively select and purposefully experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	An exceptional ability to skillfully and rigorously record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and annotation, and any other appropriate means relevant to intentions, as work progresses.	An exceptional ability to competently present a personal and meaningful response and realise intentions with confidence and conviction. An exceptional ability to demonstrate understanding of visual language.
20 Convincingly 19 Clearly 18 Adequately 17 Just	A highly developed ability to effectively develop ideas through creative and purposeful investigations. A highly developed ability to demonstrate critical understanding of sources.	A highly developed ability to thoughtfully refine ideas. A highly developed ability to effectively select and purposefully experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	A highly developed ability to skillfully record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and annotation, and any other appropriate means relevant to intentions, as work progresses.	A highly developed ability to competently present a personal and meaningful response and realise intentions with confidence and conviction. A highly developed ability to demonstrate understanding of visual language.
16 Convincingly 15 Clearly 14 Adequately 13 Just	A consistent ability to effectively develop ideas through purposeful investigations. A consistent ability to demonstrate critical understanding of sources.	A consistent ability to thoughtfully refine ideas. A consistent ability to effectively select and purposefully experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	A consistent ability to skillfully record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and annotation, and any other appropriate means relevant to intentions, as work progresses.	A consistent ability to competently present a personal and meaningful response and realise intentions. A consistent ability to demonstrate understanding of visual language.
12 Convincingly 11 Clearly 10 Adequately 9 Just	A moderate ability to effectively develop ideas through purposeful investigations. A moderate ability to demonstrate critical understanding of sources.	A moderate ability to thoughtfully refine ideas. A moderate ability to effectively select and purposefully experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	A moderate ability to skillfully record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and annotation, and any other appropriate means relevant to intentions, as work progresses.	A moderate ability to competently present a personal and meaningful response and realise intentions. A moderate ability to demonstrate understanding of visual language.
8 Convincingly 7 Clearly 6 Adequately 5 Just	Some ability to develop ideas through purposeful investigations. Some ability to demonstrate critical understanding of sources.	Some ability to refine ideas. Some ability to select and experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	Some ability to record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and annotation, and any other appropriate means relevant to intentions, as work progresses.	Some ability to present a personal and meaningful response and realise intentions. Some ability to demonstrate understanding of visual language.
4 Convincingly 3 Clearly 2 Adequately 1 Just	Minimal ability to develop ideas through investigations. Minimal ability to demonstrate critical understanding of sources.	Minimal ability to refine ideas. Minimal ability to select and experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	Minimal ability to record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and annotation, and any other appropriate means relevant to intentions, as work progresses.	Minimal ability to present a personal and meaningful response and realise intentions. Minimal ability to demonstrate understanding of visual language.
0	Work not worthy of any marks.			

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total

AQA GCSE Photography Assessment Mark Sheet

Plympton Academy — Expand Your World

Student Name: _____   **Class:** _____

Marks	Assessment objective 1 — Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.	Assessment objective 2 — Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	Assessment objective 3 — Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.	Assessment objective 4 — Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.
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8 Convincingly 7 Clearly 6 Adequately 5 Just	Some ability to develop ideas through purposeful investigations. Some ability to demonstrate critical understanding of sources.	Some ability to refine ideas. Some ability to select and experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	Some ability to record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and annotation, and any other appropriate means relevant to intentions, as work progresses.	Some ability to present a personal and meaningful response and realise intentions. Some ability to demonstrate understanding of visual language.
4 Convincingly 3 Clearly 2 Adequately 1 Just	Minimal ability to develop ideas through investigations. Minimal ability to demonstrate critical understanding of sources.	Minimal ability to refine ideas. Minimal ability to select and experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.	Minimal ability to record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and annotation, and any other appropriate means relevant to intentions, as work progresses.	Minimal ability to present a personal and meaningful response and realise intentions. Minimal ability to demonstrate understanding of visual language.
0	Work not worthy of any marks.			

To do List:
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WWW (What Went Well):

Next Steps:
Your priority must be to complete any tasks named on your To Do List.

Personal Target:

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total

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CAMERA SETTINGS

SHUTER PRIORITY

APERTURE PRIORITY

PROGRAM

GUIDE

MANUAL

AUTO

EFFECTS

AUTO FLASH OFF

NIGHT PORTRAIT

PORTRAIT

SPORTS

CLOSE UP

How to set up a Camera

If you have chosen the D3200 or the D3500, hold the button on the lens when initially turning the lens, do so until you hear a 'click'.
If you have chosen the D90, D3100 or the D7100, simply turn the lens.

To turn on the camera, flick the switch above the handle. Turn it right to turn it on, and turn it left to turn it off.
(make sure there is a battery and SD card in the camera)

Once your camera is on, select the mode, using the dial on the top right of the camera.
Turn the dial until the mode you want to use aligns with the white line (located to the left of the dial)

CHANGING THE CAMERA BATTERY

BATTERY DOOR ON THE BOTTOM OF THE CAMERA, MOVE HOLD CLIP TO RELEASE

PUT BATTERIES ON CHANGE:
FLASHING LIGHT= CHARGING
SOLID LIGHT=CHARGED

CHECK BATTERY FIT FOR YOUR CAMERA

HOW TO PUT THE SD CARD IN THE CAMERA

1. LABEL FACES OUT
2. CUT EDGE FACES DOWN

SD CARD

HOW TO GUIDE.....COMPUTER/PRINTING
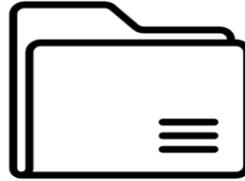
How to find your work:

- ❑ Teams
- ❑ Files
- ❑ Student Work
- ❑ Find your folder
- ❑ Click on your PowerPoint

How to upload your images:

- ❑ Insert the SD card into the card reader
- ❑ Insert the card reader into the USB port on the right hand end of the screen
- ❑ Select file explorer
- ❑ Select Nikon
- ❑ DCIM
- ❑ Look through the folders to find your images
- ❑ Select the first image, hold shift and select the last image
- ❑ Right click and select copy
- ❑ This PC
- ❑ One Drive
- ❑ New folder-Name the folder linked to your shoot
- ❑ Click into the folder
- ❑ Right click and paste the images into your One Drive

How to print: PowerPoint

- ❑ File
- ❑ Print
- ❑ Select Printer MFD V000022
- ❑ Select the slide/s you want to print
- ❑ Select the number of copies
- ❑ Click print
- ❑ Collect work from the printer

How to print: File Explorer

- ❑ File Explorer
- ❑ This PC
- ❑ One Drive
- ❑ Select your folder
- ❑ Select the images you want to print
- ❑ Use ctrl to select individual images
- ❑ Hold shift to select the whole group of images
- ❑ When the images are selected- Right click
- ❑ Select show more options
- ❑ Print
- ❑ Check you have selected printer MFD000022
- ❑ Check the paper size is A4
- ❑ Check what document type you want to print (Contact sheet is the last option)
- ❑ Select print
- ❑ Collect your prints from the printer

Definition:

Leading Lines- This is when lines that naturally occur as an element in an image or shot, draw the viewer's eye through and into the image. The lines don't always have to be straight.

