

When studying Graphic Communication A Level, it is important that you not only attend all of your lessons and complete all of your homework, but that you are also doing independent study to advance your knowledge and skills. We would recommend that you are spending at least 5 hours a week on your independent study. In order for this study to be of maximum benefit, it is important that you do a range of different activities from the boxes below, and that these are selected for their relevance to the current project work. Present the work to a standard suitable for your Personal Investigation.

Contextual Research

One important part of independent study is further investigation of your project work. Below are some suggestions of things you can do to raise the standard of your research:

- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the resources available on the Catalogue
- ✓ Investigate a wide range of artists, designers and craftspeople
- ✓ Visit galleries and museums
- ✓ Read latest blogs & identify trends
- ✓ Take photos as source material
- ✓ Do sketches for inspiration
- ✓ Research wider context of your own work: ethical, social, environmental, historical, cultural
- ✓ Write critical and evaluative analysis on individual pieces of design/products
- ✓ Collect exemplar graphic products
- ✓ Survey target market
- ✓ Interview client

Skills Development

Another important part of independent study is extending your skills, to aid the production of high-quality Graphics. Below are some suggestions to help you develop those skills:

- ✓ Refine techniques learnt in class (physical or digital) and trial alternatives
- ✓ Learn a new skill: digital animation, web design, painting, collage, calligraphy
- ✓ Watch video tutorials on Ps, Ai or Id
- ✓ Trial free editing software like Gimp, Inkscape or Snapseed. Practise!
- ✓ Trial image creation with Procreate (iPad)
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with downloadable options

Documentation

The final important part of independent study is recording your progress. Evidence of your research and experimentation will help you retain new knowledge and skills. Below are some ideas about how you can document your work:

- ✓ Visual recording: Use Snipping tool, Screenshots and Photos
- ✓ Describe tools and techniques
- ✓ Explain choices and justify changes
- ✓ Reflect on Brief and Specification
- ✓ Review your work in depth
- ✓ Refine: Ideas for further development
- ✓ Be critical and analytical
- ✓ Use key terminology

Support Materials

In addition to the resources on the [Catalogue](#), there are links on [the CSF Super-curricular Graphic Communication](#) site. These are designed to help support your independent study and aid contextual research and skills development. They include: Blogs, recommended websites, Typography, Branding, Imagery, Downloads, Great Websites, Free Software, Galleries and Museums.