

Q: What can I do to prepare for A level Design and Technology?

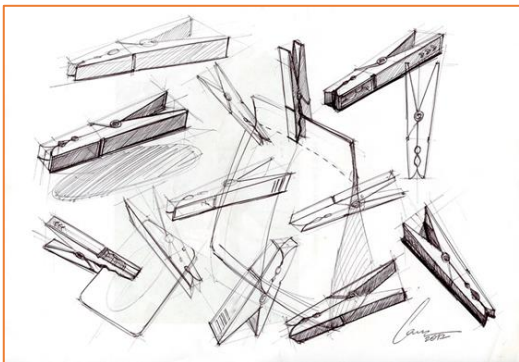
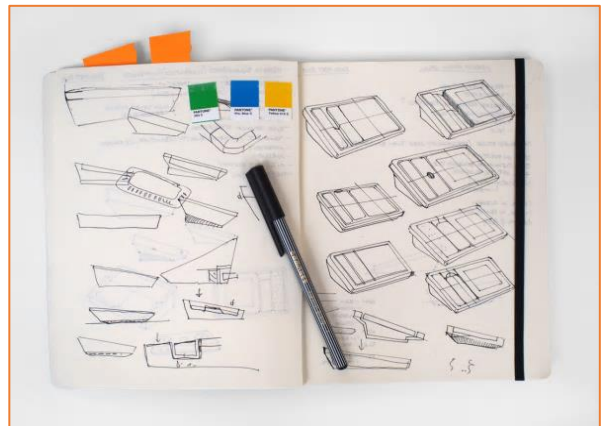
A: Practice Sketching!

There is always a big step up from GCSE to A-Level, but even more so this year as there is a new syllabus for the Design and Technology Product Design A-Level. There are significant changes to the content and structure of the coursework and you will be unfamiliar with the specific approach to designing that the exam board are now looking for i.e. It is different to how you did it in your GCSE controlled assessments.

You will need to be able to sketch your ideas freely and quickly and not feel constrained by any belief (justified or not) that you are 'rubbish at sketching'. **Anyone is able to reach the required standard of sketching, it just takes time and practice.** Therefore, I would strongly recommend that you buy yourself a small sketch book (such as a Rhodia A5 Dot Notepad from Amazon for £4.99) so that you can practice sketching.

Once you have a sketch book you could try any or all of the following:

- Do a 2 minute isometric sketch every day.
- Sketching any examples of 'bad design' that you come across. These should be annotated to explain what you feel makes them bad.
- Sketching any examples of 'good design' that you come across. Again, these should be annotated to explain what you feel makes them good.
- Examine products and sketch 2D cross sections/exploded views to show how they work.



Sketching will be a fundamental skill if you are to succeed on the new A-Level course. The aim is for you all to get to a stage where you are confident at sketching, so it almost becomes second nature. That way you need only think about what you are designing, not how you are sketching. **The quality of sketching is not as important as being able to convey your ideas clearly.**

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A: Open your eyes and be inquisitive!

Even the best designers are always seeking to learn new things. Whether that's the latest material developments, advances in 3D printing technologies or trying to predict what features consumers will want their next smartphone to have, an inquisitive and open mind is crucial.

As you are a **fledgling designer** it is even more important that you take notice of design and are aware of how it can be used to improve our lives. **Whenever you interact with a product or a system ask yourself questions like: How does that work? How is that made? What is that made of? Why has it been designed like that? How could it be improved? ...**

Another good way of expanding your knowledge, understanding and appreciation of design is to expose yourself to more of it!

- Get yourself a **Pinterest** account and create boards with examples of products/design that you like
 - Get inspired by reading design stories/articles online and/or **sign up** to design based newsletters.
- A selection of good sites can be found below...



<https://www.designweek.co.uk/>



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/>



<http://www.core77.com/>



<https://design-milk.com/>



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