

Photography Curriculum Intent		Year 11
		The GCSE Photography curriculum is designed to develop students as increasingly confident, independent and reflective photographers. Across Years 10 and 11, students build the technical knowledge, creative understanding and critical thinking needed to investigate ideas, experiment with photographic processes and produce personal, meaningful outcomes. The course begins by establishing a secure foundation in the formal elements of photography, including texture, tone, colour, pattern, composition, light and form. Students learn how to use SLR cameras purposefully, develop confidence with digital editing and understand how technical decisions influence the appearance and meaning of an image. These skills are introduced in a structured way and then revisited through increasingly sustained projects. Contextual research is embedded throughout the course. Students study a range of photographers and visual practitioners, including Edward Weston, Karl Blossfeldt, Kazuhiko Kawahara and Horst P. Horst, and use their work to inform their own investigations. As students progress, the balance gradually shifts from acquiring substantive knowledge towards applying that knowledge more independently through purposeful photoshoots, experimentation, image selection, editing, evaluation and refinement. Successful GCSE Photography is therefore understood as the development of ideas and decision-making across a portfolio, rather than the production of isolated final images. Assessment is structured around the four GCSE Art and Design Assessment Objectives: AO1 Develop, AO2 Refine, AO3 Record and AO4 Present. Students are supported to understand how research, experimentation, recording and presentation combine to create a coherent photographic journey. Alongside this, the Skills Builder Framework develops transferable skills such as Creativity, Problem Solving, Aiming High, Planning, Staying Positive, Listening and Leadership, while career links help students understand how these skills connect to areas such as commercial, scientific, fashion and editorial photography, digital retouching and art direction. By the end of the course, students will have developed a portfolio that demonstrates technical competence, experimentation, contextual understanding and increasingly personal creative responses. The curriculum provides a strong foundation for progression into Post-16 Photography, Art and Design, Graphic Design, Media and wider creative pathways.
Term 1 Enquiry		Identity – Developing a Personal Response
	Big Picture <i>What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?</i>	
During Term 1, students begin Year 11 by returning to a sustained coursework project based on the theme of Identity. The enquiry encourages students to explore how photography can communicate ideas about personality, culture, relationships, memory, belonging and self-expression.		

Building on the technical and creative foundations established during Year 10, students are expected to work with significantly greater independence and develop a line of enquiry that reflects their own interests and experiences.

Students research photographers and artists relevant to their chosen direction and consider how different practitioners use imagery to explore aspects of identity. Contextual research is used to generate ideas rather than simply provide background information, with students selecting approaches, techniques and themes that can inform their own photographic practice.

The term places a strong emphasis on development and refinement. Students undertake purposeful photoshoots, experiment with digital manipulation and other photographic processes, evaluate their work and decide which ideas have the greatest potential. By this stage of the course, they are expected to demonstrate a clear relationship between research, experimentation and personal intention.



Zoom In

What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

The enquiry begins with students identifying a more specific area of identity that they wish to investigate. This might include personal identity, family, relationships, culture, memory, place, appearance or self-representation. Students research relevant photographers and visual practitioners and analyse how subject, composition, lighting, colour, viewpoint and editing are used to communicate meaning.

Students then plan and undertake a series of increasingly purposeful photoshoots. Their work should show that ideas are developing over time rather than remaining fixed. Contact sheets, image selection, experimentation and annotation provide evidence of the decisions students make as their project progresses.

Digital editing and photographic manipulation are used with increasing independence. Students select processes because they support their ideas rather than because a particular technique has been prescribed. They are encouraged to compare different outcomes, identify successful directions and refine these through further photography or editing.

Annotation becomes increasingly evaluative. Students explain how contextual research has influenced their work, why particular decisions have been made and how experimentation has caused their ideas to develop.



Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?



Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Students enter Year 11 with a substantial body of knowledge developed throughout Year 10. They should be confident in the basic operation of an SLR camera and have experience of composition, tone, colour, pattern, texture, image selection and digital editing. They have also developed an understanding of the GCSE creative process through research, photography, experimentation, annotation and refinement. The sustained tessellation project and Year 10 mock examination provide an important foundation for the greater independence expected within the Identity project. The key progression is therefore the move from responding primarily to teacher-directed projects towards developing a personal enquiry and selecting appropriate processes independently.	Challenge within this term comes through the depth and individuality of the students' investigation. Higher-attaining students should move beyond obvious interpretations of identity and consider more complex or subtle ideas. They may explore contradictions, changing identities, memory, relationships or the difference between how a person sees themselves and how others perceive them. Their contextual research should be increasingly selective and purposeful. Rather than studying a photographer and then copying their visual style, students should identify ideas, processes or approaches that can be adapted and combined within their own developing work. At the highest levels, students should demonstrate a clear creative journey in which experimentation leads to new decisions and their work becomes increasingly personal, sophisticated and intentional.
 Wider Framework <i>How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?</i>	 Curriculum Hinterland <i>What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?</i>
Term 1 represents an important transition into the final year of the GCSE course. Students are now expected to manage a sustained project more independently and demonstrate evidence across all four Assessment Objectives. The project continues into Term 2, where students will refine and complete their coursework portfolio and prepare for a two-day mock examination. The ability to manage research, photoshoots, experimentation and annotation independently also prepares students directly for the Externally Set Assignment later in Year 11, when they will need to	The theme of Identity allows students to explore photography as a means of understanding both the individual and wider society. Photographers have long used portraits, objects, environments and personal archives to explore questions of culture, belonging, relationships and self-representation. Students begin to recognise that identity is not always fixed or straightforward. It may be influenced by family, place, culture, experience, relationships and the way individuals choose to present themselves to others. This has strong connections with media, sociology, history and psychology, as students consider how identities are constructed and communicated visually. It also develops wider visual literacy by encouraging students to question how

select and develop their own response to an examination starting point.	photographs, particularly portraits and images shared online, shape perceptions of people and groups.
 Authentic connections <i>How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?</i>	
Students' spiritual development is particularly strong within this enquiry because the theme encourages reflection on identity, experience, relationships and personal values. Students can explore aspects of themselves or wider human experience through a visual rather than purely written form. Moral development is supported through consideration of representation and the responsibilities involved in photographing people. Students consider issues such as consent, manipulation, stereotyping and the way images can influence perceptions of an individual or group. Social development is strengthened through discussion, critique and the exploration of relationships and communities. Students learn to respond respectfully to personal and potentially sensitive ideas expressed through the work of others. Cultural development is supported through research into photographers and artists who explore identity from different cultural, social and historical perspectives. Students develop a broader understanding of how identity can be shaped and represented in different contexts. Career Links: • A key career focus is the Portrait Photographer, who must use lighting, composition, setting and interaction with the subject to communicate something about an individual rather than simply record their appearance. • Students can also explore the work of a Documentary Photographer, where photography is used to communicate stories about individuals, communities and social experiences. • A further connection is the role of a Fashion Editorial Photographer, where clothing, styling, location, pose and image manipulation are deliberately combined to construct particular identities and visual narratives. The Skills Builder Framework is embedded throughout the project, with particular emphasis on Creativity, Leadership and Speaking. • Creativity is developed as students interpret the broad theme of Identity and establish their own visual direction. They generate ideas, combine influences and experiment with different ways of communicating meaning through photographs. • Leadership is developed through increasing ownership of the creative process. Students are expected to make decisions about research, photoshoots and development rather than waiting for each stage to be directed by the teacher. • Speaking is developed through critique and discussion. Students explain their intentions, justify creative decisions and respond to questions and feedback from others about how effectively their ideas are being communicated.	
 Resources <i>What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?</i>	 Assessment <i>How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?</i>



Students use SLR cameras, computers, Adobe Photoshop and other appropriate photographic processes depending on their chosen direction. Their existing Year 10 skills provide the technical foundation, while individual contextual research introduces photographers and artists relevant to each student's area of identity. Teacher modelling, GCSE portfolio exemplars, gallery collections and resources such as The Photographers' Gallery, Tate and the National Portrait Gallery can support students in identifying a wider range of approaches to portraiture, identity and personal storytelling.	Assessment during Term 1 is rooted in the AQA GCSE Art & Design Assessment Objectives and reflects the increasing independence expected in Year 11. Approximately 25% of assessment focuses on substantive knowledge and 75% on disciplinary knowledge. The 25% substantive knowledge includes students' understanding of photographic techniques, composition, lighting, digital manipulation and relevant contextual sources, alongside the subject-specific language required to discuss identity and photographic representation. The 75% disciplinary knowledge focuses on students' ability to select and apply this knowledge independently. Students are expected to establish a line of enquiry, research appropriate sources, plan purposeful photoshoots, experiment with techniques, evaluate outcomes and refine their work in response to their developing intentions. AO1, Develop, is particularly important as students investigate relevant contextual sources and establish their own interpretation of Identity. AO2, Refine, is demonstrated through increasingly purposeful experimentation and selection of processes. AO3, Record, is evidenced through photographs, contact sheets, observations and reflective annotation. AO4, Present, begins to emerge as students identify stronger directions that can be developed into more resolved outcomes during Term 2. Assessment focuses on the extent to which students demonstrate an increasingly coherent relationship between context, intention, experimentation and personal response.
Term 2 Enquiry  Identity – Refinement, Completion and Mock Examination	



