

Make: Practice & Revision

AP Drawing ■ Topic 6

AP Drawing



What we will cover

- 1 The sustained investigation
- 2 Practice experimentation revision
- 3 Synthesis
- 4 The six drawing skills
- 5 Composition & craft
- 6 Developing ideas over time



The Sustained Investigation

Big Idea 2 is about **making**: a body of work exploring **one** question in depth over time.

- guided by **questions**, and it develops as you draw
- **15 images** plus written evidence
- shows practice, experimentation and revision – **not** unrelated pieces

Build the portfolio as a **story**: image 1 states the question, the middle images **test and turn**, the late images **answer with authority**. Scorers read the **sequence**.

The rhythm of a Sustained Investigation

the loop

make, document, reflect, revise, make again – every one or two weeks

start early

a rushed investigation is **visible at a glance**; the images betray it before the writing does

why a rhythm

“sustained” is a claim about time, and only a regular cadence leaves the trail that proves it

plan backwards

from May: photography, writing and selection all take real calendar time

The word is *sustained*, not *large*. A steady fortnightly cycle from September beats a heroic March.

Practice, experimentation and revision

- **Practice** – repeated work to build skill
- **Experimentation** – trying new materials to discover
- **Revision** – changing work after reflection or feedback

Submit process images **on purpose**: journal spreads and **revision pairs** make the three actions undeniable.



Michelangelo study: practice builds visible skill

Practice, experimentation and revision are three different things

practice

repeats a skill until it is reliable – the tenth ellipse, the fiftieth hand

experimentation

tries something whose outcome you do not know, and records what happened

revision

returns to a work and **changes it on purpose**: crop it, rework it, redraw it, or answer it with a new version

keep the failures

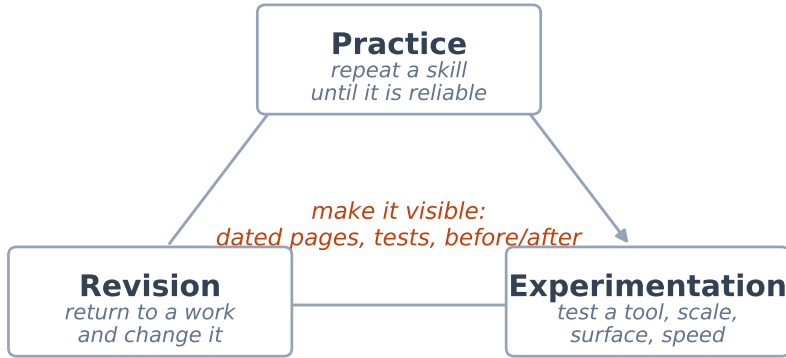
an **annotated failed experiment** is stronger evidence than an unexplained success

a revision pair

first state and revised state, with one sentence on what changed – classic AP evidence

The rubric asks for all three separately. A portfolio full of practice with no revision scores as practice, however good the drawing is.

Three engines of making



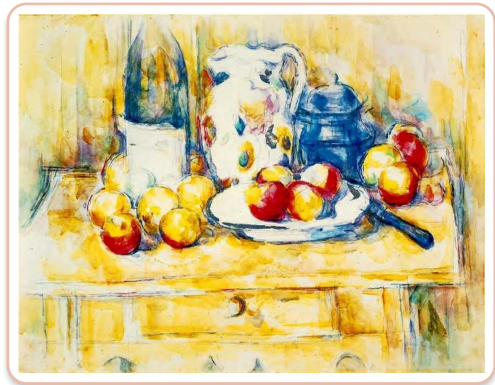
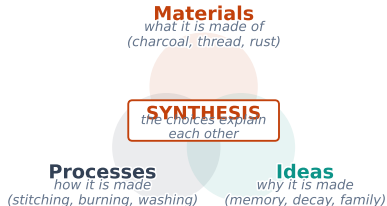
AP Drawing · Make · practice, experimentation, revision: the three engines

Three engines of making: repeat a skill, test something new, return and change

Synthesis of materials, processes and ideas

Synthesis is where the three **fuse**: the whole becomes more than its parts.

Pick materials that **mean something** for your question – and **say the link out loud** in the written evidence.



