

Graphics Curriculum Intent		Year 7
The Year 7 Graphics curriculum introduces pupils to the fundamental principles of visual communication through the creation of their own Zine. Pupils begin by developing an understanding of key graphic design skills, including typography, colour theory, collage and layout composition, before learning how these elements can be combined to communicate ideas clearly and creatively. Across the three topics, pupils move from learning the formal elements of graphic design, to researching and developing ideas, and finally to applying drawing and computer-aided design skills to produce their finished Zine. The project therefore introduces pupils to the wider Design Wheel through researching, planning, making and evaluating, providing a clear foundation for later Graphics projects. Pupils also explore how artists and designers communicate ideas visually, including making connections to the work of Michael Craig-Martin, while developing their ability to use concise definitions, annotation and visual examples when presenting information. By the end of the project, pupils should be increasingly confident in making purposeful choices about type, colour, imagery, composition and layout, and in combining traditional drawing with digital processes to create a visually organised final outcome. The skills developed provide the foundation for Year 8, where pupils move into logo design, branding and food packaging, and Year 9, where those skills are applied to a more sophisticated commercial branding project.		
Topic 1		Natural Forms: Observational Recording and Artist Investigation
	Big Picture <i>What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?</i>	
Topic 1 introduces pupils to the core visual language of Graphic Design through typography and colour theory. Pupils begin to understand how graphic designers communicate ideas visually and how choices about type, colour, imagery and layout can influence the way an audience responds to a design. The Year 7 curriculum intent identifies typography, colour theory, collage and layout composition as key introductory Graphic Design skills, alongside learning how artists and designers communicate ideas visually.		
	Zoom In <i>What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?</i>	
Pupils understand what typography is and how different typefaces can communicate different moods, meanings and styles. They learn the difference between key typographic features, including: - font - typeface - size		

- weight
- spacing
- alignment
- hierarchy

Pupils develop an introductory understanding of colour theory, including how colours can be organised and combined to create different effects.

They consider:

- primary and secondary colours
- warm and cool colours
- complementary colours
- contrasting colours
- harmonious colour combinations
- how colour can affect mood and meaning

Pupils also begin to understand that Graphic Design is about visual communication and that designers make purposeful choices to influence an audience.

Disciplinary Knowledge:

- Pupils identify and describe the visual characteristics of different typefaces.
- They compare how typography can change the tone or meaning of a design.
- Pupils experiment with different colour combinations and consider which are most effective for a particular purpose.
- They begin to make links between audience → message → typography → colour
- Pupils apply these ideas through short practical exercises, creating examples that communicate different moods, themes or messages.
- They also begin to present ideas clearly using annotation and concise explanations, in line with the Year 7 curriculum expectation that pupils learn to present information through definitions, annotations and visual examples.

Key Vocabulary: Graphic Design, typography, typeface, font, visual communication, hierarchy, alignment, spacing, colour theory, primary colour, secondary colour, complementary, contrast, harmony, warm colour, cool colour, audience, message



Pre-Requisite Knowledge

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



Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Pupils may enter Year 7 with very different levels of experience in Art, Design and digital presentation. The Year 7 curriculum explicitly recognises that some pupils may have limited or no prior experience of Design Technology specialisms and is intended to establish a common foundation of knowledge and skills. Pupils may already have encountered colour mixing or simple lettering in primary school, but this topic develops those ideas into a more explicit understanding of Graphic Design as purposeful visual communication.	Pupils are challenged to move beyond simply choosing colours or fonts they like. They should explain why a particular typeface or colour combination is suitable for a given message or audience. More confident pupils should compare alternative design choices and explain how they would create different visual effects. They should begin to demonstrate awareness of visual hierarchy, showing that some information should attract attention before other information. The strongest work will show clear links between: purpose → audience → typography → colour choice rather than treating each element separately.
 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>
Topic 1 provides the foundation for Topic 2, where pupils will learn how to research and present information and begin developing ideas for their own Zine. The knowledge developed here will then be applied in Topic 3, where pupils create the finished Zine using drawing and computer-aided design. The Year 7 curriculum identifies typography, colour, collage, layout and documenting ideas as the core foundation for progression through KS3 Graphics.	Pupils begin to recognise Graphic Design in the world around them. They can make connections to: • posters • magazines • packaging • logos • websites • signs • advertising They also explore how designers use typography and colour to influence how people interpret information. The Year 7 curriculum connects this work to professional artists and designers, including Michael Craig-Martin, helping pupils understand how visual style and colour can communicate ideas.
 Authentic connections <i>How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?</i>	
Spiritual development is supported through experimentation, personal expression and developing individual visual preferences. Moral development is introduced through recognising that visual communication can influence people and that designers have a responsibility to communicate clearly and appropriately. Social	