Effects:

Leading Lines- Draw the viewer's eye into and around the image.

Leading Lines
10 Rules of Composition

Examples:
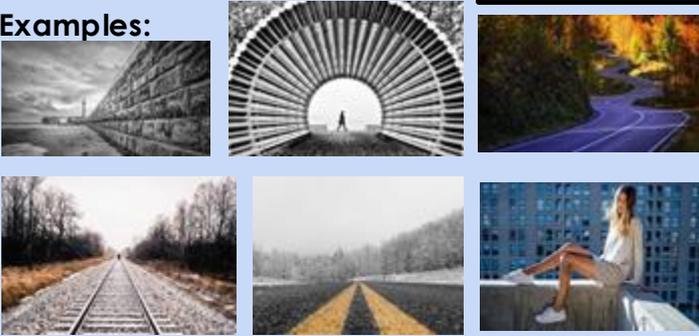
In action:

Leading Lines are an integral part of the image. The photographer has shown great consideration when choosing the viewpoint, to capture the model centred within the archway, emphasising the leading lines of the tunnel surface, drawing the viewer's eye to the focal point of the image.

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Definition:

Rule of Thirds-This is when you imagine the image is divided into 9 equal sections (Thirds both horizontally and vertically) and some of the elements on the image sit along the lines of the thirds.

Effects:

Rule of Thirds- Enables the viewer's eye to find key elements of the image in aesthetically pleasing positions within the image.
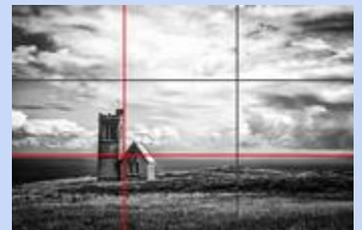
Rule of Thirds
10 Rules of Composition

Examples:
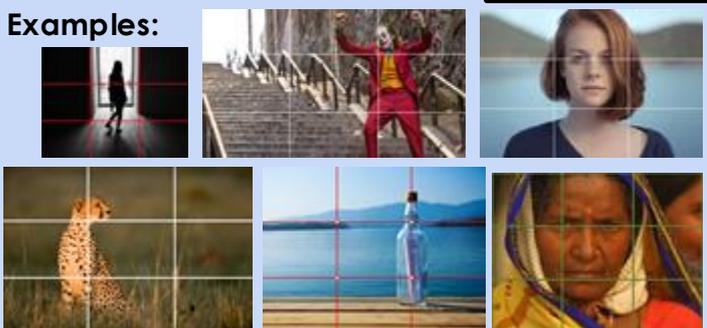
In action:

The photographer has carefully positioned the model within the image to capture the lighting highlighting the features of her face. The composition technique, the rule of thirds has been used to draw the viewer's attention to the features from the composed position.

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Definition:

Balancing Elements-This is when elements of the image balance against each other, usually one larger element balance with a smaller focal element.

Effects:

Balancing elements- Highlights two key features of an image through their position.

Balancing Elements
10 Rules of Composition

Examples:
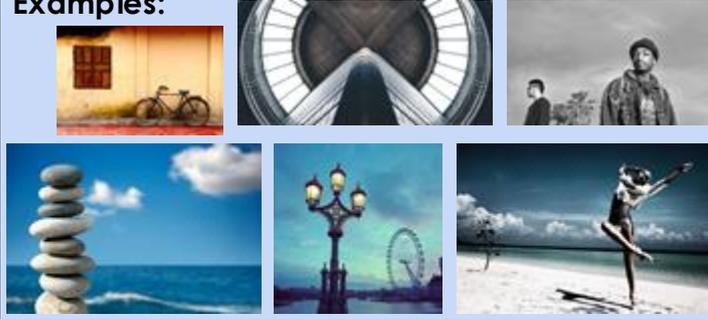
In action:

The Photographer has used the viewpoint to strengthen their use of balancing elements within the image. The position of the models highlights the important of both figures, and how they create the focal point with the image.

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Definition:

Symmetry and Pattern-This is just like in maths when elements in an image look like they have been reflected in a mirror. Patterns- This is elements of the image that form patterns or disrupt patterns.

Effects:

Symmetry and patterns- draw the viewer's eye to the image with aesthetically pleasing elements or disruptive elements.

Symmetry and Pattern
10 Rules of Composition

Examples:

In action:

The photographer has created a tension in the image through the use of the pink and white life ring. Against a background of the yellow and white it compromises the pattern and disrupts the symmetrical pattern that can be seen within other areas of the image.

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Definition:

Viewpoint- This is when elements of interest have been photographed from a different viewpoint, this could be from above, below, side view etc.

Effects:

Viewpoint- The viewpoint can increase or decrease the emphasis on the subject, adding dimension and complexity to the image

Viewpoint
10 Rules of Composition

Examples:

In action:

The viewpoint has completely altered the viewers perspective of the image. The photographer has enabled the viewer to explore the model's mood and emotion by capturing the stature and position of the model. By photographing the model from below it enables the viewer to see the power held by the model.

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Definition:

Depth-Foreground, Mid-ground, Background- This is where it is clear to see three clear depths in an image. The distance, the background. The elements in the middle, the mid-ground and the elements closest in the image, the Foreground.

Effects:

Depth- Draws the viewers eye through the levels or layers of the image.

Depth
10 Rules of Composition

Examples:

In action:

Depth has been shown and one of the most important compositional feature of this image. The photographer has used the natural layers of the landscape to draw the viewer to the image. The sunlight that lays on the mid-ground sections enables to view to look deeper within the image.

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Definition:

Background- This is when the background within an images forms a key feature or enables an important element to be emphasised.

Effects:

Background- Enables key features of an image to emphasised or isolated.

Background
10 Rules of Composition

Examples:

In action:

The vibrant colour and the subtle pattern of the background enable the viewer to divert attention to the feature of the model within the image. The isolation created by the background forces the attention to the left-hand side to find the disruption to the visual line and seek the contrast of colour.

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Definition:

Framing-This is when an element in the image has been used to frame and showcase another element.

Effects:

Framing- Elements of the image feature within a frame and are Showcased.

Framing
10 Rules of Composition

Examples:

In action:

Alongside the level of contrast within the image the isolation of the key feature is one of the most important compositional techniques used. The framing of the dancer in the dark archway, allows the viewers eye to seek the focal point whilst still experiencing this snapshot of recorded movement.

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Cropping
10 Rules of Composition

Definition:

Cropping- This can be done in the camera by zooming in and out of a shot or in post-production (editing) using photo-editing software like photoshop.

