

**ART & DESIGN STUDIES**  
**EXPRESSIVE ARTS – PORTRAITURE**

When writing about any painting the important things you must write about are;  
**The Visual Elements – Line, shape, form, tone, colour, pattern, texture.**  
(Use the language of art worksheet to help give you good descriptive words for each element.)

Also you must refer to the following important aspects of a painting;  
Content, composition, Materials/media, technique, style, atmosphere, mood.

**CONTENT - What's in the painting**

Describe the **content** of the portrait. Be specific sometimes it's good to think that you are describing it over the phone.

Is the portrait full length. Ie. The whole body. Is it from the waist up. Or is it a close up.

Has the person been **cropped** in the portrait? Ie. Top of the head chopped off?

**COMPOSITION - The arrangement of the painting**

What can you see in the **foreground**, **middleground** and **background**?

What is the **eyelevel** of the painting seen from? Above? Below?

Describe the **composition** or arrangement of the elements in the painting.  
Is there a **focal point**? Why is this area a focal point? How are your eyes drawn around the art work?

Is the **composition** formal, contrived, relaxed, balanced, symmetrical etc.?

**MATERIALS/MEDIA - What materials has the artist used**

Is it simply oil on canvas? Has the artist used a variety of materials. Collage? Mixed media?

**TECHNIQUE - What materials has the artist used**

What **techniques** has the artist used in this artwork? How is the medium applied, e.g. rough brushstrokes, sketchy charcoal etc.? Smoothly applied? Visible brushstrokes? Impasto?

**STYLE - What materials has the artist used**

How has the artist treated the **subject matter**? Is it realistic, photo-realistic, semi realistic abstract, simplified, detailed, expressive, impressionistic etc.

**THEME**

This is what the artist is trying to convey with the painting, and it requires you to give your personal opinion. This can't be wrong but you must justify be able to justify it.

**ATMOSPHERE/MOOD**

What mood does the sitter convey? Happy, sad, depressed, angry, frustrated.

What is the overall mood of the painting. Is it cold, warm, uplifting, optimistic.