Big Picture

What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

During Term 2, students bring their Identity coursework project towards completion. Building on the research, photography and experimentation developed during Term 1, the emphasis now shifts towards refinement, resolution and presentation. Students revisit earlier work, identify the strongest directions and make purposeful decisions about which ideas should be developed further.

The term is designed to strengthen students' understanding that a successful GCSE portfolio is not simply a collection of finished images. It should show a clear creative journey in which contextual research informs experimentation, experimentation leads to reflection, and reflection shapes the final response.

The culmination of the term is a two-day mock examination, which gives students valuable experience of working under sustained conditions. This provides an important bridge between coursework and the Externally Set Assignment later in Year 11, requiring students to plan carefully, manage their time and make independent creative decisions.



Zoom In

What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

The term begins with students reviewing the progress of their Identity project and identifying where further development is needed. They may return to contextual research, complete additional photoshoots, strengthen digital experimentation or improve annotation in order to create a more coherent portfolio.

Students are expected to move beyond simply completing gaps. Refinement should involve purposeful change, with students explaining why particular images, techniques or ideas have been selected and how these decisions improve the overall quality of the project.

As the project develops, students begin to resolve their strongest ideas into more finalised outcomes. These may include a series of photographs, digitally manipulated images, mixed-media presentations, photographic installations or a combination of traditional and contemporary processes, depending on the direction of the individual project.

Preparation for the mock examination focuses on planning, time management and technical readiness. Students identify the work they intend to develop, prepare appropriate imagery and resources and consider how the final outcome will demonstrate the intentions established throughout the project.



Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?



Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Students begin Term 2 with a developed body of research and practical work around the theme of Identity. They should already have a clear line of enquiry, relevant contextual sources and a growing collection of photographs and experiments. They also draw upon the full range of technical knowledge developed across Year 10 and Term 1 of Year 11, including camera control, composition, lighting, image selection, Photoshop editing and presentation. The key progression is the ability to evaluate work critically and decide what needs to happen next, rather than relying on the teacher to direct each stage of development.	Challenge in Term 2 comes through the sophistication of refinement and the degree of independence students demonstrate. Higher-attaining students should be able to identify weaknesses within their own project and make deliberate decisions about how these can be improved. They should show that further photoshoots, editing or experimentation are undertaken because they strengthen the concept of the project rather than simply increase the volume of work. Students working towards the highest levels should demonstrate a clear personal voice. Their final responses should not simply resemble the work of the photographers studied, but should show how contextual influences have been adapted and combined into something increasingly individual. During the mock examination, students should be able to manage their own time effectively, solve technical problems and sustain concentration without constant teacher direction.
 Wider Framework <i>How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?</i>	 Curriculum Hinterland <i>What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?</i>
Term 2 completes the major coursework phase of the course and provides a direct transition into the AQA Externally Set Assignment. The mock examination is particularly important because it allows students to rehearse the practical and organisational demands of the final examination process. They experience the need to arrive with developed preparatory work, make decisions under time constraints and produce a resolved outcome within supervised conditions. The evaluation of this experience also helps students identify areas they need to improve before the ESA begins in Term 3.	The process of refining and presenting the Identity project reflects the way professional photographers and artists develop substantial bodies of work. Creative practice rarely moves in a straight line; ideas are revisited, rejected, adapted and reworked before a final outcome is selected. Students also develop an understanding of curation and presentation. The way photographs are sequenced, displayed, printed or combined affects how an audience interprets the work. This reinforces the idea that presentation is part of meaning, rather than simply a final decorative stage. The Identity theme also allows students to engage with wider issues surrounding representation, culture, relationships and self-expression, supporting their understanding of photography as a powerful form of personal and social communication.



