

DP Visual Arts

# Preparing students for their EAs



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# The Comparative Study

The comparative study is externally assessed and is worth 20% of the overall grade.

In this part of the course students need to independently critically appraise, analyse, compare and contrast at least three artworks by at least two different artists from different times and cultures.

Students will use a combination of visuals and text to convey their ideas. Higher level students must make connections to their own art making practice and the work chosen for the comparative study.

As a reference, think of the comparative study as an art history research report, only made as a visual presentation.

The formal requirements for the comparative study are:

SL students: 10 to 15 screens

HL students: 10 to 15 screens, plus 3 to 5 screens that connect the study to their own artwork

# Best Practices for the Comparative Study

Teachers are supposed to provide students with feedback for their Comparative Study **only once**.

I do this when they have completed their rough draft. It is teacher discretion as to how this feedback is provided (written, oral, comments on a presentation) and to what extent and depth the feedback is provided.

When will you plan to give your students feedback on their Comparative Study?

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It is also important to teach students how to cite sources for their Comparative Study. Citing artwork in various formats can be complicated, so I give my students a "cheat sheet" resource to help them with citing their sources.



# Assessing the Comparative Study

The Comparative Study is assessed using criterion A-E for SL, and A-F for HL students. The assessment is marked out of 30 points for SL and 42 points for HL.

Let's look at the assessment criteria in detail and breakdown what is required:

## A. Analysis of the formal qualities

IB wants to see evidence that the work provides a consistent, insightful and informed identification and analysis of the formal qualities of the selected pieces. Students need to analyze the formal qualities of each piece of artwork that they have chosen. This needs to be an effective discussion of the formal elements, including a discussion of the elements of art and principles of design and how the artist utilized them. Students may also discuss the media used and how this affects artistic intentions.

## B. Interpretation of the function and purpose

IB wants to see evidence that the work provides a consistent, insightful and informed analysis and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the function and purpose of the selected pieces from at least two contrasting cultural contexts. Students need to explain why the artist made the artwork. What is its function? What is the artwork's purpose and what were the artist's intentions? Does the piece evoke a particular mood or have a message? Students also need to explore their own and others' interpretations of the chosen artwork as well as discussing how it was made and what materials and methods were used.

### C. Evaluation of cultural significance

Students need to put the artwork into context. When was it made? What was happening in the world at that time that may have had a specific impact on the artist and subsequently the work? Avenues to explore include: social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts.

### D. Making comparisons and connections

Students need to make meaningful comparisons and connections between the works they have chosen. They should consider the differences and similarities between the formal elements, function and purpose and the cultural significance of the pieces.

### E. Presentation and subject language

For this assessment objective the examiner is looking for a balance of text and image, a visually pleasing layout that is legible and ordered. Subject specific language will be considered for its accuracy and correct sources used and citations made.

### F. Making connections to own art making practice (HL only)

This provides students with an opportunity to make valuable connections between their own artwork and that of the artists they have selected. Connections and sources of inspiration need to be clearly defined, accompanied by reflections and evaluations of the significant connections and outcomes of creating the study.

# The Comparative Study Lesson Plans & Activities

Below you will find some lesson activities you can implement into your teaching to support the Comparative Study.

## Citing Sources

It can be tricky and complicated citing sources, so give your students a "cheat sheet" to help them with this process.

In the resources section, find:

- A cheat sheet you can give to your students so they can properly cite their sources.

## Scaffold the Process

Teach your students how to organize their Comparative Study, and how the steps involved in this assessment. I like to give my students a guide on creating their Comparative Study, and I give them a step-by-step directions page to help them so they don't feel so overwhelmed.

In the resources section, find:

- A step-by-step student guide to creating the Comparative Study.
- A student guide to organizing their Comparative Study.

## Checklists

Checklists help students check that they have all the elements they need for their Comparative Study before they submit the assessment.

In the resources section, find:

- A checklist for students.



## Recording Research

Introduce students to a variety of ways to record their research (bubble maps, diagrams, graphic organizers, infographics, etc.). I have students create a bubble map in their Artist Journal with their names as the center bubble. From there they expand by answering questions such as: Who am I? Where do I come from? What am I passionate about? Who is important in my life and how do I relate to them within my own context? What is important in my life and why? What are my spiritual or religious beliefs and how do they define who I am? What are my aspirations for my future? This provides students with multiple starting points throughout the 2-year journey. Here are the directions I give my students for creating a bubble map.

