MAKING CONNECTIONS

Identifying skills and career pathways from Advanced level courses
About this resource:

This pack has been designed to help students who are considering taking A level courses, or who are already studying them, to make the connections between:

1. the skills they develop whilst studying A level courses and how they might be useful in work
2. the A level courses they are studying and the career areas to which these might relate
3. the A level courses they are studying and the higher education courses to which these might relate

Why do students need to make these connections?

In terms of skills, many young people struggle to see their A level studies as anything other than an academic exercise; they have little sense of the skills that they have to develop in order to study subjects successfully at this level. By making the skills explicit to students, they can consider their options from a different perspective. ‘Will I enjoy doing this?’ as well as ‘Will I enjoy learning about this?’. It will also help them to sell themselves to employers should they choose to move directly into work at the end of their A level programme. In the current labour market, employers are demanding a wider repertoire of skills from young people than ever before. A level students need to be confident about describing the skills they have acquired from their studies.

In terms of careers and higher education, many students struggle to see the links between A level courses and future pathways. By considering these connections, questions such as ‘What can you do with an A level course in ..’ and ‘If I go on and study this subject at university, what will I be able to do then?’ can be answered more easily.

Who is this pack designed for?

It is designed to be used by sixth form tutors, lecturers, careers/personal advisers, anyone working with students (and their parents) who are considering or already taking A level courses.

What does the pack contain?

The pack is in two parts. The first part is a set of lesson plans, and associated teaching materials, designed to help students explore the connections between A level courses, skills developed, career and higher education pathways. These lesson plans make heavy use of the resources provided in the second part.

The second part is a set of 21 handouts which provides information on 21 of the main A level subject areas available to study. Each handout comprises 6 sides of A4 and covers:

An Introduction
This gives information about how many A level courses to study and how this particular subject might be combined with other subjects or programmes.

Skills
This section, which spreads over two sheets, outlines the skills which can be developed through studying this subject at A level. It provides examples of how these skills are developed within the subject area and also how these skills might be used in work.

Career Connections
This section identifies a range of occupations which relate well to the particular subject area and provides their connexions resource classification code so that they can be researched further.

Higher Education Information
This section identifies a range of degree programmes that relate well to this particular subject area. It also highlights graduate opportunities and recent trends in terms of graduate employment for those students who have studied this subject area at degree level.

Further Information and contact details
This section provides signposts for obtaining further information on the occupational areas related to this particular subject.

How can the pack be used?

The pack could be used in a variety of ways, for example:

1. As a resource within the Year 11 careers education programme to help students explore choosing A level courses as their post 16 option.
2. As a resource within the Y12/13 careers education programme to help students taking A level courses to explore choosing higher education courses or to identify their skills in order to sell themselves more effectively to employers.
3. The 21 handouts could be given out to parents and students at parents evenings or during guidance interviews or as part of an information session, to help them consider the connections between A level courses and the choices beyond.
4. The 21 handouts could be kept in the careers library as a reference source for students.

Faced with an increasingly competitive labour market and rising costs for higher education, students need to be able to make well informed and realistic decisions about their future career plans. This pack is designed to support students, considering or taking A level courses, with that process.
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Each subject has the following sections:
- Skills checklist
- Career connections
- 6 ways to check it out
- Thinking of doing a degree?
- Factfile: opportunities for graduates
- Useful Addresses and Publications
Choosing A level courses with a career in mind

Aim

By the end of this session participants will have:

1. identified the similarities and differences between certain Advanced level courses
2. considered possible combinations of A level courses to take if they have a specific career in mind
3. discussed the implications of these choices for future study and career plans

Method

1. Begin by explaining to the students that when choosing A level courses it is usual to choose to study 4 at AS level and then reduce this to 3 at A2 level. (You may want to modify this, and the case study worksheet, to reflect the usual number of choices made by your students).

2. Point out that the subjects that they choose to combine could have an impact on what is available to them beyond A level both in terms of higher education courses and careers. However, it is not true to say that there are perfect matches between A level choices and courses or careers, as there is always some flexibility as to what will be accepted by universities and employers.

3. Then ask them to work in groups of 3. Give everyone a copy of the Choosing A level courses with a career in mind worksheets.

