

Welcome to A-level History of Art at Dauntsey's

You have chosen well. The Pearson/Edexcel syllabus allows for wide and varied study across a range of media, eras, and themes. The subject provides a fascinating lens through which to view the world both past and present; students often comment on how much their perceptions change during the course, and how the new visual language they have learned enables them to express their ideas, opinions, and observations more fully.

As with any new language, there is a lot of vocabulary to learn. This will happen naturally as you need the words to use, but get into the habit of, when looking at art books, looking up words you don't understand. You don't need any specialist knowledge to start the course, but some familiarity with the breadth of work in the established canon will help you feel more confident.

DEFINITELY:

- **Visit a gallery or two**, particularly if you get to a city this summer. There are great collections in surprising places. Perhaps visit a sculpture park. Don't worry too much about analysis at this stage but look closely at how works have been created (materials, mark-making etc) as well as what they depict; think about why the artist may have made the decisions they have. Consider what audience the artist had in mind
- Browse here: <https://smarthistory.org/introductory-guides-overview/> This site is a wonderful resource. The 'Guided Learning' section is fun. Work your way through as much as you are able: it all helps.

PROBABLY:

- **Read a book!** Take books out of the library or invest in your own copies. There are great deals second-hand, so always check. We think these are a good place to start:

Andrew Graham-Dixon, *Art: The Definitive Visual Guide*

Matthew Rice, *Rice's Architectural Primer*

Dorling Kindersley (publisher), *The Illustrated Story of Art*

Mary Acton, *Learning to Look at Sculpture*

Mary Acton, *Learning to Look at Paintings*

John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*

- There are some great art historical novels too, although remember not to rely on them for facts! We like these:

Karen Essex, *Leonardo's Swans*

Sarah Dunant, *The Birth of Venus*

Tracey Chevalier, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*

Simon Mawer, *The Glass Room*