Effects:

Cropping- Illuminates additional noise within an image
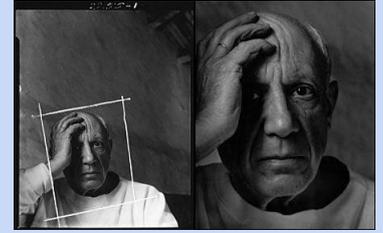
Examples:

In action:

The significant change of mood and intensity within the image has occurred during the cropping of this image. The model's connection with the viewer has been strengthened with the removal of the additional background space to force the close up, and uncomfortable interaction with the model

Experimentation
10 Rules of Composition

Definition:

Experimentation- This is when the photographer experiments with elements in the image or with the way they use the camera to capture the elements or how they edit the image.

Effects:

Experimentation-How the creative decisions of the photographer effect the outcome of the image produced.

Examples:

In action:

The photographer has embedded their own creativity within the image by experimenting and exploring movement. The composition has been altered by the exploration of lengthening the shutter speed, capturing the flow of the water as it moves

NIKON DSLR DIAGRAM

1	Mode dial	2	Release-mode selector	3	Information button
4	Exposure compensation button/Aperture button/Flash compensation button	5	Shutter-release button	6	Power switch
7	AF-assist illuminator/ Self-timer lamp/ Red-eye reduction lamp	8	Accessory shoe (for optional flash units)	9	Flash mode button/ Flash compensation button
10	Microphone	11	Function button	12	Lens release button
13	Playback button	14	Menu button	15	Thumbnail button/Playback zoom out button/Help button
16	Playback zoom in button	17	Information edit button	18	Viewfinder eyepiece
19	Diopter adjustment control	20	AE-L/AF-L button/Protect button	21	Command dial
22	Live View switch	23	Movie-record button	24	Multi selector
25	OK button	26	Delete button	27	Speaker
28	Monitor				

How to create a Photographer study or manipulations

Presenting your knowledge and understanding of Photographers work is an integral part of your evidence in your portfolio. To create successful photographer studies, you will need to follow the check list below.

Title

Image

Annotations

Annotations

Image

Image

Annotations
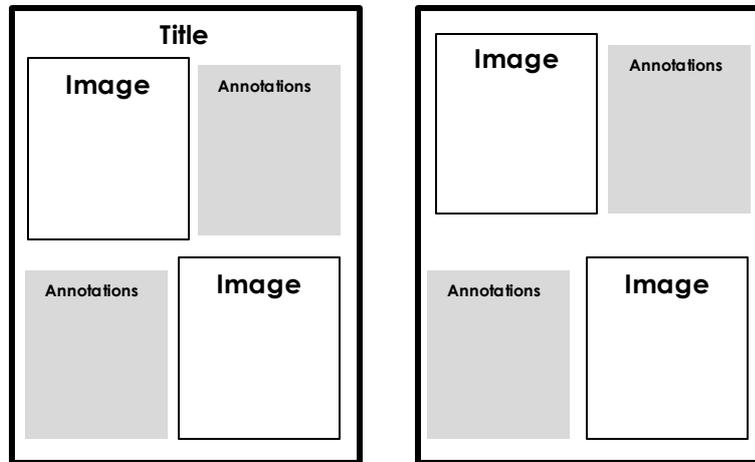
Annotations

Image

Your photographer study must include:

- ❑ Two A4 pages
- ❑ Title size 24 (Photographer's name)
- ❑ Contain 4 images of a photographer's work
- ❑ Annotation to accompany each images

Possible sentence starters:

- This work has inspired me to…
- I will experiment with…
- I could adapt this technique by…
- I think this image is successful because…
- I find the use of … effective because…
- If I were to recreate this image, I would…
- This image suggests…
- The mood of the photo is…
- It could represent/communicate…
- The audience might feel…
- The photographer achieves this effect by…
- A key feature of this image is…
- The use of … (depth of field/contrast/leading lines) creates…
- The photograph shows…
- The photographer uses… (lighting/angle/colour/texture)…
- The composition draws attention to…

- ❑ Have you **described** what you see?
- ❑ Have you **analysed** techniques and visual elements?
- ❑ Have you **interpreted** the meaning or mood?
- ❑ Have you **evaluated** what works well?
- ❑ Have you **linked** it to your own project?

Creating A Shoot Plan

A shoot plan is an integral part of the planning process in Photography. Planning helps to secure your marks as it evidences your thought process. You need to create a template that you can use each time you complete a shoot plan. Use the checklist below to make sure you have included all information needed.

Shoot Plan:

- ☐ Link to photographer
- ☐ Link to Project title
- ☐ Concept
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Time
- ☐ Composition
- ☐ Lighting type and style
- ☐ Equipment
- ☐ Camera settings
- ☐ Model
- ☐ Props
- ☐ Make-up and Costume
- ☐ Manipulation plans
- ☐ Problems I may encounter
- ☐ Images of inspiration
- ☐ Drawing/ sketch of images trying to produce
- ☐ Lighting diagrams
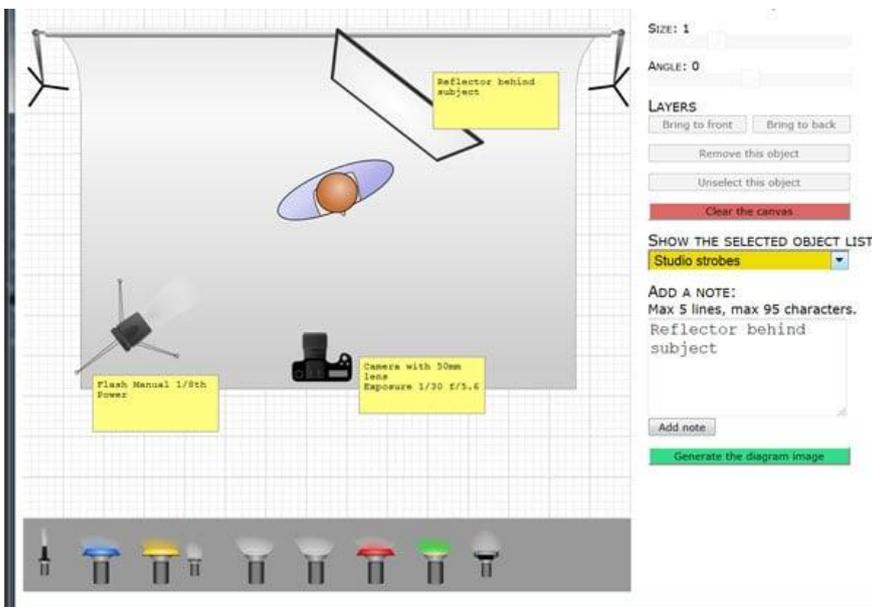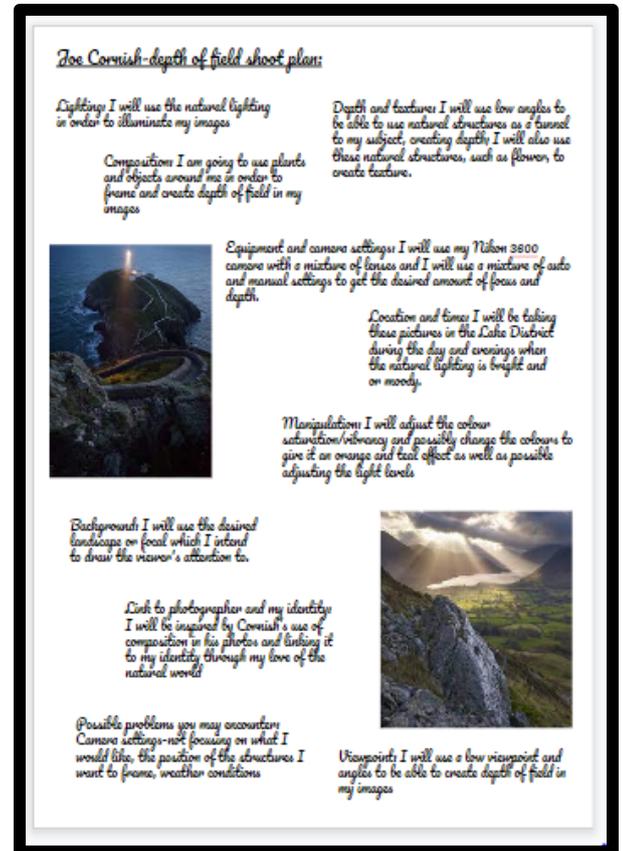
Shoot plans hints and tips:

- ☐ Check your presentation- Font and text size 12
- ☐ Add Images to show your ideas
- ☐ Use technical language
- ☐ Always write in full sentences
- ☐ Make it personal to your shoot and ideas

HOW TO ANNOTATE YOUR CONTACT SHEETS

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Follow these steps to annotate your contact sheets:

1. Add the date and time of your shoot to the top of your contact sheet.
2. Title your shoot linking it to your shoot plan, ideas or photographer's study. Add this to the top of your contact sheet.
3. Put a big cross through any images that are unusable. Images that are unusable are blurry, wrong subject.
4. Over Exposed images add a single line through the image with over exp.
5. Under exposed images add a single through the image with under exp.
6. Cropping- Add crop lines to 4-6 images for your contact sheet
7. Composition- Add rules of composition to 4-6 images
8. Editing plans- Add keywords linked to your editing plans for 4-6 images this is normally for your best images.
9. Final 4-6 highlighted images the best from your shoot
10. Camera settings- Add them to the top of your contact sheet if you know them.

Contact Sheets should be printed 5 x 6 30 images per page

How to annotate your contact sheet checklist:

❑ Date and Time
❑ Title of the shoot
❑ Unusable images
❑ Over Exposed images
❑ Under exposed images
❑ Cropping
❑ Composition
❑ Editing plans
❑ Final 4-6 highlighted
❑ Camera settings
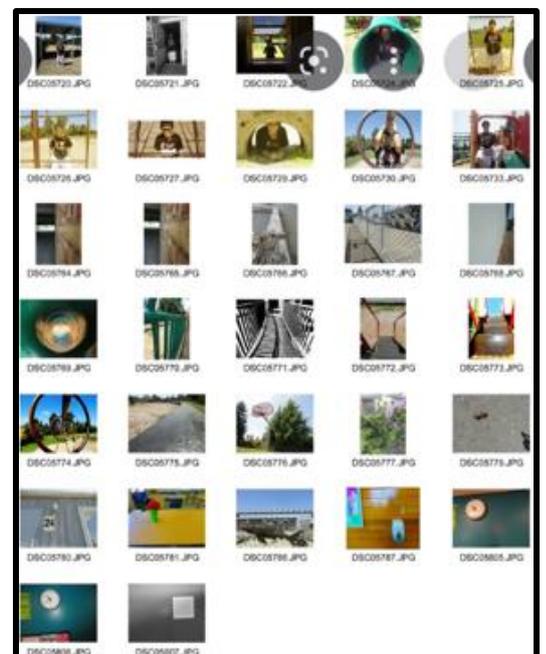
Drawing in Photography

Why Drawing is Important in Photography

Even though this is a photography course, drawing has to be included as part of the AQA GCSE Photography specification:

Drawing helps you to:

- Plan your ideas and compositions before you take photos.
- Show how you are thinking visually.
- Record textures, shapes, and details that may inspire your shoots.
- Communicate ideas that are not easy to capture with a camera.
- Strengthen your portfolio by showing your creative process.

Remember: **Drawings don't have to be perfect art pieces** — they are part of your *thinking and planning*.

How to Use Drawing in Your Work

- **Thumbnail sketches** – small, quick drawings to explore composition and framing.
- **Storyboard panels** – if planning a sequence of images or a photoshoot.
- **Diagram sketches** – show lighting setups, camera positions, or editing ideas.
- **Mixed media** – combine photographs with drawn marks, overlays, or collage.
- **Texture/Detail studies** – draw close-ups of patterns, lines, or forms you want to photograph.

Tips for Strong Annotation alongside your drawing

- Use **Tier 2 words** (analyse, refine, develop, evaluate).
- Use **Tier 3 words** (aperture, composition, exposure, contrast).
- Always explain your **intentions**: *Why did you make this choice? What effect does it create?*

Example:

- *I sketched out four possible compositions. I chose the second because the use of leading lines draws the viewer's eye to the subject. My photo shoot developed from this plan.*

Balancing Photography and Drawing

- Aim to include **at least one sketch/storyboards** for each photographer.
- Use drawing to **support** your photography, not replace it.
- Mix images and sketches on the same page to show your creative journey.

Physical Manipulation Techniques for Photography

Physical manipulation is an important form of experimentation, once you have completed a shoot, you will need to explore a minimum of one form of physical manipulation techniques. Across your project explore a **range** of techniques.

Physical Manipulation Ideas

Cutting & Collage
- Cutting and reassembling images into new compositions.
- Layering photographs with magazine/text/image cutouts.
- Creating surreal or abstract effects by combining multiple images.

Scratching & Distressing
- Scratching into a printed photo with a blade or sandpaper.
- Crumpling or tearing the paper surface for texture.
- Burning or singeing edges (safely, under supervision).

Painting & Drawing Over Prints
- Adding acrylic, ink, or watercolour washes onto prints.
- Drawing lines, patterns, or textures with pen or marker.
- Using mixed media (charcoal, pastel, chalk) to enhance mood.

Photomontage & Layering
- Overlapping transparent prints (acetates, tracing paper).
- Printing on unusual surfaces (fabric, cardboard, textured paper).
- Layering multiple exposures by hand.