4. Then give each group one set of A level resource sheets for a specific case study. (For example, group 1 begins with case study 1 and they are given a copy of the English, History, Modern Languages, Media Studies and Computing/IT A level courses resource sheets. Group 2 begins with case study 2 and so on.) Ask them to read the case study and then look at the resource sheets. They have to decide which 4 main AS level courses the student in the case study should take.

5. Then swap the A level resource sheets around so that group 1 now works on case study 2 and so on.

6. When the class has had the chance to do all 4 case studies, take feedback to the front and discuss the choices they have made. You might want to refer to the tutor notes whilst doing this.

Note: Another way to do this is to get all the class working on one case study. Then take feedback to the front and discuss the choices with the whole group. Then move on and repeat with the other case studies.

Time

30 minutes depending upon the amount of discussion and feedback.

Resources required

- Copies of the Choosing A level courses with a career in mind worksheets, on pages 8 & 9, one per person.
- A copy of the Choosing A level courses with a career in mind tutors notes, on page 7.
- Copies of the A level courses resource sheets for the following subjects:
  - English page 69 - 74
  - History page 81 - 86
  - Modern Languages page 111 - 116
  - Media Studies page 105 - 110
  - Computing / IT page 51 - 56
  - Psychology page 129 - 134
  - Sociology page 141 - 146
  - Law page 93 - 98
  - Maths page 99 - 104
  - Physics page 123 - 128
  - Chemistry page 45 - 50
  - Biology page 39 - 44
  - Art and Design page 27 - 32
  - Business Studies page 33 - 38
  - History of Art page 87 - 92
**Possible answers:**

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**CHRIS**

Chris could take any combination but would be advised to take some subjects that he knows he is good at and can get higher grades in. History and English would also allow him to showcase his written skills – useful if he decides to apply for a journalism degree. He could either go on to do a media or journalism degree, or he could do another degree e.g. English and study journalism as a post graduate. English A level would be useful for media, journalism or English degrees and History would also be useful for showcasing his written skills. He needs to look closely at the Computing and IT to see what he would cover – the ability to produce and edit online content can be useful for journalism which increasingly involves producing multi-platform content.

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**JENNY**

Jenny needs to carefully research the subjects required for law as many universities prefer candidates not to have studied A Level law. Many universities also prefer applications to have high grades in traditional subjects. Taking traditional subjects may also mean Jenny can then decide to apply for either law or sociology degrees. Both of these degree options also mean she could apply for the probation service’s graduate training route or she could do a CPE/GDL to convert to law.

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**HYWEL**

Hywel should stick with Maths and the Sciences for medicine. If he does not do as well as he hopes he could apply for a computing degree without having a Computing / IT A level qualification.

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**SANJIT**

Sanjit could combine any of these but should be aware that doing both Art and Design and History of Art might be seen as too narrow. Studying a language would help with his ambition to work abroad. He also needs to be aware that although a Business Studies A level would give him some understanding of business theory, relevant work experience would be crucial for getting into arts administration or gallery work. If he decides he is serious about being a designer and is good at practical art work, he may want to consider a BTEC National Diploma rather than A Levels to allow him to develop his design skills and be able to go straight onto an Art and Design (or specialist design) degree.

Note: If you are uncertain about any of these answers discuss them with your Careers Adviser or Tutor first.
Thinking about choosing to study Art & Design at A level?

or

Already studying it and wondering what your next step might be?

This worksheet has been designed to help you consider how you can use what you learn from an A level course in Art & Design in your future career planning.

ART & DESIGN

Studying any A level course will give you two main things, knowledge about the content of the subject (using different media, materials and techniques to express ideas through evocative images, etc.) and skills in how to deal with that content. Although you may not need to remember the content for very much longer than your course, the skills you develop can be built on and used throughout the rest of your life.

MIX & MATCH

Art & Design AS/A2 courses are often taken alongside, and to contrast with, subjects that have a greater written component. It is usually an essential subject for entry to careers in Art and Design. Students wishing to pursue a career in the arts may take other complementary AS/A2 levels such as History, English, Media Studies, Drama/Theatre Studies and Modern Languages. Mathematics, Sciences and Craft Design and Technology may also be combined with Art to provide a useful combination for entry to fields such as Architecture, Engineering and Product Design. Students taking Art and Design via the vocationally related route will often focus on this area in greater depth and choose only one other subject at AS/A2 level to study alongside it.

What to study it with?

