



5 hours in...

PHOTOGRAPHY

Research shows that the most successful students (i.e. those that make the most progress and get the highest grades) are doing between 20 and 25 hours of independent study per week by the end of Year 13. That may seem a lot, but it's something that you would build up to over the course of your A-Levels. In Year 12, we're talking something more like 15 hours per week. This equates to roughly 5 hours of independent study per A-Level per subject.

Remember that your independent study is divided into three types – **Consolidation, Reactive and Proactive**. How this is divided may vary from week to week or between subjects but one approach could be:

Consolidation - 45mins

Straight after a lesson, or that evening / the following day you should reread your notes, talk a topic through with somebody, write summaries, mindmaps, flashcards e.g. for equations, definitions, facts you need to recall etc.

In photography, this might be spending 45 minutes looking up key photography terminology/vocabulary used in the lesson or in notes/presentations by your teacher. Make sure you understand the skills and techniques covered by documenting them fully in your sketchbook. Sound sketchbook presentation and thoroughly documenting all planning, photoshoots, editing and reviewing and evaluation as well as artist/photographer research is essential at A level – spending 45 mins adding to/completing your sketchbook work is a perfect consolidation task as this often takes longer than lesson time allows.

Reactive – 3hrs

This is your 'homework'. Each of your teachers should give you at least 1 hours' worth of homework each week. This could be linked to upcoming exams, preparation work for coursework or coursework that is currently being completed.

In photography, this could include work started in lesson time that your teacher asks you to finish. It could also be a completely new task; artist research or to plan and/or conduct a new photoshoot. Teacher-set tasks will vary between 1-3 hours.

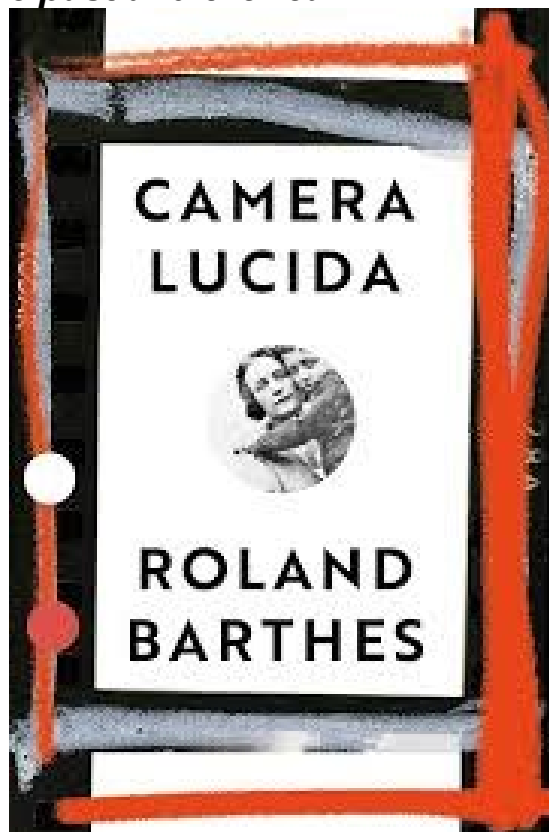
If you find this takes more than 1 hour, that's fine, you can take this from the proactive phase (not from the consolidation phase though). Equally, if you find you finish your reactive work quickly, spend more time on your proactive work.

Proactive – 1hr 15mins

This is the section that will broaden and deepen your overall understanding of the subject you are studying. It will not necessarily involve work that has been set by your teacher, but instead it is about you doing the extra practice

questions, reading articles, watching videos, TED talks etc. In **Photography** this might contain some of the following:

- Complete additional research on an artist/photographer linked to your topic/classwork. Use the 'Responding to Photographs' analysis framework to help structure an in-depth analysis of one of their artworks/photographs.
- Look at some of the exemplar student photography work on 'Student Art Guide': <https://www.studentartguide.com/featured/high-school-photography-projects>
- Read the following article and imbed some of the ideas featured into your project planning/experimentation: <https://www.studentartguide.com/articles/creative-photography-ideas>
- Look at some previous student exemplar sketchbooks in the Photography Department- ask your teacher if you can't find them!
- Research current/forthcoming Photography exhibitions and plan a visit. Record/write up what you saw and how it could influence and inspire your own work.
- **Read the Book: Camera Lucida by Roland Barthes** and complete the following task:
"Here are some Polish soldiers resting in a field (Kertez 1915) nothing extraordinary, expect this, which no realist painting would give me, that they were there; what I see is not a memory, an imagination, a reconstitution, a piece of Maya, such art lavishes upon us, but reality in a past state: at once the past and the real."