Authentic connections

How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Students' spiritual development is supported through reflection on the personal ideas and experiences explored within the Identity project. They consider how effectively their photographic choices communicate the ideas that matter to them. Moral development continues through discussion of representation, consent, editing and the responsibilities involved in presenting photographs of people or personal experiences. Social development is strengthened through critique, feedback and shared problem-solving. Students learn to respond constructively to advice while maintaining ownership of their own creative direction. Cultural development is supported through the range of photographers and visual perspectives encountered across the project. Students develop a stronger appreciation of how identity may be expressed differently according to cultural, social and historical context.

Career Links:

- A key career focus is the Photo Editor, who selects, sequences and refines imagery for publication, exhibitions and digital platforms.
- Students can also explore the role of a Gallery Curator, where decisions about selection, arrangement and presentation influence how an audience interprets a body of visual work.
- A further link can be made to the Freelance Photographer, who must manage an entire creative project from initial idea through to final delivery and presentation.

The Skills Builder Framework is embedded throughout the term, with particular emphasis on Planning, Leadership and Adapting.

- Planning is developed through preparation for the mock examination. Students need to organise their portfolio, identify priorities, prepare materials and manage the sequence of tasks required to complete their work successfully.
- Leadership is developed through sustained refinement. Students are expected to revisit weaker elements and continue improving their work rather than accepting the first resolved outcome.
- Adapting is important during both portfolio completion and the mock examination. Students may encounter technical problems, unsuccessful experiments or time pressure and are encouraged to respond constructively and adapt their approach.



Resources

What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?



Assessment

How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

Students use their existing Identity portfolio alongside SLR cameras, computers, Adobe Photoshop and any additional photographic or presentation materials appropriate to their chosen direction.

Teacher feedback, GCSE exemplars and mock examination planning materials support students in identifying gaps and understanding

Assessment during Term 2 continues to use the AQA GCSE Art & Design Assessment Objectives, but there is now a very strong emphasis on disciplinary knowledge because students are applying previously acquired knowledge within a sustained and increasingly independent project.

how their work demonstrates evidence across all four Assessment Objectives.	Approximately 20% of assessment focuses on substantive knowledge and 80% on disciplinary knowledge. The 20% substantive knowledge includes students' understanding of photographic techniques, digital processes, presentation methods and relevant contextual sources. The 80% disciplinary knowledge reflects students' ability to evaluate, refine and resolve their work independently. They must identify weaknesses, select appropriate processes, make purposeful improvements, manage their time and bring together research, experimentation and presentation into a coherent final response. AO1, Develop, is demonstrated through the continued development of ideas and contextual understanding. AO2, Refine, is particularly significant as students revisit and improve their work. AO3, Record, continues through further photography, documentation and annotation. AO4, Present, becomes a major focus as students resolve and present their Identity project and produce an outcome during the mock examination. Assessment therefore focuses on the extent to which students can demonstrate a coherent journey from investigation and experimentation through to refinement and personal response.
Term 3 Enquiry	 Externally Set Assignment – Investigation and Development
	Big Picture <i>What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?</i>

During Term 3, students begin the AQA Externally Set Assignment, which forms 40% of the final GCSE Photography grade. This marks the point at which students apply the knowledge, technical skills and creative processes developed across the course to an externally provided starting point.

Students select a theme or starting point from the examination paper and begin developing an individual response. The emphasis is on independence, purposeful research and the development of a clear line of enquiry. Students are expected to interpret the starting point thoughtfully, identify relevant photographers and artists and begin generating ideas that have the potential to develop into a personal photographic investigation.

The preparatory period mirrors the creative process established throughout Years 10 and 11, but with significantly greater independence. Students plan photoshoots, experiment with photographic and digital processes, record observations and evaluate the direction of their work, building evidence across all four Assessment Objectives.



Zoom In

What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

The term begins with students exploring the range of starting points provided within the ESA paper. They consider possible interpretations, generate initial ideas and select a direction that offers enough scope for sustained photographic development.

Once a starting point has been chosen, students undertake contextual research into relevant photographers, artists and visual practitioners. Research is expected to be selective and purposeful, with students identifying techniques, concepts and visual approaches that can genuinely inform their own work.

Students then begin a series of practical investigations. They plan and complete photoshoots, produce contact sheets, select imagery and experiment with composition, lighting, viewpoint and digital editing. Their work should demonstrate that ideas are evolving as new possibilities are tested.

Annotation supports this process by explaining the relationship between the examination starting point, contextual research and practical experimentation. Students are increasingly expected to justify why particular ideas are being taken forward and how their work is beginning to develop a personal direction.



Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Students enter the ESA with a substantial range of knowledge and experience developed throughout the GCSE course. They should be



Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Challenge comes through the ambition and individuality of the interpretation students develop from the examination starting point.

confident in using an SLR camera, planning photoshoots, selecting successful imagery and applying a range of digital editing processes. They should also understand how to research relevant photographers, analyse visual sources and use contextual investigation to generate rather than simply imitate ideas. Their experience of the Identity project and mock examination provides a direct foundation for the independent working practices required during the ESA. The key progression is that students are now required to apply these processes to an externally provided starting point with significantly less teacher direction.	Higher-attaining students should avoid predictable or literal responses and explore more conceptual or unexpected interpretations. They are encouraged to make connections between several contextual sources, combining ideas rather than following a single photographer too closely. Their practical work should show breadth during the initial investigation, but experimentation should remain purposeful. Students working towards the highest levels should be able to identify which ideas have genuine potential and explain why particular directions deserve further development. Written analysis should become increasingly concise and perceptive, focusing on how contextual influences, technical choices and visual decisions contribute to the development of the student's own intentions.
 Wider Framework <i>How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?</i>	 Curriculum Hinterland <i>What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?</i>
Term 3 begins the final major project of the GCSE course and draws together the knowledge and habits established across Years 10 and 11. The work developed during this term forms the foundation of the preparatory portfolio that continues through Term 4. Students will need to use the early investigation to identify stronger directions, undertake further photography and refine their ideas towards a final response. This preparatory work ultimately leads to the supervised examination in Term 5, where students produce the final outcome that represents the culmination of the ESA project.	The Externally Set Assignment allows students to recognise that professional creative practice often begins with a brief, theme or externally defined problem rather than complete freedom. Photographers working within advertising, editorial, fashion, design and commercial contexts regularly interpret briefs and must find individual ways to respond while meeting particular requirements. Students therefore experience an authentic creative process in which originality must operate within constraints. The breadth of the ESA starting points also encourages students to draw upon wider cultural, social and visual knowledge. Depending on their chosen direction, they may make connections with areas such as identity, environment, architecture, nature, technology, society or material culture.
 Authentic connections <i>How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?</i>	

Students' spiritual development is supported through selecting and interpreting a starting point that connects with their own interests, ideas and visual preferences. They have increasing freedom to decide what they wish to communicate and how they want their work to develop. Moral development emerges through the themes, and imagery students choose to investigate. They are expected to consider representation, consent and the ethical implications of the images they create and manipulate. Social development is strengthened through critique and discussion during the preparatory process. Students explain their emerging ideas, consider alternative interpretations and respond constructively to feedback while retaining ownership of their own project. Cultural development is supported through independent research into photographers and artists from relevant historical, cultural and contemporary contexts. Students increasingly select their own contextual sources rather than relying solely on practitioners introduced by the teacher.

Career Links:

- A key career focus is the Advertising Photographer, who interprets a client's brief and develops imagery that meets a particular purpose while remaining visually distinctive.
- Students can also explore the role of an Editorial Photographer, who responds to themes, stories or commissions and must develop a visual approach appropriate to a particular audience or publication.
- A further connection is the Creative Producer, who helps develop an initial concept into a workable visual project by coordinating research, planning, resources and creative decisions.

The Skills Builder Framework is embedded throughout the ESA, with particular emphasis on Creativity, Planning and Leadership.

- Creativity is developed through interpreting the examination starting point and generating an individual photographic direction. Students are encouraged to make connections, explore alternatives and avoid predictable first ideas.
- Planning becomes essential as students manage the different stages of an extended examination project. They organise research, photoshoots, experimentation and annotation so that the project develops coherently within the available time.
- Leadership is developed through ownership of the enquiry. Students make increasingly independent decisions about contextual sources, practical processes and the direction in which their ideas develop.



Resources

What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?



Assessment

How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

Students use the AQA Externally Set Assignment paper alongside SLR cameras, computers, Adobe Photoshop and any additional photographic or presentation processes appropriate to their chosen starting point.

Contextual research becomes increasingly individual, with students using gallery collections, photographic publications and reliable digital resources to identify practitioners relevant to their selected area of enquiry.

Assessment during Term 3 is structured entirely around the AQA GCSE Art & Design Assessment Objectives and reflects the high level of independence expected within the Externally Set Assignment. Approximately 20% of assessment focuses on substantive knowledge and 80% on disciplinary knowledge.