When choosing to study A level courses full time it is usual to study four subjects at AS level in the first year then three at A2 level in the second year. It is also possible to study some subjects via the vocationally related route (Applied A level double awards and BTEC Diplomas). The other subjects you choose to combine with Art & Design may have an influence upon what you can choose beyond A level, so check out your choice. Although some A level subjects require a good grade at GCSE as a foundation for study at the A level, others can be studied from scratch. It’s a good idea to check this out before finalising your A level course choices.

The higher education and employment scenes are continually changing due to social, economic and political pressures. This worksheet, therefore, is not a definitive guide to your future career but is more of a prompt to get you thinking about making connections between your choice of A level courses and higher education and career opportunities.
### Art & Design Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research skills:</th>
<th>Ways in which you might learn these in the subject:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ researching a topic by finding and choosing the most useful materials to use</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ summarising that information either in writing or verbally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ developing artistic ideas through research, visual observation and recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ looking for inspiration for art projects in magazines, papers, films, the natural environment, online, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ studying the work of other artists</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Communication skills - written and visual:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ putting across clear and relevant information when writing about a subject</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ using visual materials and images to convey design ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ producing artifacts in 2 and 3 dimensional form in response to design briefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ producing subject-related online content or adding to online discussions via blogs or social media tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ writing about your own and others’ work in essays and note books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ producing art pieces in a range of media, eg. painting, sculpture, photography, drawings, collage, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Communication skills - verbal:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ taking part in discussions and making relevant contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ listening and responding to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ making value judgements and giving constructive criticism about your own and others work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ discussing art works following individual research, lectures, visits to galleries and exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ assessing and commenting on your own and others’ work</td>
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<th>Numerical skills:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ collecting and recording data estimating, measuring and calculating physical dimensions, proportions and timescales</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ gathering together information and materials to use in art projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ working out how much paint, paper, plaster of paris, photographic fixer, etc. to use</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Creative skills:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ assessing the relationship between art and real life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ visualising possible design solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ selecting materials and techniques to develop design ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ learning about art and artistic methods and techniques and trying to develop your own artistic talents</td>
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In addition to the specific skills you will develop whilst studying Art & Design at A level, you may also develop a number of other skills which will be extremely important, whether you go on to higher education or into employment.

**Improving own learning and performance:**
- dealing with complex subjects
- checking understanding of work set and seeking clarification if unsure
- agreeing and setting targets and planning action
- following a plan to meet targets and making revisions to the plan as necessary
- checking progress with an appropriate person
- identifying any support needed and using it effectively

**Working with others:**
- planning activities with others
- identifying and agreeing targets with others and checking understanding
- identifying and confirming responsibilities within the group
- agreeing working arrangements with those involved

**Using ICT:**
- selecting appropriate and reliable sources when doing web-based research
- use of appropriate packages to produce publications, artwork and essays
- using social media to share and discuss art works after research, lectures and visits

Other skills

Improving own learning and performance:

- dealing with complex subjects
- checking understanding of work set and seeking clarification if unsure
- agreeing and setting targets and planning action
- following a plan to meet targets and making revisions to the plan as necessary
- checking progress with an appropriate person
- identifying any support needed and using it effectively

Working with others:

- planning activities with others
- identifying and agreeing targets with others and checking understanding
- identifying and confirming responsibilities within the group
- agreeing working arrangements with those involved

Using ICT:

- selecting appropriate and reliable sources when doing web-based research
- use of appropriate packages to produce publications, artwork and essays
- using social media to share and discuss art works after research, lectures and visits

Art & design

Ways in which you might use these in a job:

- developing creative ideas for advertising campaigns, fashion and interior designs, product and packaging design, in fact any kind of design

- producing visually stimulating materials such as newsletters, handouts, posters, etc.
- writing newspaper articles, catalogue inserts, public notices, leaflets, etc.
- creating works of art

- working as part of a team
- giving guided tours and presentations
- dealing with customers

- calculating the quantities of materials needed for projects
- finding new and different uses for materials and products

- thinking creatively and using your imagination when dealing with problems and looking for solutions
- presenting original views or interpretations on various topics

- producing visually stimulating materials such as newsletters, handouts, posters, etc.
- creating works of art

© Highflyers Resources
There are a number of careers where having an A level qualification in Art & Design, and all the skills that you develop through studying it, will be very useful. An A level qualification in Art is usually required for entry into careers in Art & Design. Most of the career areas come under the general heading of ‘Design’ as the majority of people who enter careers connected to Art tend to be a designer of one sort or another. You can find out more about these careers by looking up information in your careers library under the Connexions Resources Classification Index (CRCI) codes listed here.

