

## Treatment of the topic

Once they have their research question, students should make a research plan. The plan should be flexible enough to allow the students to explore the topic in a creative manner. They should not be afraid to take risks throughout the research process: originality is encouraged, as is the use of a number of different research models.

It is vital that the methodology of the EE is tailored to the research question and allows for an in-depth exploration.

Many different approaches to the research question can be appropriate, for instance:

- use of primary sources (artworks and artists) and secondary sources (material about the visual arts) in order to establish and appraise varying interpretations
- analysing secondary sources in order to explore and explain particular aspects of the visual arts
- using primary source material for analysis, with emphasis on a particular aspect of visual arts
- collecting and analysing reproductions of artworks, possibly leading to a comparison of similar or different images.

Students should also demonstrate awareness of other issues surrounding the artworks studied.

- Do I show an awareness of the value and limitations of the art I am studying through analysing its origin and purpose?
- Do I show a consistently good artistic understanding in setting the research question into context and addressing it fully and effectively?

Relevant outcomes of this analysis should be integrated into a well-substantiated argument.

- With what evidence do I support my comments and conclusions?
- Is this evidence relevant and well founded, and not based simply on my preconceptions?

The emphasis of the EE should always be on written analysis, interpretation, evaluation and the construction and development of a sound argument.

## Visual reference material

The inclusion and discussion of appropriate visual reference material is mandatory. Such material must, however, be directly supportive of, and relevant to, the analysis or argument. Images should be appropriately presented and acknowledged and should appear in the body of the essay, as close as possible to the first reference.

In order to promote personal involvement in the EE, the use of local and primary sources should be encouraged wherever possible. Where students do not have access to primary sources they may rely on high-quality reproductions or images of sources.

Students are expected to evaluate critically the resources consulted during the process of writing the EE by asking themselves the following questions.

- Which sources are vital to the support of my ideas, opinions and assertions?
- Which sources do not contribute to the analysis?

Finally, an EE in visual arts is a formal essay, so students must pay careful attention to the requirements of the assessment criteria. Frequent reference to the assessment criteria by both the supervisor and the student will help keep a sharper focus on the project.

## Examples of topics, research questions and suggested approaches

Once students have identified their topic and written their research question, they can decide how to research their answer. They may find it helpful to write a statement outlining their broad approach. These examples are for guidance only.

Topic	<b>Cultural influences on Pablo Picasso’s work</b>
Research question	Picasso: individual genius or cultural thief?
Approach	An investigation of the extent to which selected images in Picasso’s work may have been appropriated from other cultural sources.

Topic	<b>Architectural influences: the Pompidou Centre</b>
Research question	How were Sir Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano influenced by the Maison de Verre designed by Pierre Chareau in their design and construction of the Pompidou Centre in Paris?
Approach	An original investigation into the stylistic similarities in the architecture of these two buildings.

Topic	<b>The impact of immigration on an artist’s work</b>
Research question	What is the impact of transcultural experience on the art of Gu Xiong?
Approach	An investigation into the effects of migration, from China to Canada, on a selected artist’s work.

### An important note on “double-dipping”

Students must ensure that their EE does not duplicate other work they are submitting for the Diploma Programme. For example, artists and art works selected for study within the art comparative study task would not be appropriate for study within the EE.

### The visual arts EE and internal assessment

An EE in visual arts is not an extension of the internal assessment (IA) task. Students must ensure that they understand the differences between the two.

**Supervisors play an important role here in guiding students on these distinctions. Students risk their diploma if academic misconduct is detected.**