The 20% substantive knowledge includes students' understanding of relevant photographic techniques, digital processes, contextual sources and specialist vocabulary needed to support their chosen investigation.

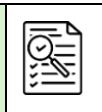
The 80% disciplinary knowledge focuses on how successfully students apply this knowledge to an unfamiliar starting point. They must interpret the examination theme, identify relevant sources, generate ideas, plan and undertake purposeful photography, experiment with processes and make informed decisions about which directions should be developed.

AO1, Develop, is particularly significant during this term as students establish their interpretation of the starting point and investigate relevant contextual sources. AO2, Refine, develops through experimentation with photographic and digital processes. AO3, Record, is demonstrated through photoshoots, contact sheets, observations and annotation. AO4, Present, begins to emerge as students identify stronger ideas that may eventually lead towards their final examination response.

Assessment focuses on whether students can transform an externally provided starting point into a coherent, personal and increasingly independent photographic investigation.

Term 4 Enquiry	 Externally Set Assignment – Refinement and Preparation
 Big Picture <i>What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?</i>	During Term 4, students continue the AQA Externally Set Assignment, developing the initial ideas and investigations established during Term 3 into increasingly focused and resolved photographic responses. The emphasis shifts from generating possibilities towards selecting the strongest directions, refining them and preparing confidently for the final supervised examination. Students are expected to work with a high level of independence. They revisit earlier shoots, experiments and contextual research, identifying which ideas have the greatest potential and which need further development. They undertake additional photography where necessary, extend digital manipulation and presentation experiments, and make increasingly deliberate decisions about how their work communicates their chosen theme. This term is therefore about depth rather than breadth. Students should demonstrate that their ideas are not simply accumulating, but developing through a clear process of evaluation, refinement and personal decision-making.
 Zoom In <i>What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?</i>	Students begin the term by reviewing the direction of their ESA and identifying the most successful areas of development. They consider whether their current work demonstrates enough connection between contextual research, practical experimentation and personal intention. Further photoshoots are planned where they are needed to strengthen the project. Students may refine composition, lighting, viewpoint, subject choice or scale and compare new imagery with earlier attempts. Digital editing and manipulation become increasingly selective, with students expected to use techniques because they contribute to the meaning or visual impact of the work. Presentation is also developed further. Students consider how images might be sequenced, grouped, layered, enlarged, repeated or combined in order to communicate their intentions more effectively. Their annotations become increasingly evaluative, explaining why particular choices have been made and how the project has changed over time. By the end of the term, students should have a clear understanding of the direction of their final examination response and the preparatory work needed to support it.

 Pre-Requisite Knowledge <i>What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?</i>	 Pitch Up <i>How will we challenge ourselves?</i>
Students enter Term 4 with a chosen ESA starting point, relevant contextual research and an established body of photographic experimentation from Term 3. They should already be confident in using SLR cameras, Photoshop and a range of photographic processes, and they should understand how contextual sources can influence practical development. The main progression is the ability to edit and refine their own creative journey, identifying what deserves further development and what can be left behind.	Challenge during this term comes through the quality of students' refinement and the sophistication of their decision-making. Higher-attaining students should show that each new experiment has a clear purpose and that their work is moving towards an increasingly personal and coherent response. They should be able to explain how contextual influences have been adapted rather than copied and how practical experimentation has changed the direction of the project. Students working towards the highest levels should demonstrate strong visual coherence, ambitious use of photography and editing, and a clear sense of personal intention. Their final preparation should show that they understand not just what they intend to produce, but why it is the most appropriate culmination of their investigation.
 Wider Framework <i>How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?</i>	 Curriculum Hinterland <i>What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?</i>
Term 4 prepares students directly for the supervised examination in Term 5. By the end of the term, students should have completed the main body of preparatory work and have a clear, achievable plan for the final outcome. The process closely mirrors professional creative practice, where ideas are researched, tested, refined and resolved before final production. Students are therefore expected to manage their own workload carefully, prioritise the most important areas for development and use feedback strategically. This term represents the final major opportunity to strengthen the project before the final examination outcome is produced.	The refinement process encourages students to understand photography as a discipline built around selection, judgement and interpretation. Professional photographers rarely use every image they capture; they edit, compare and refine in order to construct a stronger final body of work. Students also recognise that visual meaning is shaped not only by the individual photograph but by the way images are presented. Sequencing, scale, repetition, layout and physical or digital presentation can all influence how an audience responds. This develops wider visual literacy and reinforces the idea that photography is both a technical and conceptual discipline.