Cézanne: media, process and idea as one whole

Synthesis: when the material is part of the meaning

material as meaning

charcoal drawings with **burnt** edges about wildfire; **thread-stitched** portraits about family ties

process as meaning

obsessive stippling for time passing; blind contour for the uncertainty of memory

the timing

it **cannot be added at the end** – it grows from experimenting early with materials that relate to the idea

the test

could this work be made in any other material without losing what it says? If yes, it is not yet synthesis

Synthesis is the top of the rubric and the hardest thing to fake, because the evidence for it is in the **early** pages of the journal.



The six drawing skills the rubric names

mark-making

line

surface

space

light and shade

composition

Audit your portfolio against all six – every one should appear **strongly somewhere**. One work can carry several: a figure in a lit interior shows **space, light and shade, and composition** at once.

Making the skills visible

A skill **only counts** if it is visible in the **submitted image** – photograph well, or the skill **disappears**.

“Good” portfolios show **competent** skills; a 5 shows **advanced** skills with **visual evidence** everywhere.

Audit at mid-year, not in April – the gaps you find **write your practice plan** while there is still time.

In written evidence, name skills with the **CED's own words**, so the scorer connects claim to image instantly.

Composition and craft

Craft means **physical care**: clean margins, controlled smudging, flat paper. Composition applies the principles to organise the picture plane.

Craft should **serve the idea** – sometimes a rough handling is the **right** choice.



Vitruvian Man: proportion and composition as craft

Finished works are judged as made objects

the three

composition designed, edges considered, surface controlled

plan first

thumbnail sketches and notan before committing – composition is decided **before the first real mark**

scale is a decision

an intimate A5 and a commanding A1 are **different statements** of the same idea

protect the work

damaged or dirty drawings photograph badly – cover sheets and fixative

unresolved corners

betray hurry. Finish them, or leave them raw on purpose and let the writing own the choice

Craft is not fussiness: an expressive charcoal can be **perfectly crafted expression**. The question is whether the roughness was chosen.



Developing ideas over time

Development is visible when **later works build on discoveries** in earlier ones.

- new questions, materials or processes push it forward
- not every experiment succeeds – what did **not** work is **still valuable**

Never pad with lookalikes. Fifteen near-identical drawings read as **one idea repeated** – each variation must **move a variable**.

What development looks like in the images

development

the CED's word: **furthering an inquiry through in-depth exploration**

series thinking

variations on one **motif** show **deliberate exploration**, not repetition

a mid-course turn

healthy **when documented**: "the shadows became the subject" *is* development

weak areas

fixable with **targeted practice blocks** – that is what the craft topics of this course are for

Development is visible as **change with a reason**. Fifteen good drawings of the same thing, unchanged, read as fifteen drawings, not an investigation.

Worked example – showing development in writing

The Sustained Investigation is scored on evidence of *thinking*

“My first three drawings used even outlines; after critique showed they felt flat, I tested weighted and lost-and-found line in works 4–6, then in works 7–9 I let the edges dissolve entirely where the memory fades.”

Describing a **change** and the **reason** for it is how you demonstrate practice, experimentation and revision.

Exam tips

- **Build the portfolio as a story:** image 1 states the question, the middle images test and turn, the late images answer with authority. Scorers read the sequence.
- **Submit process images on purpose** – two or three journal spreads, tests, or revision pairs among the 15 make practice, experimentation, and revision undeniable.
- **The 5-portfolios show synthesis:** pick materials that mean something for your question, and say the link out loud in the written evidence.
- **Audit against the six drawing skills at mid-year**, not in April – the gaps you find write your practice plan while there is still time.
- **Never pad with lookalikes.** Fifteen near-identical drawings read as one idea repeated; variations must each move a variable.



Topic 6 – key takeaways

1

A story

question, then test and turn, then answer – scorers read order

2

Six skills

mark-making, line, surface, space, light and shade, composition

3

Show process

journal spreads and revision pairs among the 15

4

No padding

each variation must move a variable, not repeat one

Check yourself

- 1 Name three of the six drawing skills.
- 2 Why can a skill you truly have still score nothing?
- 3 Fifteen near-identical drawings – what do scorers read?
- 4 When should you audit against the six skills?

Answers 1. any of: mark-making, line, surface, space, light and shade, composition
2. it is not visible in the image 3. one idea repeated 4. mid-year