development is strengthened through discussing visual choices, sharing ideas and responding constructively to different interpretations. Cultural development is supported through recognising that colours, symbols and styles can have different meanings within different communities and contexts.

The topic also connects strongly with Art and Design through colour and composition, English through communication and meaning, and Digital Literacy through visual presentation.

Career Links:

- A Type Designer creates typefaces and lettering styles for print, digital media and branding.
- A Signage and Wayfinding Designer uses typography, colour and symbols to help people navigate spaces such as airports, hospitals, shopping centres and public buildings.
- A Print Designer creates visual designs for printed materials such as posters, leaflets, stationery and promotional materials.

The main Skills Builder focus for this topic is Creativity, Speaking and Listening.

- Creativity is developed through experimenting with typography and colour combinations.
- Speaking is developed as pupils explain and justify their visual choices.
- Listening is developed through responding to feedback and comparing different interpretations.



 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>
Pupils use: • examples of graphic design • typography samples • colour wheels • visual communication examples • sketchbooks or design sheets • drawing materials • digital presentation tools where appropriate The Year 7 Graphics curriculum also supports pupils in presenting information clearly through visual examples, definitions and annotations.	Topic 1 includes the baseline assessment for Year 7 Graphics. The wider KS3 assessment model states that pupils complete a baseline assessment at the start of each Design Technology specialism, combining prior-knowledge questions with practical skills tasks. Approximately 60% of assessment focuses on substantive knowledge and 40% on disciplinary knowledge. The 60% substantive knowledge includes understanding typography, colour theory, visual communication and key graphic design terminology. The 40% disciplinary knowledge assesses pupils' ability to apply typography and colour choices purposefully and explain how those choices influence communication. High expectations are placed on pupils to demonstrate that Graphic Design choices are intentional and linked to audience and purpose, rather than simply decorative.

Topic 2
Topic



Research, Presenting Information and Developing the Zine



Big Picture

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

Topic 2 develops pupils' ability to research, select and present information clearly, before using that research to begin developing ideas for their own Zine. Pupils now apply the typography and colour theory knowledge from Topic 1 in a more purposeful design context. They learn that successful Graphic Design is informed by research and that ideas should develop from evidence, inspiration and a clear sense of purpose rather than being created at random.



Zoom In

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

Substantive Knowledge:

Pupils understand the purpose of research within Graphic Design and how it helps designers develop informed ideas.

They learn that effective research should be:

- relevant to the project
- clearly organised
- visually presented
- concise
- annotated
- linked to future design decisions

Pupils revisit the importance of:

- typography
- colour
- collage
- layout
- visual hierarchy
- imagery
- annotation

They also understand what a Zine is as a small, independently designed publication that combines text and imagery to communicate ideas visually.

The Year 7 curriculum believes pupils should learn to present information clearly through concise definitions, annotation and visual examples.

Disciplinary Knowledge

- Pupils select relevant visual research rather than collecting unrelated images.
- They organise research pages so that information is easy to follow.

They annotate research to explain:

- what they notice
- what they find effective
- how typography is being used
- how colour influences the design
- how layout guides the viewer
- which features could influence their own Zine

Pupils begin generating and developing their own Zine ideas, making links between research and design decisions. They experiment with page layouts, visual themes, type styles and colour combinations in preparation for making the final outcome.