Stitching & Textiles
- Sewing into photographs with thread, yarn, or embroidery.
- Combining fabric textures with printed photos.

3D Manipulation
- Folding, bending, or curling prints into sculptural forms.
- Creating pop-up or layered constructions.
- Mounting onto objects or mixed materials.

Transfers
- Image transfer using gel medium or acetate.
- Printing onto unusual surfaces (wood, glass, metal).

Overlay & Transparency
- Printing onto acetate and layering over other images.
- Using tracing paper or tissue layers for soft/ghosted effects.

Mixed Media Experiments
- Combining photography with collage, paint, or text.
- Blending traditional art techniques with photographic imagery.

ANNOTATING - MY WORK
What to write when annotating my own images or manipulations

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I have created:
- How have you used your photographs?
- Have you used any other artists/photographers for inspiration?
- What materials have you used?
- How have they helped your work?
- What is the subject matter of the image?
- Is there a theme? What is it?
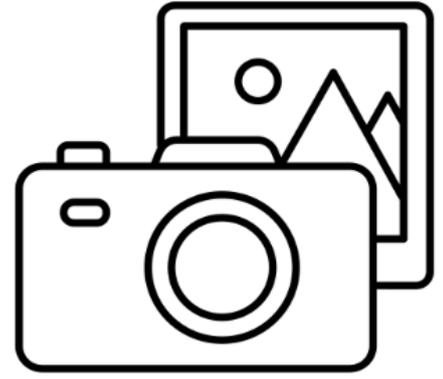
Formal Elements:
- **Line:** Are there any lines in the image? How are they used?
- **Shape:** Are there any shapes in the image? How are they used?
- **Form:** Is there any form in the image? How has this been created?
- **Texture:** Is there any texture in the image? How has this been created?

Personal Comments:
- What do you like/dislike about this image and why?
- How does this image compare to other pieces that you have created, if so how/why does it compare to them.
- Does this image link to other photographers/artists work that you know of, if so how/why does it link to their work.
- How would you evaluate this image?

Aesthetic Comments:
- **Composition:** Describe how the image is arranged.
- **Lighting:** Describe what lighting has been used.
- **Viewpoint/Vantage Point:** Describe where/how was the camera positioned when taking these images.
- **Focus/Depth of Field:** Describe what parts of these images are clear or blurry and why.

Technical Comments:
- **Camera Settings (ISO, Shutter Speed, Aperture):** What settings did you use on your camera and why did you use them.
- **Editing Software (Photoshop):** Have these images been edited using Photoshop or another editing software package. If so describe what tools were used and why.

Tips For Annotating Your Own Work

Describe Your Intentions
- Clearly explain what you set out to achieve with your photograph. Mention your inspiration, the theme, and what you wanted the viewer to notice.

Analyse Technical Choices
- Discuss your camera settings (e.g., ISO, aperture, shutter speed) and editing techniques. Explain why you chose them and how they affect the final image.

Reflect on Composition
- Comment on how you arranged elements in your photo (rule of thirds, leading lines, focal point, etc.) and how this impacts the viewer's attention.

Evaluate Strengths and Areas to Improve
- Be honest about what works well in your image and what could be improved. Suggest how you might develop the idea further or try different techniques next time.

Link to Artists or Photographers
- Reference any artists or photographers who inspired your work. Explain how their style or techniques influenced your image and what you learned from them.

ANNOTATING – A Photographers Work

What to write when annotating the work of photographers/artists

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Expand Your World

How has the photographer/artist used:
- Shape?
- Colour?
- Texture?
- Line?
- How has the image been composed? (Rule of thirds, leading lines, etc.)
- Is there a focal point in the image? If so, where is it and why is it important?

Personal Comments:
- What do you like/dislike about this photograph and why?
- How would you use this photograph to inspire your own work and why?
- Does this image give you any ideas for creating your own work? If so, what are they?
- How would you develop this image?

Subject/Theme Comments:
- What is the subject matter of the photograph? (Portrait, landscape, still life)
- What message or meaning does the photograph convey to you as a viewer?

Technical Comments:
- Describe how lighting has been used:
- Natural light
- Artificial light
- Combination of both
- Directional lighting
- Diffused lighting
- High key/low key lighting

Aesthetic Comments:
- What is the mood/atmosphere in the image and why?
- Does this image link to any other artists' work or art movements/styles that you've studied?
- Does it remind you of anything else you've seen before (other photographs/artworks)?

Personal Story or Experience:
- Does this photograph remind you of any personal story or experience you've had in your life?

Tips For Annotating A Photographer's/ Artist's Work

Describe What You See
- Start by objectively describing the image: subject matter, composition, and key visual elements (e.g., colour, light, texture).

Identify Techniques and Style
- Note any distinctive techniques (e.g., use of lighting, camera angles, editing) and describe the artist's style or approach.

Interpret Meaning and Mood
- Suggest what message, mood, or story the artist might be communicating. Use evidence from the image to support your ideas.

Make Connections
- Link the work to art movements, genres, or other artists you've studied. Explain similarities or influences you notice.

Reflect on Personal Response
- Share your own opinion: What do you like or dislike? How does the image inspire or influence your own photography?

GCSE Photography
High Frequency Annotation Words

AO1: Develop ideas (informed by artists/photographers)

- Inspired by
- Influence / Influenced
- Style
- Approach
- Technique
- Context
- Mood
- Concept
- Symbolism
- Message

AO2: Refine work (experimenting with media/techniques)

- Experiment
- Adjust
- Refine
- Alter
- Edit
- Crop
- Exposure
- Contrast
- Lighting
- Focus
- Depth
- Texture
- Layer
- Combine

AO3: Record ideas, observations, insights

- Observe / Observation
- Detail
- Shape
- Line
- Colour
- Pattern
- Composition
- Framing
- Perspective
- Angle
- Subject
- Setting
- Record
- Capture

AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response

- Present
- Final outcome
- Meaning
- Personal
- Narrative
- Effective
- Successful
- Intentions
- Communicate
- Express
- Response
- Interpretation
- Evaluate

Useful Linking Phrases for Annotation

- *This photograph was inspired by…*
- *I experimented with…*
- *The composition emphasises…*
- *The lighting creates…*
- *This links to my artist research because…*
- *I refined my work by…*
- *My intention was to…*
- *This outcome is successful because…*

GCSE Photography Vocabulary

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Tier 2 Vocabulary (academic, analytical, evaluative)
(Useful across subjects, but powerful in written annotations and evaluations)

- Analyse / Analysis
- Interpret / Interpretation
- Evaluate / Evaluation
- Develop / Development
- Refine / Refinement
- Explore / Exploration
- Experiment / Experimentation
- Contrast
- Emphasise
- Impact
- Successful / Effective
- Intention
- Outcome
- Narrative
- Perspective (as viewpoint or opinion)
- Symbolism
- Represent / Representation
- Influence / Influenced
- Inspired by
- Communicate / Communication
- Express / Expression

