AP 2-D Art and Design

Common Mistakes ·

The readers see only your images and your writing about them, so most lost points are a decision that was made but never shown or explained.

The portfolio – what the readers can and cannot credit

✗ Submitting a set of unrelated good pieces.

✓ **Sustained Investigation means one inquiry pursued across the works, visibly.**

Variety without an investigation cannot show sustained inquiry, which is what the section scores.

CED Investigate

✗ Uploading only finished pieces.

✓ **Include the experiments and the revisions – practice and revision are scored qualities.**

Revision cannot be assessed from finished work alone.

CED Make

✗ Uploading the images in an order that hides the development.

✓ **Order them so the investigation's progress is visible.**

The readers follow the sequence to see the inquiry develop.

CED Present

✗ Writing an inquiry question that cannot be answered by making art.

✓ **Ask something your materials and processes can actually explore.**

A question the work cannot address leaves the investigation unevidenced.

CED Investigate

✗ Describing what is in the image.

✓ **Say what the CHOICE was and why you made it.**

The written evidence is scored for the decisions, not for a description of the result.

CED Present

✗ Using source imagery you did not make and not attributing it.

✓ **Attribute every source, and transform it substantially.**

Unattributed source imagery can invalidate the portfolio, which is a whole-submission risk.

CED Present

✗ Photographing work at an angle, unevenly lit, or with the surroundings in shot.

✓ **Shoot square on, evenly lit, cropped to the work.**

The readers see only the photograph, so a poor image is a poor work to them.

CED Present

- Read the current portfolio requirements before you start: the number of works and the image counts change, and a submission that misses them is penalised before the art is judged.

CED Present

1 · Elements of Art

✗ Using every element of art in one piece to show range.

✓ **Choose the elements the inquiry needs, and use them deliberately.**

A catalogue of elements shows no decision, and decisions are what is scored.

CED 1.1

✗ Treating colour as decoration.

✓ **Use hue, value and saturation as choices that carry meaning.**

Colour relationships are assessed content in the 2-D course.

CED 1.4

✗ Leaving the composition's edges unconsidered.

✓ **Decide what happens at the border – cropping is a choice.**

In 2-D design the picture plane's boundary is part of the composition.

CED 1.6

2 · Principles of Design

✗ Centring everything for balance.

✓ **Balance can be asymmetrical; decide what the arrangement is doing.**

The principles are tools for a purpose, not rules to satisfy.

CED 2.2

✗ Making every part equally emphatic.

✓ **Decide where the eye goes first, and subordinate the rest.**

Emphasis and hierarchy are named principles of design.

CED 2.4

✗ Repeating a motif without variation.

✓ **Let repetition build rhythm, and vary it where the work needs a change.**

Rhythm is assessed as a relationship, not as a count.

CED 2.5

3 · 2-D Media, Materials, and Techniques

✗ Working in one medium throughout because it is comfortable.

✓ **Let the investigation choose the material, and document why.**

Materials and processes are a scored dimension of the 2-D portfolio.

CED 3.1

✗ Submitting digital work with no evidence of process.

✓ **Show the iterations – early versions, alternatives, adjustments.**

Process evidence is how experimentation is assessed.

CED 3.4

✗ Scanning work at low resolution.

✓ **Capture at a resolution that shows the surface and the mark.**

The submitted image is the work as far as the readers are concerned.

CED 3.5

■ Write the material and process for every image. It is a required field and an empty one wastes a chance to explain a decision.

CED Present

4 · Investigate: Inquiry and the Artistic Process

✗ Choosing an inquiry topic so broad that anything fits it.

✓ **Narrow it until it excludes things – that is what makes an investigation visible.**

A question nothing could fail to answer cannot show sustained inquiry.

CED 4.1

✗ Changing the inquiry halfway and not saying so.

✓ **If it shifted, say what prompted the shift – that is evidence of inquiry, not of failure.**

The readers score the process, and a documented change is part of it.

CED 4.3

✗ Writing the inquiry question after the work is finished.

✓ **Let it guide the making, and let the making refine it.**

A question fitted afterwards rarely matches the sequence the images show.

CED 4.2

5 · Make: Practice, Experimentation, and Revision

✗ Calling a second version of a piece a revision when only the size changed.

✓ **Revise a decision – the composition, the palette, the process – and show both versions.**

The scored quality is the decision, not the repetition.

CED 5.2

✗ Experimenting once and settling.

✓ **Try several routes and keep the evidence, including the ones you rejected.**

Experimentation is assessed across the body of work, not in a single piece.

CED 5.1

✗ Working at one scale throughout without asking whether it serves the idea.

✓ **Test the scale – the size of a 2-D work changes how it is read.**

Scale is a design decision the readers can see you making.

CED 5.3

6 · Present: Communication and the AP Portfolio AP

✗ Writing the same sentence under every image.

✓ **Say what is different about THIS one and why.**

Repeated text tells the readers nothing about the sequence.

CED 6.2

✗ Leaving the written evidence until the deadline.

✓ **Write it as you go, while you still remember the decision.**

Written evidence reconstructed later tends to describe rather than explain.

CED 6.1

✗ Submitting the Selected Works with no relation to the investigation.

✓ **Choose works that show your strongest decisions, and say what each demonstrates.**

The Selected Works section is scored on the quality of the decisions shown.

CED 6.3

✗ Exceeding or falling short of the required number of images.

✓ **Count them against the current requirements before submitting.**

The count is checked before the work is assessed.

CED 6.4

■ Back up every image as you make it. A portfolio lost the week before the deadline cannot be reconstructed from finished work alone.

CED 6.4

✗ Treating the two-dimensional surface as a window and nothing else.

✓ **Decide whether the work asserts its flatness or creates depth – either is a choice worth explaining.**

The relationship between the picture plane and the illusion is central to 2-D design.

CED 1.5