Key Vocabulary: research, Zine, annotation, layout, composition, typography, colour theory, collage, visual hierarchy, imagery, inspiration, idea development, design influence, presentation, visual communication

 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>
Pupils build directly on Topic 1. They should understand: • basic typography • colour theory • audience and purpose • visual communication • how type and colour can affect meaning They may also bring prior experience from Art or primary school with collage, sketching and simple presentation work. Topic 2 develops these skills into a more formal design process where pupils are expected to research before designing.	Pupils are challenged to move beyond simply sticking images onto a page. They should explain why particular examples are relevant and what they have learned from them. More confident pupils should compare different visual examples and identify which are more effective and why. They should also begin to justify how their research is influencing their own Zine choices. The strongest work will show a clear relationship between: research → analysis → influence → idea development rather than treating research and design as separate tasks.
 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>
Topic 2 prepares pupils directly for Topic 3, where they will make their final Zine using drawing skills and computer-aided design.	Pupils explore how professional graphic designers build visual research boards, reference collections and concept pages before developing final designs.

The research and development work completed here should therefore give pupils a clear visual direction before they begin production. The Year 7 curriculum identifies research, design and Zine creation as an important foundation for later Graphics work, including more complex visual communication and digital design at Key Stage 4.	They begin to recognise that magazines, posters, websites and advertising are carefully constructed rather than accidental. Pupils also make connections to the work of artists and designers who use colour, imagery and text to communicate ideas visually, including the Year 7 curriculum link to Michael Craig-Martin.
Authentic connections <i>How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?</i> Spiritual development is supported through exploration of personal interests and creative influences when developing the Zine. Moral development is developed through considering how visual communication can shape attitudes and how designers should communicate information responsibly. Social development is strengthened through discussion, peer feedback and respecting different visual interpretations. Cultural development is supported through exposure to a range of visual styles and the understanding that graphic design reflects different communities, trends and cultural influences. The topic also connects strongly with English through selecting and presenting information, Art and Design through composition and collage, and Digital Literacy through research and digital presentation. Career Links: • A Creative Researcher gathers visual, cultural and audience research to support the development of creative projects and campaigns. • An Advertising Designer creates visual concepts for advertising campaigns across print, digital and social media. • A Visual Merchandiser plans how products, graphics, colour and displays are presented to attract customers in shops and commercial spaces. The main Skills Builder focus for this topic is Planning, Creativity and Problem Solving. • Planning is developed through organising research and deciding how the Zine will be structured. • Creativity is developed through experimenting with different visual ideas and themes. • Problem Solving is developed as pupils decide how best to combine text, imagery, colour and layout within limited page space. 	
Resources <i>What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?</i> Pupils use: • examples of Zines • graphic design research examples • typography references • colour and collage examples • annotation prompts	Assessment <i>How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?</i> Assessment in Topic 2 focuses on pupils' ability to research, analyse, present and develop ideas. Approximately 45% of assessment focuses on substantive knowledge and 55% on disciplinary knowledge.

- drawing materials
- magazines and printed imagery
- digital research and presentation tools where appropriate

The 45% substantive knowledge includes understanding research, annotation, layout, typography, colour, collage and visual communication.

The 55% disciplinary knowledge assesses pupils' ability to select relevant research, present it clearly, explain design influences and develop initial Zine ideas.

This contributes to the practical assessment approach used across Design Technology, where pupils are assessed on planning, designing and making skills alongside their theoretical understanding.

High expectations are placed on pupils to ensure that research actively informs their Zine development, rather than simply decorating the page.

Topic 3

Topic



Making a Zine Using Drawing Skills and Computer-Aided Design



Big Picture

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

Topic 3 brings the Year 7 Graphics project together as pupils make their final Zine using drawing skills and computer-aided design. Pupils apply the typography, colour theory, research, annotation and idea-development skills from Topics 1 and 2 to create a finished graphic outcome. The emphasis is on clear visual communication, effective layout and purposeful design decisions.

The Year 7 curriculum states that pupils should create their own Zine by applying their understanding of graphic communication and visual organisation, before evaluating the finished work and reflecting on the creative process.



Zoom In

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

Substantive Knowledge

Pupils understand how the different elements of Graphic Design work together within a finished publication.

They revisit:

- typography
- colour theory
- collage
- layout
- composition

- imagery
- visual hierarchy
- annotation
- drawing
- computer-aided design

They understand that a successful Zine should have a consistent visual style and communicate information clearly.