In the resources section, find:

- A student directions worksheet (with a student sample) on creating a bubble map on self exploration.

## Practice Comparing Works of Art

Practice comparing works of art with students and have them compare and contrast.

In the resources section, find:

- A basic visual aid example of how you can practice comparing works of art in your classroom.

# My notes

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# The Process Portfolio

The process portfolio showcases the students' experimentation, manipulation, exploration and refinement of a variety of visual art activities during the one year (SL) or two year (HL) course.

They need evidence of the investigation and development of ideas and artworks, and they need to reflect and evaluate their own work as it progresses.

To do this, we use hardcover sketchbooks for students to record every aspect of the two-year course. Teachers need to be sure that they have their sketchbooks or other means of recording the artistic process at the very start of the school year.

Be sure that students understand the importance of their journals. The journal is used every day, it is evidence of where students are at any particular day. While students need to understand the importance of the journal, what goes inside is not necessarily "precious". Many students think they need to write everything in pencil first, then go over it in black pen (black pen photocopies best).

Discourage this! It is a waste of students' time! I found it necessary to tell students if they spell a word wrong, to simply strike through it with their pen, and correct the spelling.



# Assessing the Process Portfolio

The process portfolio is externally assessed using the following assessment objectives for SL and HL.

It is marked out of a total of 34 for SL and HL.

## A - Skills, techniques and processes - 12 marks

Students need to demonstrate sustained media experimentation that show a manipulation of a range of skills and techniques. SL students need to show that they have utilized at least two art making forms and HL students need to show that they have utilized at least three art making forms from the Art Making Forms table (refer to page 46 of the IB Visual Arts Guide).

## B - Critical investigation - 6 marks

Students need to critically appraise the work of artists' art-making practices and communicate how this has had an impact on their own artwork.

## C - Communication of ideas and intentions - 6 marks

Students need to articulate their ideas and intentions clearly. This must include how they have selected particular processes and techniques to help them to realize their intentions.

#### **D - Reviewing, refining and reflecting - 6 marks**

Students should communicate how the acquisition of skills and techniques have developed and express how they have made creative decisions through reflection and evaluation.

#### **E - Presentation and subject-specific language - 4 marks**

Consistent use of subject specific language is essential here. A visually stimulating portfolio that conveys evidence of their creative journey in a coherent way.

# The Process Portfolio

## Lesson Plans & Activities

Here are some learning activities and lesson plans to help you plan out this part of the course.

### Checklists

Just like with the comparative study, use a checklist at the end of this EA so students can make sure they are including all the necessary elements into their process portfolio. Below is a checklist made by an DP art teacher.

In the resources section, find:

- A student checklist for the Process Portfolio.

## Speciality Supplies

Ask students if they wish to have any specialty supplies ordered at the beginning of the year. Let them know that they can also bring in specialty supplies of their own. The supplies being used will vary by each student.

## Learn with your Students

You do not have to be an expert on a certain art medium to present it to your class. I tried encaustics for the first time with my class and we learned by trial and error together while watching tutorial videos. Students appreciate seeing a teacher learning new techniques and materials alongside them.



## Experiment

Give opportunities for students to experiment with different art media. These can be short, quick, fun projects.

In the resources section, find:

- A PowerPoint presentation with different types of microlabs you can complete with your students.

# My notes



# Conclusion

Here are some final tips for you as you prepare your students for their **Comparative Study**:

- Remember if students select works of art that excite them, this project will be more fun and rewarding for students to work on. Encourage them to spend some time making their selections.
- Ensure they have selected works that show a difference in place and time before devoting time to creating their presentation.
- Have students show the class which works of art they have selected and why. This way students get ideas from one another and it encourages students to collaborate and help critique their peers as they progress in their Comparative Study.

Here are some final tips for you as you are preparing your students for their **Process Portfolio**:

- Keep a journal as the teacher. Over the years I have been able to look back to previous projects and ways of working that I have introduced to students to better understand what works and what doesn't work.
- Either provide students with a set of colored pencils/markers or have them purchase their own set. This allows students to be more creative with their visual journal pages which may be used as process portfolio screens later.
- If the text from scanned sketchbook pages is not easily legible, have students add a text box on the screen and transcribe their writing.

# Teacher Reflection

Which EA do you think your students will do best on? Why?

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Which do you think they will struggle with?  
What are some strategies you can use to support your students?

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# Resources

Find all the printables that were discussed in this Print and Go Pack by downloading the individual files in this Pack.



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