CRCI code:
- E: General information on careers related to Art & Design
- E: Fine Art
- E: Graphic Design
- E: Fashion Design
- E: Textile/Surface Design
- E: Interior Design
- E: Exhibition Design
- E: Product Design
- PC: Photography

Other occupations where Art may be required or useful:
- BA: Architecture
- HB: Landscape Architecture
- O: Advertising Copywriter
- JF: Art Therapist
- BC: Town Planning
- K: Museum Curator
- Q: Make Up Artist
- RC: Beauty Therapist

Although it is possible to enter some of these jobs after A level studies, many of these areas recruit people with higher qualifications so you may need to seriously consider going on to higher education.
Entry into Art & Design careers may not be as clear cut as in some other occupations. There are a wide range of degrees in the broad spectrum of design disciplines. The criterion for selection to these degrees is not only A level qualifications, but also the quality of the portfolio, usually developed over 1 or 2 years on a pre-degree foundation course. Although it is possible to gain direct entry to degree or Foundation degree studies from A level courses, many students choose to take a Foundation course in order to identify which area of art and design they wish to specialise in.

**Degree programmes in Art & Design**

There are two main sectors in higher education that offer courses related to Art. These are firstly Colleges & Institutes of Art & Design and secondly Universities and Colleges of Higher Education. A vast number of courses exist at degree and Foundation degree level. These include:

- Fine Art
- Visual Arts
- Fine Art Conservation
- Painting
- Multi-disciplinary Design
- Graphic Design
- Printing Design
- Illustration
- Visual Communication
- Typography
- Furniture Design
- Fashion & Textile Design
- Advertising Design
- Industrial/Product Design
- Interactive Media Design
- Glass Design
- Ceramic Design
- Surface Pattern Design
- Interior Design
- Theatre Design
- Jewellery Design
- Design & Technology
- Display Design
- Photography
- Film & Photographic Art
- Animation
- Film & Television production
- Multimedia Design
- Sculpture

Details of all the degrees available in these areas, and more, can be found on the UCAS website at www.ucas.com

**Art & Design FACTFILE**

Opportunities for Graduates

Statistics from a recent survey show the following trends can be identified for Art & Design graduates:

- almost 70% entered employment within 6 months of graduating.
- almost one quarter of art and design graduates who went straight into work entered jobs in Arts, Design, Culture and Sports Professional.
- areas of work entered by art and design graduates included freelance art, design and photography and commercial design.
- 10% continued with further studies or training.
- graduates from creative subjects such as art and design often spend time in non-creative jobs alongside creative activities (paid and unpaid) especially straight after graduation. However, a recent study found that most creative graduates were spending most of their time in paid creative work when they were surveyed a few years after graduation. For more information on the career paths of creative graduates see: www.employment-studies.co.uk/projects/creative/creative.php.

**jobs**

These are some of the jobs that Arts graduates have gone into in recent years

- Marketing Assistant, a stage entertainment company
- Event Planner and Sales Assistant; a bridal store Gallery Manager, Art Gallery
- Office Auction Manager, an auctioneers
- Design Engineer, a design and manufacturing company
- Interior Designer, a commercial premises design company
- Set Designer, a London theatre
- Artist, self-employed
- Assistant Editor, a publishing company
- Product Designer, a homewares supplier
- Occupational Therapist, a hospital
- Supervisor, a book store

Details of all the degrees available in these areas, and more, can be found on the UCAS website at www.ucas.com
You might find these publications useful. Check to see if your Careers Library or local library have copies. You might find these publications useful:

> The Essential Guide to Business for Artists and Designers (Essential Guides)
  *published by A & C Black Publishers Ltd*

Useful websites:

- Arts Council England
  www.arts council.org.uk

- Association of Illustrators
  www.theaoi.com

- Crafts Council
  www.craftscouncil.org.uk

- Design Council
  www.designcouncil.org.uk

- National Society for Education in Art & Design
  www.nsead.org

- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
  www.architecture.com

- Royal Photographic Society
  www.rps.org

- Your Creative Future
  www.yourcreativefuture.org.uk