Pupils also develop an introductory understanding of how digital design tools can be used alongside traditional drawing and collage techniques.

Disciplinary Knowledge

Pupils plan the structure and appearance of their Zine.

They combine hand-drawn and digital elements to create individual pages.

They make purposeful decisions about:

- placement of text
- font and typography
- colour combinations
- image size
- page balance
- spacing
- visual hierarchy

Pupils use computer-aided design techniques to refine and present work clearly.

They review work as it develops, making changes where layout or visual communication is unclear.

They then evaluate the completed Zine and reflect on how successfully their design choices communicate the intended ideas.

Key Vocabulary: Zine, computer-aided design, CAD, layout, composition, typography, visual hierarchy, digital design, drawing, collage, imagery, alignment, spacing, presentation, refinement, evaluation

 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>
Pupils build directly on Topics 1 and 2. They should understand: • typography • colour theory • visual communication • audience and purpose	Pupils are challenged to create a Zine that feels coherent and intentional, rather than a collection of unrelated pages. They should demonstrate consistency in typography, colour and layout choices while still creating visual interest. More confident pupils should use digital design tools to refine alignment, hierarchy and composition and combine traditional and digital techniques effectively. The strongest work will show that every design choice has a clear

• research • annotation • layout • idea development They should also have a developed visual direction for their Zine. The Year 7 curriculum specifically identifies typography, colour, collage, layout and documenting ideas as the foundation for this final making stage.	purpose and that the Zine communicates information in an engaging and organised way.
 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>
Topic 3 completes the Year 7 Graphics project and prepares pupils for Year 8. The practical skills developed across the Zine project provide a foundation for later work in logos, branding, typography, layout and packaging design. The Year 7 curriculum explicitly states that these experiences prepare pupils for more advanced visual communication, digital design and creative projects later in KS3 and KS4. In Year 8, pupils will apply these skills within a more commercial context through the food packaging and logo design project.	Pupils develop a wider understanding of independent publishing and how designers combine text and image to communicate messages. They can make links to: • magazines • independent publications • posters • digital media • editorial design • advertising They also begin to recognise how computer-aided design has changed the way graphic products are created, edited and reproduced.
 Authentic connections <i>How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?</i>	
Spiritual development is supported through creative expression and the opportunity to produce an individual visual outcome. Moral development is developed through responsible communication and consideration of how images and text can influence an audience. Social development is strengthened through peer feedback, critique and sharing completed work. Cultural development is supported through recognising the role of Zines, magazines and graphic publications in communicating the interests and identities of different communities. The topic also connects strongly with Art and Design through drawing and composition, English through written communication, and Digital Literacy through computer-aided design and digital presentation. Career Links:	

- A Pre-Press Technician prepares digital artwork and layouts so that publications, posters and other graphic products are ready for professional printing.
- A Web Designer combines layout, typography, colour and imagery to create visually effective websites.
- A Motion Graphics Designer creates animated typography, graphics and visual effects for television, advertising, websites and digital media.

The main Skills Builder focus for this topic is Creativity, Planning and Adapting.

- Creativity is developed through combining typography, imagery, drawing and colour into a final visual outcome.
- Planning is developed through organising pages and managing the structure of the completed Zine.
- Adapting is developed as pupils respond to feedback and refine layouts or design choices during production.

 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>
Pupils use: • their Topic 1 and Topic 2 design work • Zine exemplars • drawing materials • collage materials • typography references • digital design software • computers or iPads • printer access where appropriate The Year 7 Graphics intent specifically identifies the use of different media and clear presentation as important practical skills within the project.	Topic 3 includes the final assessment of the Year 7 Graphics project. Approximately 40% of assessment focuses on substantive knowledge and 60% on disciplinary knowledge. The 40% substantive knowledge includes understanding typography, colour, layout, composition, digital design and visual communication. The 60% disciplinary knowledge assesses pupils' ability to apply those elements effectively when producing the Zine, refine work during production and evaluate the final outcome. The wider DT assessment model states that the final summative assessment focuses on theoretical knowledge developed through the project, including key concepts, processes and evaluation. High expectations are placed on pupils to produce a Zine that demonstrates clear visual organisation, creative decision making and increasingly confident use of both traditional and digital graphic design techniques.