

Graphic Design

AQA Specification



General information:

Studying graphic design at A level is essential for developing a deep understanding of visual communication, which is crucial in today's media-saturated world. It enables individuals to master the principles of design, typography, colour theory, and digital tools, fostering creativity and technical proficiency. Graphic design also equips students with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, allowing them to create compelling and effective visual content that can influence, inform, and inspire audiences. The course also provides opportunities for specialisation and portfolio development, enhancing future career prospects in various industries such as advertising, marketing, web design, and multimedia art.

Course content:

During the first part of the course you will develop and refine your skills in Graphic Design. The course is designed to develop your ability as a young designer, questioning and reflecting on themes that will initially be set for you. The course will allow you to pursue and develop an idea creatively and confidently with the support of expert teaching staff.

Your initial project will be based on branding and advertising, where you will get the opportunity to explore many areas of graphic design, including illustration, photography, print making to name a few. This first project will give you a comprehensive understanding of the assessment objectives and allow you to find your own style as a designer. Within the project you will discover digital art, learn how to use Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. You will then independently work in response to a chosen theme and start your own personal Investigation, which will make up 60% of your overall grade. This will ensure you understand the expectations of the subject and prepare you for a future degree or career in Art and Design. The course concludes with Component 2: An Externally Set Assignment (40%), completed in February of Year 13.

How is the course taught and assessed?

Component 1: The Portfolio (60%) which you will start at the end of Year 12. This will be supported by a written assignment to contextualise your investigation (1000-3000 words).

The course concludes with Component 2: An Externally Set Assignment (40%), completed in February of Year 13.

Student's work is assessed against four assessment objectives (AOs) detailed below.

AO1: Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

AO2: Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops

AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Entry requirements:	Results information:	Top destinations for students:
As well as the general entry requirements for BWS, Grade 6 in GCSE Art, Graphic Design, Photography or Design Technology and a portfolio of work to support if needs be.	Graphic Design is a very successful subject at BWS. In 2025, 100% of students achieved A* to A grade at A level.	Common choices include Art Foundation Courses. Degree in Graphic Design, Illustration, Animation, Concept Art, Visual Arts, Architecture and Photography

Beyond the curriculum:

Students are offered the opportunity to continue their artwork in the art rooms outside of lessons when available. They can display their work around the school, be published in Wordsworth magazine and support younger students with their artwork.

During the A Level Art course, we have the incredible opportunity to visit London several times over the two years, immersing ourselves in the city's vibrant creative culture. These trips are a vital part of our artistic journey, allowing us to experience world-class art and design firsthand. We explore inspiring locations such as the South Bank, Tate Modern, the Design Museum, the Hayward Gallery, and the Barbican Centre—each offering a unique perspective on contemporary and historical art. We also visit the V&A, the National Gallery, and the National Portrait Gallery to study masterpieces up close, gaining valuable insight into technique, composition, and context. Highlights of the course include the D&AD New Blood exhibition in Shoreditch and the London Illustration Fair, where we encounter cutting-edge creative talent and emerging industry trends. Each visit deepens our understanding of art in all its forms and fuels our own creative development.

Throughout the A Level Art course, we actively take part in a wide range of design, art, and photography competitions both locally and nationally, giving us the chance to showcase our creativity beyond the classroom. Our students have entered prestigious events such as the Rotary Photography Competition and have exhibited their work in local museums and libraries, gaining valuable exposure and recognition. We also take part in creative workshops at Salisbury Cathedral, where the stunning architecture provides a unique source of inspiration. In addition, we've had the privilege of exhibiting at Gallery 21 in Salisbury, presenting our work in a professional setting and engaging with the wider art community. These experiences not only enhance our artistic skills but also build confidence, ambition, and a deeper connection to the creative world around us.

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