	Authentic connections <i>How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?</i>
Students' spiritual development is supported as they refine ideas that increasingly reflect their own interests, values and creative preferences. They make personal choices about how their theme should be represented and what they want an audience to understand. Moral development continues through consideration of representation, editing, consent and the impact of visual choices. Students are expected to make responsible decisions about the subjects and imagery used within their project. Social development is strengthened through critique and feedback. Students learn to justify their choices, respond constructively to different viewpoints and make informed decisions about whether to adapt their work. Cultural development is supported through continued engagement with photographers and artists from relevant historical and contemporary contexts, helping students position their own work within a wider visual culture. Career Links: • A key career focus is the Art Director, who is responsible for shaping the overall visual direction of a project and deciding which imagery, styles and approaches best communicate an intended message. • Students can also explore the role of a Photo Editor, who selects and refines images for publication, advertising and digital platforms. • A further connection is the Creative Director, who oversees the development of a visual project from initial concept through to final presentation and must make strategic decisions about which ideas should be taken forward. The Skills Builder Framework is embedded throughout the term, with particular emphasis on Aiming High, Planning and Problem Solving. • Adapting is developed through the expectation that students continue refining and improving their work rather than accepting an idea simply because it is complete. • Planning is essential as students manage the remaining preparation time before the final examination and identify which tasks will have the greatest impact on the quality of their project. • Problem Solving is developed as students respond to technical, visual and organisational challenges and adapt their approach when an idea does not work as intended.	
	Resources <i>What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?</i>
	Assessment <i>How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?</i>
Students use their ESA preparatory portfolio alongside SLR cameras, computers, Adobe Photoshop and any additional photographic or presentation materials relevant to their individual project.	Assessment during Term 4 continues to be structured around the AQA GCSE Art & Design Assessment Objectives, with a strong emphasis on disciplinary knowledge. Approximately 15% of assessment focuses on substantive knowledge and 85% on disciplinary knowledge. The 15% substantive knowledge



Contextual research continues through appropriate gallery collections, photographic publications and reliable digital sources, while teacher feedback and GCSE exemplars support students in refining their work against the Assessment Objectives.	includes students' understanding of relevant photographic techniques, editing processes, presentation methods and contextual sources. The 85% disciplinary knowledge focuses on how effectively students apply this knowledge independently. Students must evaluate previous work, identify the strongest direction, undertake targeted further experimentation, solve technical and visual problems and refine their ideas in preparation for the final examination. AO1, Develop, is demonstrated through the continued development of ideas and contextual connections. AO2, Refine, is the dominant focus as students select, adapt and improve their work. AO3, Record, continues through further photography, documentation and annotation. AO4, Present, becomes increasingly significant as students prepare the direction of their final response. Assessment focuses on whether students can demonstrate a clear progression from initial investigation towards a purposeful, personal and well-resolved final intention.
Term 5 Enquiry	 Externally Set Assignment – Final Examination and Presentation
 Big Picture <i>What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?</i>	

During Term 5, students complete the final stage of the AQA Externally Set Assignment. The term begins with the supervised examination period, during which students produce a final outcome that brings together the research, photography, experimentation and refinement developed throughout Terms 3 and 4.

This is the point at which students demonstrate the highest level of independence expected across the course. They are required to manage their time carefully, make confident creative decisions and apply their technical knowledge purposefully in order to realise their intentions.

The final outcome is not viewed in isolation. It forms the culmination of the preparatory journey and should demonstrate a clear relationship between contextual research, practical development and personal response.



Zoom In

What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Before the examination, students review their preparatory work and ensure that their intentions are clear and achievable. They identify the imagery, processes and presentation methods that will be used during the supervised period and make final organisational decisions about how they will approach the task.

During the examination, students work independently to produce their final response. This may involve digital editing, printing, image sequencing, mixed-media presentation or other appropriate photographic processes depending on the direction of the individual project.

Students are expected to respond to challenges as they arise, adapt where necessary and make purposeful choices without losing sight of the ideas developed during preparation.

Following the examination, students ensure that the final outcome and preparatory work are presented coherently as a complete GCSE submission.



Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Students enter Term 5 with a developed ESA portfolio and a clear final intention. They should already have completed relevant contextual research, photographic shoots, experimentation and refinement.

They are expected to draw on the full range of substantive knowledge developed across the course, including camera



Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Challenge during this term is demonstrated through independence, ambition and the quality of the final resolution.

