

Investigate: Inquiry and the Artistic Process

AP 2-D Art and Design

Inquiry and Asking Questions

In AP Art and Design, making begins with **inquiry** 探究—asking questions that guide a **sustained investigation** 持续探究 over time. This is Big Idea 1.



Inquiry drives a cycle: ask a question, investigate, make, reflect —and let each answer raise a new question

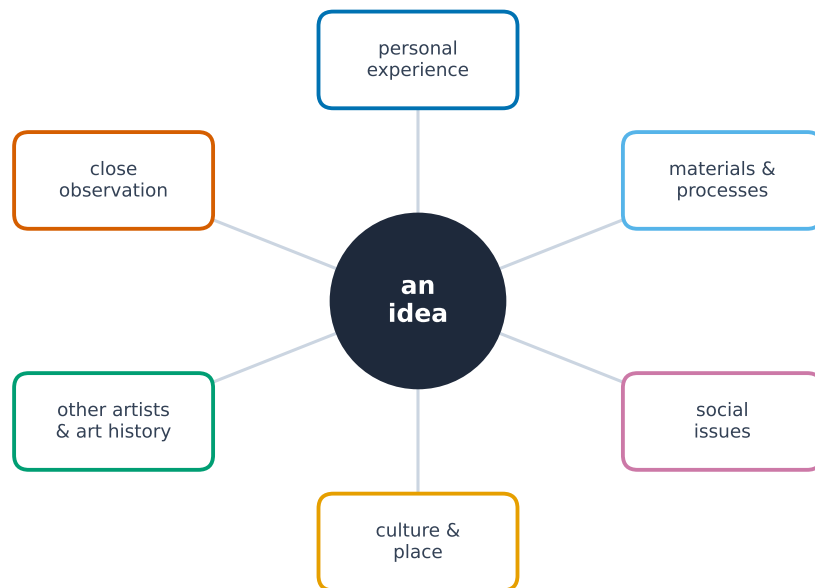
- Inquiry is asking questions to find information and drive investigation.
- A sustained investigation is an in-depth, question-driven study of materials, processes, and ideas.
- Good questions can be simple —who, what, when, where, why, how, what if, and why not.
- Questions **evolve**: early questions lead to new questions as the work develops.

Sources of Ideas and Experiences

Artists' and designers' **experiences** 经历 inform why, how, and what they make.

- An experience is any event —real surroundings, imagined ideas, communication, or research.
- Reflecting on experiences sparks questions and inspires investigation.
- Ideas come from **observation** 观察, memory, other disciplines, and other artists' work.

- Experiences can be **documented** with drawings, photos, notes, or sound, becoming a resource.



Strong inquiry questions grow from experience, observation, other art, culture, issues, and materials

Materials, Processes, and Ideas

Every work is built from three interacting components —**materials, processes, and ideas** 材料、过程与想法.

- Materials** are what a work is made of; **processes** are how it is made; **ideas** are what it is about.
- The components interact: a material suggests a process; a process shapes an idea.
- Investigating all three expands the possibilities for making, and influences how viewers interpret the work.

Art and Design in Context

Works are made and understood within a **context** 语境—traditions, cultures, and other disciplines.

- Context is when, where, how, why, and by whom a work was made and viewed.
- Artists work within, or challenge, art and design **traditions** 传统 from cultures around the world.
- Comparing works reveals similarities and differences in materials, processes, and ideas.
- Acknowledging references and influences shows **integrity** 诚信—never copying without credit.

Evaluating Art and Design

Works can be **evaluated** 评价 by using visual evidence to compare them with specific **criteria** 标准 (as the AP scoring guidelines do).

- Observe carefully: identify the materials, processes, and ideas, and how they connect.
- Consider whether the components show **synthesis** 综合—parts working together for one effect.
- Evaluation can be informal (as you work) or formal (a **critique** 评图 with peers or a teacher).
- Reflecting on evaluation improves your later thinking and making.

Documentation and the Process Journal

Documentation 记录 records information and becomes a resource for the sustained investigation.

- It takes many forms: images, notes, diagrams, material samples, and written reflection.
- A **process journal** 创作日志 (sketchbook) records questions, experiments, and revisions over time.
- Documenting your **lines of inquiry** 探究路径 shows how the investigation developed.
- Consistent documentation makes writing the portfolio's written evidence far easier.

Worked example (framing an inquiry). A weak sustained-investigation question is really just a topic: *"My investigation is about the ocean."* A strong one is a real **question** that can drive many artworks: *"How can I use colour and texture to show the ocean shifting from calm to dangerous?"* The question names an idea **and** points to the visual choices you will test —exactly what raises a portfolio's score.

Exam tips

- Frame the work with an open **guiding question**, not a closed yes/no one.
- Draw on varied **sources** —observation, experience, research —and cite your influences.
- Aim for **synthesis**: materials and **processes** chosen because they carry the idea.
- Evaluate through **critique** using the elements and principles, then plan a **revision**.
- Keep a **process journal**: record experiments and failures as evidence of inquiry.