Make: Practice, Experimentation, and Revision

AP 2-D Art and Design

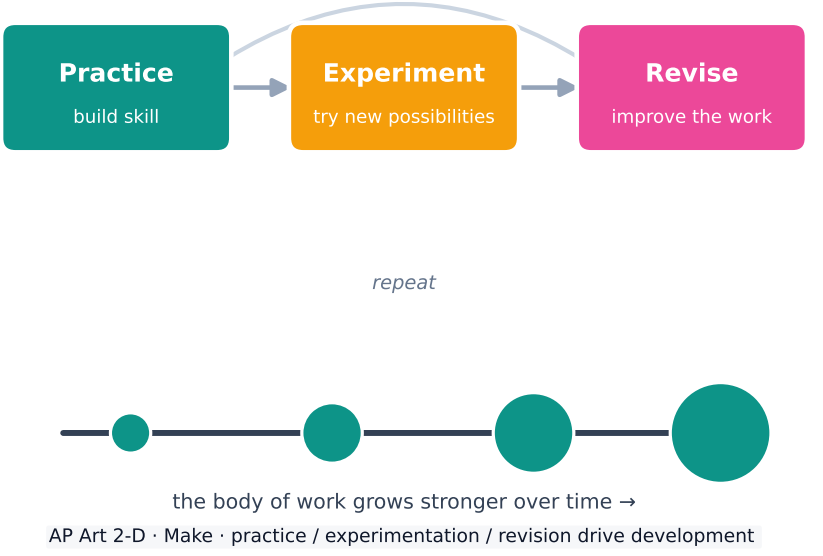
The Sustained Investigation

Big Idea 2 is about **making**. Its heart is the **Sustained Investigation** – a body of work that explores one question or idea in depth over time.

- A sustained investigation is **guided by questions or inquiry** and develops as you make.
- It shows **practice, experimentation, and revision** – not a set of unrelated pieces.
- The 2-D portfolio's Sustained Investigation section is **15 images** plus written evidence.
- A clear, focused inquiry gives the whole body of work direction and **coherence** .

Practice, Experimentation, and Revision

Making advances through three linked actions.



Practice builds skill, experimentation tries new possibilities, and revision improves the work – repeated across the body of work

- **Practice** is repeated work to build skill and understanding.

- **Experimentation** tries new materials, processes, and ideas to discover possibilities.
- **Revision** changes a work based on reflection, feedback, or new questions.
- These are shown **across the body of work**, not just in one final piece. Evidence of experimentation and revision is exactly what the AP readers look for.

A master study: practice, experimentation and revision are how 2-D skill accumulates over time

Synthesis of Materials, Processes, and Ideas

Strong works show **synthesis** – materials, processes, and ideas integrated so the whole is more than its parts.

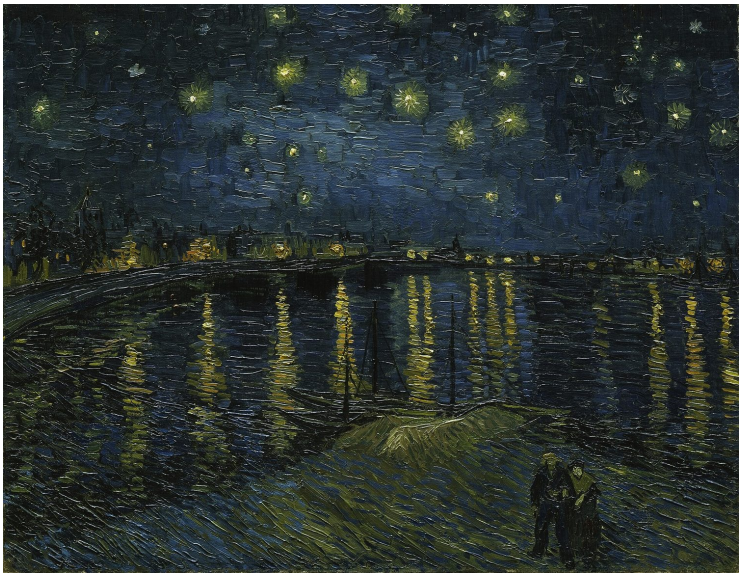
- Synthesis means the components combine to create a unified effect.
- The chosen material should support the idea; the process should serve both.
- When components are integrated, viewers read one clear message rather than separate parts.
- Synthesis develops through investigation – trying combinations and keeping what works.