Higher-attaining students should show that the final outcome is a genuine culmination of the preparatory process rather than a separate piece produced at the end. Their work should demonstrate clear connections with contextual sources while remaining personal and distinctive.

control, composition, lighting, digital manipulation, presentation and photographic terminology. The key progression is the ability to apply this knowledge fluently and independently under supervised examination conditions.	Students working towards the highest levels should make confident decisions about composition, editing, scale and presentation and respond intelligently if the original plan needs to change during the examination. The strongest outcomes should demonstrate both technical control and conceptual clarity, with every major decision contributing to the intended visual communication.
 Wider Framework <i>How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?</i>	 Curriculum Hinterland <i>What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?</i>
Term 5 completes the formal GCSE Photography journey and provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate how far their independence has developed since the beginning of Year 10. The process of planning, producing and presenting a final outcome mirrors the expectations of further study and professional creative practice, where artists and photographers are required to work within deadlines, respond to briefs and present a finished body of work. The skills developed across the course provide a strong foundation for progression into Post-16 Photography, Art and Design, Graphic Design, Media and wider creative pathways.	The final examination reinforces the idea that creative work is produced within both freedom and constraint. Students have developed their own response to the ESA starting point, but must now realise that response within a set period of time. This reflects professional photographic practice, where photographers often work to deadlines, client requirements, publication schedules or exhibition dates. Students therefore recognise that successful creative practice depends not only on imagination, but also on preparation, organisation, technical reliability and the ability to make decisions under pressure.
 Authentic connections <i>How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?</i>	

Students' spiritual development is supported as they bring a personal creative investigation to completion and reflect on the ideas and visual choices that have shaped their final response. Moral development continues through responsible representation, ethical use of imagery and consideration of how photographic choices may influence an audience. Social development is strengthened through the independence and responsibility required during the supervised examination, alongside respectful working within a shared creative environment. Cultural development is supported through the breadth of contextual research and visual influences brought together across the final project, helping students recognise their own work as part of a wider photographic and creative culture.

Career Links:

- A key career focus is the Commissioned Photographer, who responds to a brief, plans a shoot and produces finished work for a client within a fixed timeframe.
- Students can also explore the role of a Creative Producer, who coordinates the practical delivery of a visual project and ensures that the final outcome is completed successfully.
- A further connection is the Exhibition Photographer or Artist, where work must be selected, completed and presented coherently for public viewing.

The Skills Builder Framework is embedded throughout the term, with particular emphasis on Aiming High, Staying Positive and Leadership.

- Planning is developed through the expectation that students produce the strongest possible final response from their preparatory work and make careful decisions about quality, presentation and finish.
- Adapting is essential during the examination period, where students may encounter technical problems, unsuccessful processes or time pressure and must respond constructively.
- Leadership is demonstrated through ownership of the final outcome. Students are responsible for managing their own time, making decisions independently and maintaining the direction of their project through to completion.



Resources

What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?



Assessment

How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

Students continue to use SLR cameras, computers and Adobe Photoshop alongside their existing Term 4 photographic material. Contact sheets, digital experiments and contextual studies of Kazuhiko Kawahara and Horst P. Horst provide the foundation for further development.

Teacher exemplars, peer critique and high-quality GCSE portfolio examples can be used to help students recognise the difference between simple completion and sustained refinement.

Assessment during Term 5 is fully integrated with the AQA GCSE Art & Design Assessment Objectives and reflects the culmination of the Externally Set Assignment. Approximately 10% of assessment focuses on substantive knowledge and 90% on disciplinary knowledge.

The 10% substantive knowledge includes the technical, contextual and visual knowledge students apply during the final examination, including camera control, editing processes, composition, presentation and relevant photographic vocabulary. The 90% disciplinary knowledge reflects students' ability to apply that knowledge independently within the final stages of the project. They must manage time, solve practical problems, make confident creative decisions and produce a final response that clearly grows from their preparatory work.

AO1, Develop, is evidenced through the contextual and conceptual journey established across the project. AO2, Refine, is demonstrated through the decisions and experimentation that have shaped the final direction. AO3, Record, is evidenced through the photographic and observational work documented throughout the preparatory period. AO4, Present, is the dominant focus during Term 5 as students realise their intentions through a personal and meaningful final response.

Assessment therefore considers the final outcome as the culmination of a sustained journey from research and investigation through experimentation, refinement and independent resolution.