

AP 2-D Art and Design	Common Mistakes	
<i>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.</i>		
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

✗ 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