Example Sentence Starters Using Vocabulary
- *My work was **inspired by** the photographer…* (Tier 2)
- *I experimented with **aperture** and **shutter speed** to control **depth of field**…* (Tier 3)
- *The use of **negative space** helps to **emphasise** the subject…* (Tier 2 + Tier 3)
- *I refined my outcome by **cropping** the image to create **balance** in the composition…*

Tier 3 Vocabulary (Photography-specific, technical)
(Specialist terms students should apply when describing and explaining their work)
Camera & Technical

Photographic language
- Aperture
- Shutter speed
- ISO
- Exposure
- Depth of field
- Focus / Out of focus
- Lens
- Tripod
- Framing
- Zoom / Wide-angle / Macro

Composition
- Rule of thirds
- Leading lines
- Negative space
- Symmetry / Asymmetry
- Cropping
- Foreground / Midground / Background
- Point of view (POV)
- Angle (high, low, eye-level, bird's-eye, worm's-eye)
- Balance

Visual Elements
- Line
- Shape
- Form
- Tone
- Texture
- Colour
- Pattern
- Contrast
- Composition

Editing & Processes
- Manipulation
- Filter
- Retouch
- Montage
- Collage
- Layering
- Cropping
- Digital editing
- Photoshop / Lightroom tools (if named in context)

Concepts & Context
- Genre (portrait, landscape, still life, documentary, abstract, fashion, etc.)
- Style
- Movement (e.g., Surrealism, Modernism)
- Context
- Audience
- Message
- Theme

COMPOSITION

- Negative space
- Focal point
- Foreground / Background
- Rule of Thirds
- Framing
- Leading Lines
- Balancing Elements
- Symmetry and Patterns
- Viewpoint
- Depth
- Cropping
- Experimentation
- Arrangement
- Layout
- Structure
- Position
- Landscape / Portrait
- Horizontal / Vertical / Angled

LIGHTING

- Artificial / Natural
- Gentle / Harsh
- Bright / Dark
- Hazy
- Shadow / Highlight
- Tone / Contrast
- Side lighting / Top lighting / Bottom lighting
- Back lighting / Front lighting
- Soft light / Hard light
- Directional
- Flash
- Luminous
- Glash
- Mixed
- Soft

PHOTOGRAPHY KEYWORDS

MOOD

- Feeling / Atmosphere
- Alive / Exciting / Energetic
- Disturbing / Chilling
- Exposed / Intimate
- Happy / Peaceful / Calm
- Refreshing / Fresh
- Humorous / Positive
- Sad / Depressed-Tearful
- Stillness
- Thought-provoking
- Vertical *(likely a misplacement—consider using under Composition)*

TEXTURE

- Coarse / Rough / Fine
- Gloss / Matte
- Thin / Soft / Flat / Smooth
- Sharp / Blunt / Hard
- Delicate / Fuzzy / Hairy
- Reflective / Irregular / Frosted

TECHNICAL

- Aperture
- Manual
- Focus
- Depth of Field
- Studio Lighting
- Back Lit
- Side Lighting
- Aperture Priority
- Exposure
- Overexposed
- Underexposed
- F-stop
- ISO
- Noise
- Histogram
- Noise reduction
- Pixelate crop
- Shutter Speed
- White Balance
- Zoom
- Vignette
- Slow Shutter speed
- Fast Shutter speed

COSTUME AND MAKE-UP

- Bold
- Bright
- Contemporary
- Striking
- Texture
- Key Features
- Focal Point
- Contortion
- Positioning
- Soft
- Complimentary
- Enhancement
- Dense
- Placement
- Flowing
- Historical
- Luxurious
- Layers

MODEL AND PROPS

- Pose
- Position
- Placement
- Collection
- Focal Point
- Structure
- Construction Lines
- Texture
- Leading Lines
- Perspective
- Background
- Pattern
- Depth
- Historical
- Contemporary
- Reality
- Culture
- Chemistry
- Contrast
- Subtle
- Striking
- Complimentary

PHOTOGRAPHY KEYWORDS

MANIPULATION

- Layers
- Blending
- Combining
- Edit
- Enhance
- Lighten
- Darken
- Highlight
- Present
- Vintage
- Overlay
- Black and White
- Textures
- Saturation
- Wrap
- Truth

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Ideas For Annotation

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Describing the Image (What do you see?)
- The main subject of this photo is...
- I used ... (aperture, shutter speed, ISO) to create...
- The composition is effective because...
- The most noticeable detail/feature is...

Making Links (How does it connect?)
- This idea was inspired by... (photographer/artist/context).
- It relates to my project theme because...
- This connects to my previous shoot by...
- I developed this idea from my earlier experiment with...

Explaining Choices (Why did you do it this way?)
- I chose this angle/lighting/composition because...
- I wanted to create a mood/atmosphere of...
- I edited the image to emphasise...
- My intention was to communicate ...

Evaluating (What worked / what didn't?)
- The most successful part of this image is... because...
- A weakness of this image is...
- I think the photo could be improved by...
- If I repeated this shoot, I would change...

Reflecting on Process (What did you learn?)
- I discovered that using ... created the effect of...
- I learned how to control ... (lighting, depth of field, composition).
- This shoot helped me to understand...
- The editing process allowed me to

Talking About Impact (How does it affect the viewer?)
- This image creates a sense of... (isolation, movement, energy, calm).
- The use of colour/contrast/lighting makes the viewer feel...
- The photograph tells a story about...
- The image challenges the viewer to think about...

Quick Annotation Formula (to avoid "I like it")
- **What?** – Describe what you did.
- **Why?** – Explain the reason for your choice.
- **Effect?** – State the impact/result.
- **Next?** – Suggest how you will refine or develop it.
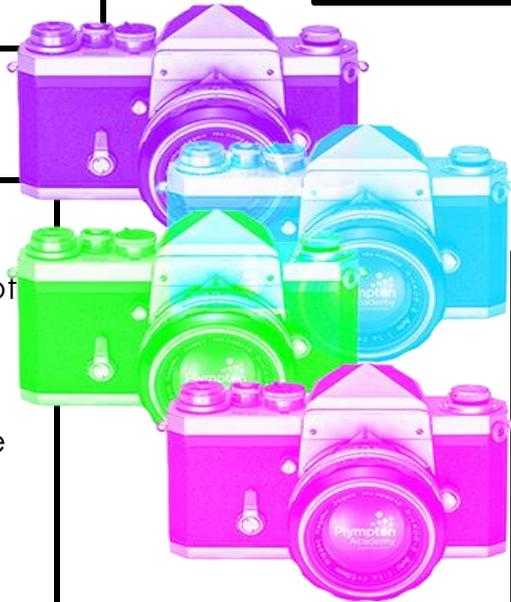
Four Ways Forward

Purpose of This Task
Presenting multiple ideas shows your ability to:
- Develop concepts (AO1)
- Explore techniques and refine approaches (AO2)
- Reflect and evaluate (AO3)
- Plan meaningful outcomes (AO4)

Structure for Each Idea
Use this format to present each idea clearly:

1. Title of the Idea
Give your concept a short, punchy title (e.g., "Urban Isolation" or" Nature Reclaimed").

2. Concept Summary
- What is the idea about?
- What message or mood do youwant to convey?
- Why does this idea interest you?