What does Roland Barthes mean? Explain in your own words but support your explanation with quotes from the book Camera Lucida. Do you agree that a photograph is different from any other form of Art because it shows both past and reality? Support your opinion with some examples of well-known photographs that had an impact on our history.

- **Consider the following and present your own argument:**

As we have seen, photography's versatility means it has many different **genres**.

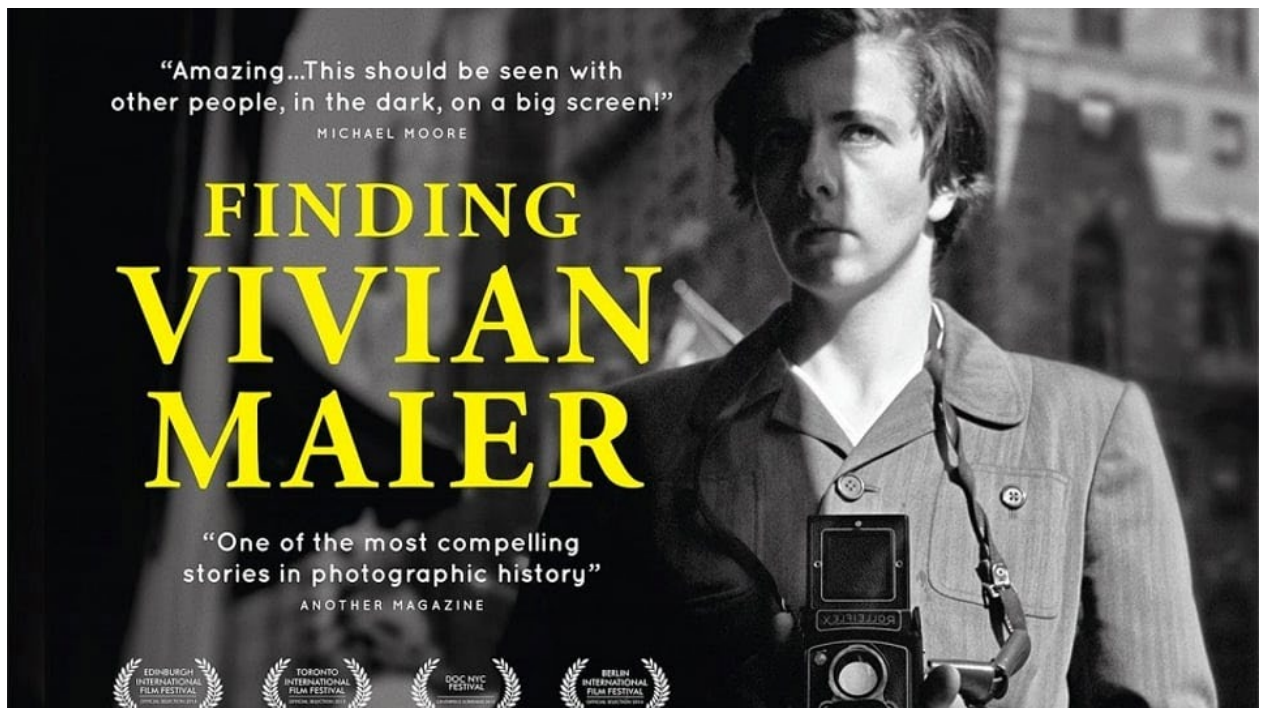
Consequently, photography is very hard to 'pin -down' as an artistic medium – it has so many different uses, styles, categories, types so many **genres**!

In effect, photography sometimes seems to have no style or characteristics which are unique and specific to the medium itself – its sheer adaptability and versatility seem overwhelming.

Partly because of this, there are some people who argue that photography is **NOT** a true artistic medium.

Extension Work: What do you think about this argument ... can photography be an art? Discuss.

- Watch the documentary 'Finding Vivian Maier' about undiscovered documentary photographer Vivian Maier. Available to download/stream across various platforms.



Useful links: (will be updated regularly)

<https://www.studentartguide.com/>

<https://www.theschoolofphotography.com/>

<https://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/>