

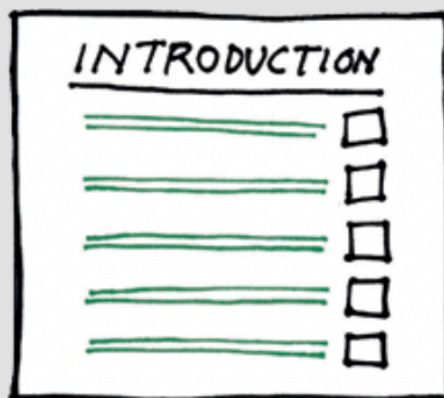
Successful writing for art and design



1. Start with an artist's statement (of intention)

Artist statements are a way to invite or formalise aims and to understand the aims of others. During group critiques student peers can précis their partners which can in turn act as a springboard for students to formulate their statements.

Teacher questions can centre on eliciting the information needed to create outlines e.g. in what ways do other artists interests feed your own?



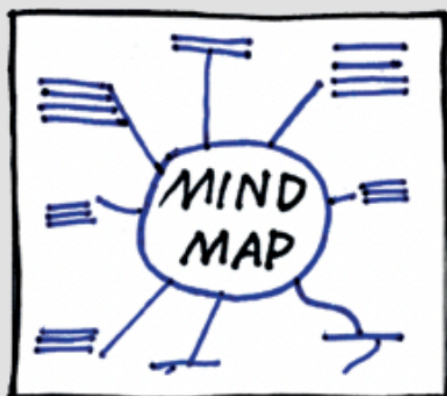
2. Introduction

Like a good film trailer an introduction will intrigue and excite the viewer, and provide the basic information necessary (the what, who, where, why and how). Five illustrated sentences will suffice.



3. Signposting

Being able to navigate easily through a submission of work is essential to the experience. Put yourself in the mind of a marker or moderator and provide labels, headings and titles that indicate exactly where they are and where they are heading. Keep them brief, perhaps capitalised for greater impact.



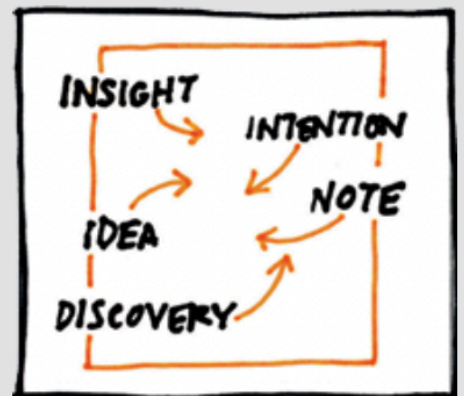
7. Mind-maps

Still a popular opening to a project, but how often are they genuine and useful? Doing one as a whole group and then asking a class to finish it can speed up the process and get them past the initial and often rather staid responses.



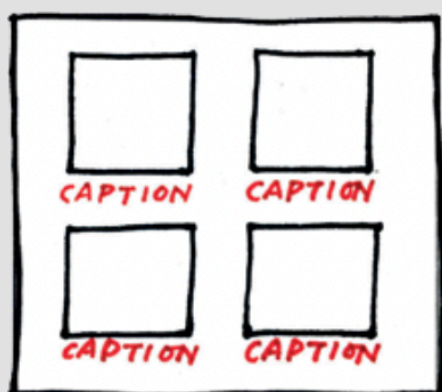
8. Keywords

Some words are more important than others. Formatting the text is a way of students discerning between these levels of significance. Important or 'key words' (bold, italic) can reflect their value. Underlining suggests a hyperlink so is now less used. If not for good reason avoid switching between different typefaces.



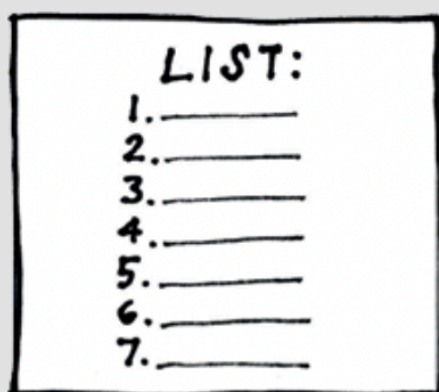
9. Notes

Jotting down thoughts in raw form is a great way to help the artist (and later the reader) gain insights into work that might otherwise remain elusive and/or vague. Keep them.



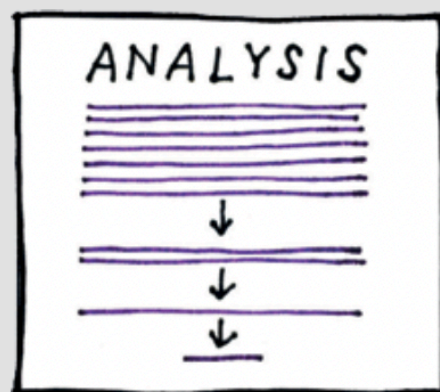
4. Captions

Martin Parr once said that the demise of the traditional photo album was the demise of the image caption. A caption is a short statement describing or explaining, which contextualises an image for those not present at the time.



5. Lists

Lists can be 'to-do' lists, possibilities, materials used, artists names etc. They can be ordered, colour-coded and grouped.



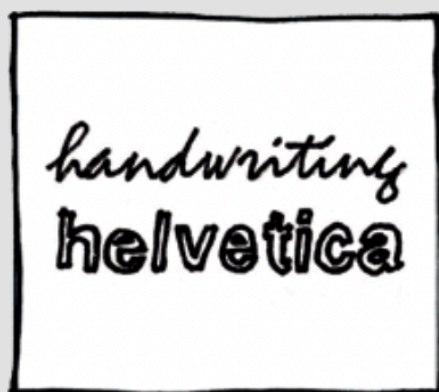
6. Analysis

Synthesise larger bits of text (like a book chapter), and reduce the word count in successive timed steps – this will help to summarise content. It's also fun to complete this task against the clock.



10. Evaluation

This short piece of text is the chance for the student to close the project and ask the questions, what worked, what did they enjoy and what did they learn from the experience, as well as what obstacles did they overcome, and how do they see the work continuing over time?



11. Handwriting

Some students have a natural and elegant script, whilst others' handwriting is almost illegible. You want to be fair but consistent. Pencil on paper encourages students to write in a fluid and relaxed fashion, but word processing enables spell checking, formatting and re-positioning. Create your own font! Using myscriptfont.com is just one of many apps available.



12. Formatting

Headers and footers, quotes, indenting, and body text. Take the time to help them really appreciate that the form is just as important as the content – how they write is as telling as what they write. They don't need to write reams, which can actually be counter-productive.