3. Visual Style & Techniques
- What kind of imagery will you use(e.g., portrait, abstract, documentary)?
- What camera techniques or editing methods will you explore?
- Will you use colour, black and white, mixed media?

4. Influences & Inspiration
- Which photographers or artists inspired this idea?
- Include 1–2 images or references and explain how they connect to yourconcept.

5. Location, Props, and Subjects
- Where will you shoot?
- What will you need (e.g., models, props, lighting)?
- Are there any practical challenges?

6. Strengths & Risks
- What makes this idea strong?
- What could be difficult or limiting?
- How might you overcome those challenges?

Tips for High-Level Presentation
- **Be Visual**: Include mood boards, sketches, or test shots.
- **Be Reflective**: Show how each idea links to your theme and personal interests.
- **Be Comparative**: Briefly compare the ideas — which is most ambitious, personal, or technically challenging?
- **Be Honest**: It's okay to say an idea might not work — that shows maturity and planning.

What Examiners Want to See:
- Originality and depth of thought
- Clear links to your research and theme
- Evidence of planning and refinement
- A sense of personal voice and intention

Four Ways Forward

How To Create An Image Collage
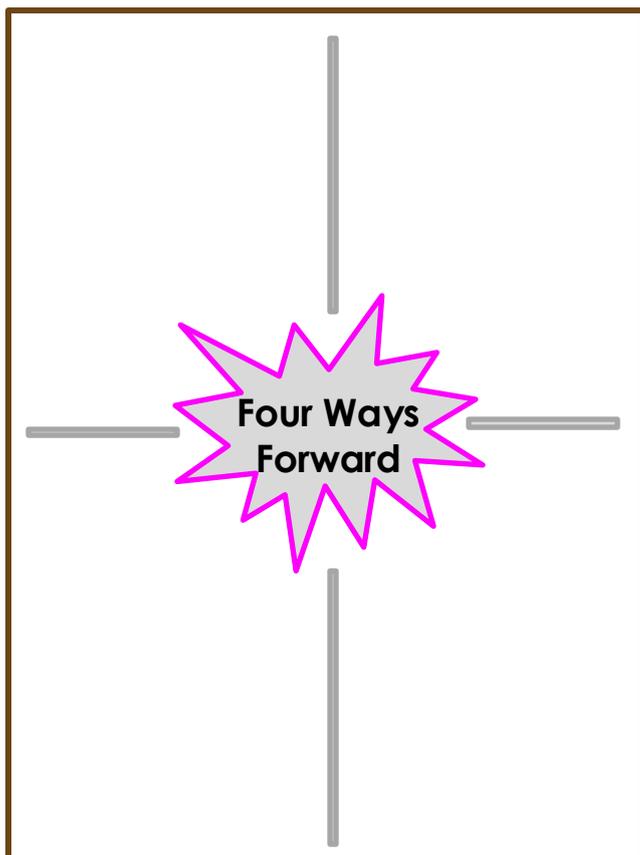
Creating a Successful Image Collage: AQA GCSE Photography Guide

What Is an Image Collage?

An image collage is a composition made by combining multiple photographs into one unified piece. It can be digital or physical, abstract or narrative, and is a powerful way to explore themes, emotions, and visual storytelling.

Why Collage Works Well for GCSE

- It shows **experimentation** and **refinement** (AO2)
- It allows you to **develop ideas** and explore **composition** (AO1)
- It's a great way to **record observations** and **layer meaning** (AO3)
- It can be a **personal and resolved final outcome** (AO4)

Planning Your Collage

1. **Choose a Clear Theme**
- Pick a concept that lends itself to layering
- Make sure your collage connects to your research and book work.

2. **Select Your Images Thoughtfully**
- Use a mix of photographs
- Think about contrast, texture, colour, and subject matter
- Consider how each image contributes to the overall message

3. **Decide on Format**
- **Digital collage**: For layering, masking, and blending.
- Play with **scale** — enlarge or shrink elements for emphasis.
- Use **overlapping** and **transparency** to create depth.
- Consider **negative space.**

☐ Annotate Your Process:
- Use keywords to explain why you chose each image.

What Examiners Look For:
- Originality and creativity
- Technical skill and control
- Clear links to your theme and research

Final Advice:
- Don't just make it pretty — make it powerful.
- Be brave with your presentation and layering.
- Keep your book updated with every step.
- Ask for feedback and refine your work.
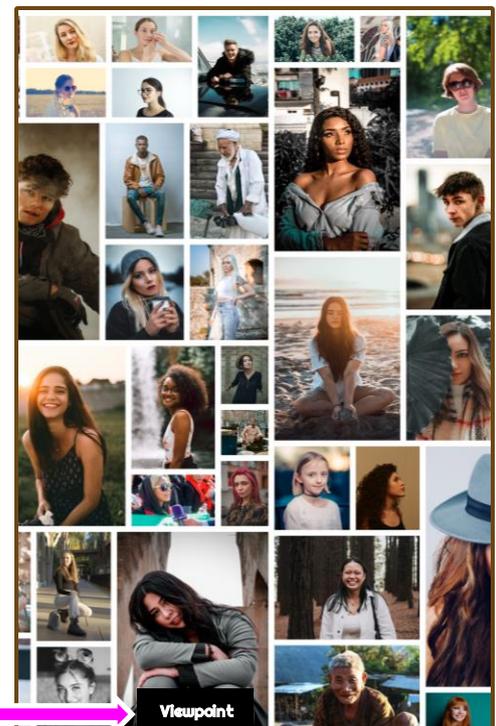
Annotated keywords

Viewpoint

GCSE Photography Evaluation Help Sheet

Why Evaluate?