Demonstrating 2-D Skills

The portfolio must show **2-D skills** – the elements and principles used to organise a flat surface.

- 2-D skills are the skilful use of line, shape, value, colour, texture, space, and the principles of design.
- Skilful work shows control of value, colour, composition, and mark-making.

- Skills are demonstrated **across many works**, in a range of materials and processes.
- The **Selected Works** section is where 2-D skills are judged most directly.



Van Gogh's Starry Night: expressive line, colour, and rhythm as 2-D skills

Composition and Craft in Making

Craft is the quality of making; **composition** is the arrangement of the work – both communicate care and intent.

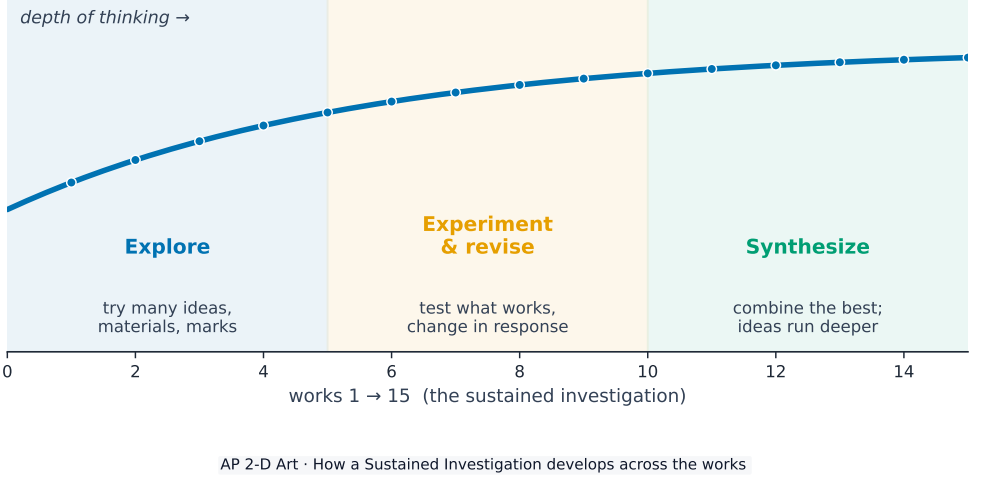
- **Craftsmanship** is the skilful, controlled handling of materials and processes.
- Composition applies the principles of design to organise the picture plane.
- Craft should serve the idea – sometimes a rough or raw handling is the right choice.
- Consistent quality across the body of work signals a developed artist.

Hokusai's Great Wave: composition and craft guide the eye across the picture plane

Developing Ideas Over Time

A sustained investigation shows ideas **developing** – growing and changing across the body of work.

- Development is visible when later works build on discoveries in earlier ones.
- New questions, materials, or processes push the investigation forward.
- Not every experiment succeeds – evidence of what did **not** work is still valuable.
- A body of work with clear development scores higher than a set of finished-but-static pieces.



Early exploration gives way to experimentation and revision, then synthesis – the thinking visibly deepens across the works

Worked example (showing development). The Sustained Investigation is scored on **evidence of thinking**, not just finished pieces: *"My first three works used flat colour; after seeing they felt lifeless, I experimented with layered glazes in works 4–6, then in works 7–9 I combined the best of both."* Describing a change **and** the reason for it is how you demonstrate practice, experimentation, and revision.

Exam tips

- Build the **sustained investigation** as a connected body of work, not one-offs.
- Show **practice**, **experimentation**, and **revision** – a documented failure still earns credit.
- Push **synthesis** and clear **2-D skills**, and keep **craft** clean to the edges.
- Let each work **develop** from the last, raising the next question.
- Choose materials and processes that embody the guiding question.

Vocabulary card meanings

coherence: The quality of a body of work that holds together as one investigation.
developing: Still growing an idea through further trials.