

ART & DESIGN STUDIES
EXPRESSIVE ARTS – PAINTING

When writing about any painting the important questions to ask yourself areas follows

COMPOSITION

- Describe the **content** of the painting. What can you see in the **foreground**, **midground** and **background**?
- What **viewpoint** is the painting seen from?
- 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 there a **structure** apparent? Is the **composition** formal, contrived, relaxed, balanced, symmetrical etc.?
- Are there connections between elements of the artwork, e.g. horizontals, verticals?
- Are there any objects framing the view?
- Are there any human elements to the artwork – people or manmade objects?
- Are they important to the artwork? Why?
- Do these human elements tell us anything about the landscape – scale, where it is, why are they included?
- Imagine you are inside the artwork – what is it like? Think about your senses – sight, smell etc.

STYLE

- How has the artist treated the **subject matter**? Is it realistic, abstract, simplified, detailed, expressive, impressionistic etc. ?
- What **medium** and **techniques** has the artist used in this artwork? How is the medium applied, e.g. rough brushstrokes, sketchy charcoal etc.?
- Sometimes an artist expresses ideas symbolically in their art work, e.g. use of blue may represent sadness or despair, a rose may symbolise love. Is there any **symbolism** or meaning apparent in this piece of art?

CHARACTERISTICS

- You should consider the **visual elements – line, shape, form, tone, texture, pattern and colour**. Focus on discussing the elements which are most important to the artwork.

TIP –use a wordbank to help you describe the visual elements which you are focusing on.

- What **palette** of colours has been used? Are they bright, pale, subtle, bold, limited, contrasting, complementary, monochromatic, warm, cool, harmonious, balanced etc.
- What **mood** or **atmosphere** does the artwork create? How does the artist create this feel? Is the weather important in this artwork? Why?
- How does **light** effect the artwork? What direction is it lit from? what quality does the light have – is it soft, harsh etc.?

YOUR OPINION

- What do you think of this artwork? Back up your opinions.
- How does it make you feel? Why?