An evaluation shows how well your project meets the assessment objectives. It helps you reflect on:

- How your ideas developed (AO1)
- How you experimented and refined (AO2)
- How you recorded your observations (AO3)
- How effective your final outcome is (AO4)

Key Words to Include:
- Composition
- Lighting
- Contrast
- Angle
- Perspective
- Depth
- Symbolism
- Narrative
- Successful / Effective
- Refine / Develop / Experiment

Sentence Starters by Assessment Objective:

AO1 – Develop Ideas
- *My work was inspired by the photographer/artist…*
- *I was influenced by their use of… (lighting, colour, composition, etc.)*
- *I developed my ideas by…*
- *This relates to the theme because…*

AO2 – Refine Work
- *I experimented with…*
- *I refined my photos by changing… (lighting, angle, editing, composition)*
- *I found that … was successful because…*
- *If I had more time, I would improve this by…*

AO3 – Record Ideas and Observations
- *I recorded my observations of…*
- *The most successful photo shoot was… because…*
- *I captured details such as… (texture, shape, colour, movement).*
- *My annotations show how I developed my thinking by…*

AO4 – Final Outcome
- *My final outcome is successful because…*
- *It communicates… (mood/meaning/theme).*
- *It links to my artist/photographer research because…*
- *It reflects my intentions of…*
- *Overall, my project shows…*

Quick Evaluation Framework (PEE)

Point → What you did (*My work was influenced by photographer X*).
Evidence → Give an example (*This can be seen in my use of lighting in shoot 3*).
Explain → Why it worked / how it links (*This creates a moody atmosphere which reflects my theme of isolation*).

Evaluation Checklist:

- ☐ Did I explain my influences? Did I describe my experiments and refinements?
- ☐ Did I reflect on my photo shoots and what worked well?
- ☐ Did I explain the meaning/message of my final piece?
- ☐ Did I use subject-specific vocabulary (composition, exposure, contrast, framing, perspective, etc.)?

Aiming For An 8 and Above

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Understand the Assessment Objectives

To hit the top marks, you must master all four AOs (Assessment Objectives). Here's what they mean and how to impress:

AO	What It Means	How to Excel
AO1	Develop ideas through investigations	Show deep research into photographers, movements, and techniques. Analyse their work and explain how it influences yours.
AO2	Refine work by exploring ideas and techniques	Experiment with camera settings, editing software, and presentation styles. Show your journey, not just the final image.
AO3	Record ideas, observations and insights	Keep a detailed sketchbook or digital portfolio. Include contact sheets, annotations, and reflections.
AO4	Present a personal and meaningful response	Your final piece should be original, thoughtful, and clearly linked to your research and development.

Top Tips for High-Level Work

1. Research Like a Pro
- Go beyond Google: use books, galleries, and interviews.
- Compare photographers critically — don't just describe their work.
- Use terminology like composition, contrast, saturation, and narrative.

2. Experiment Boldly
- Try long exposure, macro, double exposure, or mixed media.
- Use Photoshop or Lightroom to enhance and manipulate creatively.
- Document your trials — even failed ones show growth.

3. Annotate with Insight
- Explain your choices: Why this angle? Why this edit?
- Reflect on what worked and what didn't.
- Link your work to your theme and influences.

4. Make It Personal
- Choose a theme that resonates with you emotionally or culturally.
- Tell a story through your images — evoke mood or provoke thought.
- Avoid clichés unless you're subverting them.

5. Organise Your Portfolio
- Keep it clean, logical, and visually engaging.
- Use headings, captions, and consistent formatting.
- Make sure your final piece is clearly supported by your journey.

Examiner's Expectations
Examiners want to see:
- Ambition and originality
- Technical skill and control
- A clear creative journey
- A final outcome that feels resolved and meaningful

Final Advice
- Start early and work consistently.
- Ask for feedback and act on it.
- Visit exhibitions and take inspiration from the world around you.
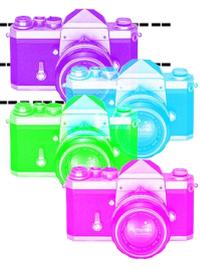- Be brave. Photography is about seeing differently — show them how you see.

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QUESTION MATRIX

Question Matrix	Is? Does? Present	Has? Did? Was? Past	Can? Possibility	Should? Opinion	Would? Could? Probability	Will? Prediction	Might? Imagination
What? Event							
Where? Place							
When? Time							
Which? Choice							
Who? Person							
Why? Reason							
How? Meaning							

The general level of difficulty increases.. A 'What is?' Question is normally easier than a 'How might?' Question.

Using our Thinking Hats to analyse an Image

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	Yellow Hat- Benefits What are the positives, plus points, why is an image is successful, show your technical knowledge and understanding		**Black Hat- Cautions** What are the difficulties, and or weaknesses of the image, give reasons explaining why, use technical knowledge and understanding
	Blue Hat- Process What processes have been used to create the image. What has the photographer chosen to create the image in this way?		**Red Hat- Feelings** What is your gut instinct about the image? What are your feelings right now? Could your feelings can change?
	White Hat- Facts What information do you know about the image? What do you need to find out? How will I get the information you need?		**Green Hat- Creativity** How has the photographer been creative with their ideas? What are the alternatives or different possibilities? Do you have any solutions to black hat problems?

	Purple Hat- Independence How can you now independently react to or respond to this image or photographer? How can you show your own creativity, skill, and technical knowledge

Photography Sentence Starters

General
- In this image I can see
- It is evident in this image that
- Demonstrated within this image is
- When analysing this image
- The photographer has

Composition
- The technique used in this image
- The composition in this image is
- When looking into this image
- I can see that the photographer has used composition techniques such as
- Using this image as inspiration I am going to explore using the same compositional techniques by

Mood
- The mood in this image is
- I feel that the atmosphere in this image is
- In ___ this image emphasises the mood in the image by ___.
- One of the important factors of this image is ____
- The feeling given by his images is

Manipulation
- Manipulation is a key in his images because ____
- It is clear to me that manipulation has been used to ____
- Manipulation has been used to emphasise ____
- A combination of ____ and ____ has been used to manipulate his image by ____
- If I were to further develop my work I would look to manipulate it by ____

Lighting
- Lighting plays a key role in his image because ____
- The lighting in his image demonstrates ____
- The use of ____ lighting shows ____
- The lighting technique used in his images is

Texture
- Textures in his image demonstrate ___
- Texture is a key feature of his image because ___
- Texture used in these images helps to ___
- I can see that the photographer has used texture to ___
- In this image I can see that texture has

Model and Props
- The model affects these images by ___
- The effect of props in these images is ___
- The careful placement of ___ in these images helps to ___
- The positioning of models enables photographers to ___

Costume
- Costume plays a key role in ___
- The photographer carefully uses costumes to ___
- The effect that costumes have had on these images is ___
- Costumes and ___ have been used together to ___
- The style of these images is heavily influenced by costume use to ___

Make-up
- Make-up has been used to ___
- Dramatic use of make-up ___
- It appears photographers carefully consider use of make-up on their models because ___
- It is clear make-up on models helps photographers achieve ___

Proud to be Plympton- Photography

Printed and Presented in books

Ensure all work that is completed is printed and presented in your photography books

Respond to feedback

Use peer, group, class, teacher written or verbal feedback to support you developing your work

Ownership of work produced

Create work that you are proud of that shows your skills, learning and can be used to support with revision

Use checklists

Use checklists to support you organising and ordering your work in your book

DIRT

Use all dedicated and improvement time to improve your work, this will have a direct impact on your grade