



# Green Skills in GCSE Art and Design

Green Skills in Art and Design  
In collaboration between Pearson, the Design Council  
and NSEAD.



# Design Council

Only 43% of designers feel that they have the capabilities to Design for Planet

If designers do not possess green design skills, the designs that they create will fall short of delivering positive outcomes for the planet.

# Design Council

This has led to our skills for planet mission: to upskill 1 million UK designers in green design skills by 2030.

While designers have a fundamental role to play in facilitating green design, it is the responsibility of all who play a role in design to put the systems and structures in place to enhance green design skills.

**71%**

of designers say they think demand will grow,

but only

**43%**

feel they have the capability to meet this.

# Introducing the Design Council Skills for Planet Blueprint

Everything that is not made by nature has been designed by someone. Design therefore holds immense power over how our world is shaped. It is a fundamental green skill, but it can all too easily result in the creation of waste, it can marginalise voices, and it can destroy natural habitats.

We need to change the way that we design to regenerate life for all. To help ensure that design falls on the right side of history, the Design Council has launched a mission to upskill 1 million designers with critical green skills by 2030.

[The Skills for Planet Blueprint](#), co-designed with 100+ design experts, provides an overview of these critical green design skills, enabling the design sector to fulfil its potential as a backbone of the green transition.

# Pearson, the Design Council and NSEAD

In collaboration with the Design Council and the NSEAD, Pearson have responded to the call to action and have developed a suite of materials, contexts and starting points to help every UK secondary school to adopt green skills into the Art and Design curriculum.

With the ambition to see green skills' teaching integrated into every GCSE and A level course, Pearson hope to contribute to the target of upskilling 1 million designers by 2030.

The following resources have been developed by art and design subject experts and practicing teachers, to show how integrating green skills can make a genuine difference to the learning taking place in GCSE Art and Design.



# Introduction

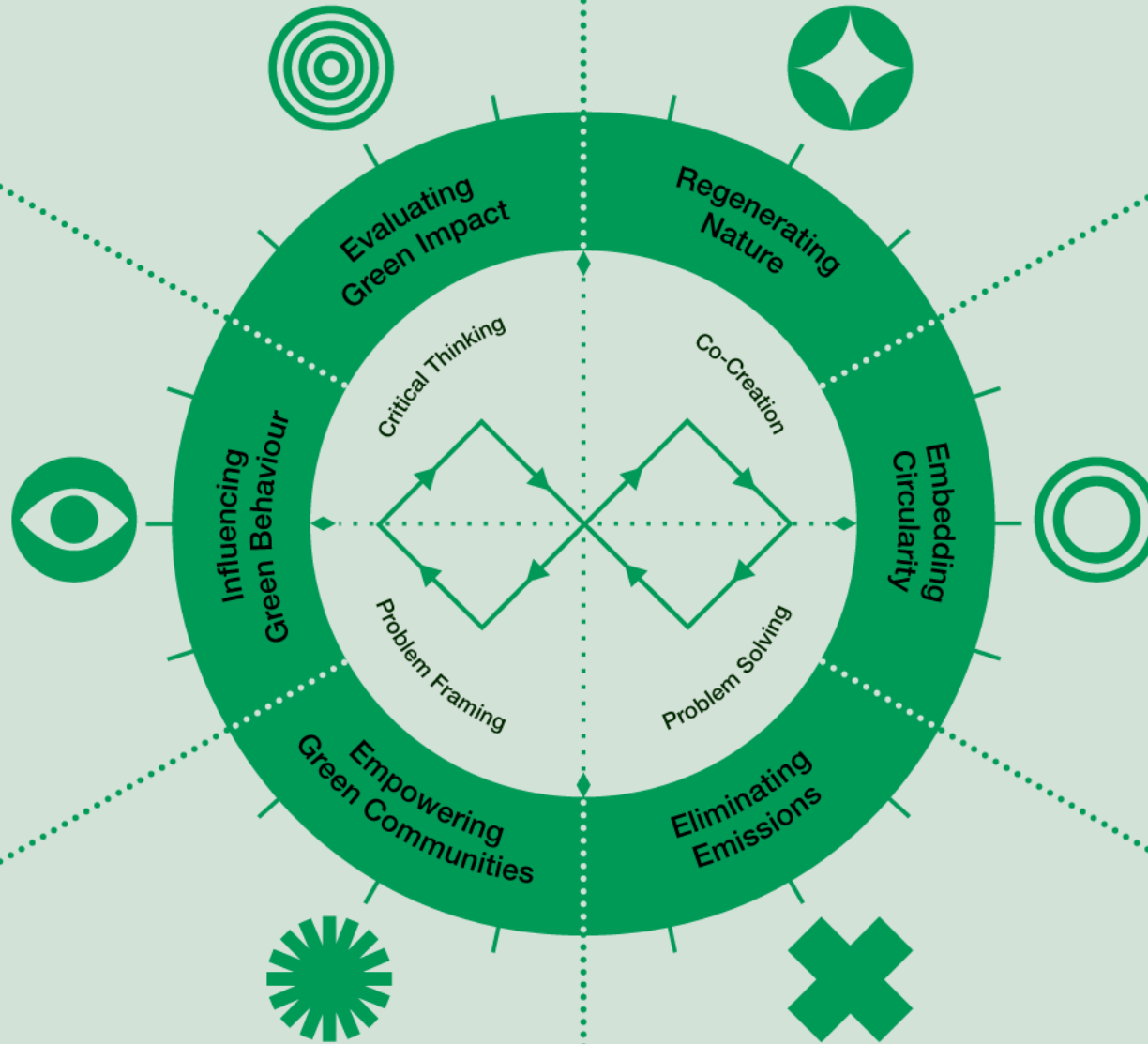
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# Introduction

Art and Design education encourages curiosity while developing **critical thinking, problem framing** and **problem-solving** skills, equipping students to tackle the **complex environmental challenges** that exist today and in the future, and preparing them for potential careers in **sustainability** and **green industries**.

By encouraging exploration and experimentation early in their education, students can gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between human activity and the natural world. Through art and design projects like those linked from this document, that focus on eco-friendly materials, sustainable design principles, and responsible consumption, learners can be empowered to consider the long-term impact of their work on global ecosystems.

Critical thinking, problem solving, problem framing and co-creation lie at the heart of the Skills for Planet map



# What are Green Skills in Art and Design Education?

The Design Council created the [Skills for Planet Blueprint](#) to map out the critical green skills that all designers need to be able to put green design into practice, providing a shared language that will make cross-sector conversations and skills-building possible.

Art and Design educators can use the blueprint to inform learning materials within their courses and help students at all stages develop **Green Design Skills**.

This can be through collaborative opportunities to use sustainable materials, apply environmentally conscious design approaches, recycle, upcycle, focus on ecological considerations, and explore visual communication techniques related to climate topics — to name a few.

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# Practical ways to integrate Green Skills into Art Education

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# Environmental project-based learning

Students could study pollution, green spaces, biodiversity, and climate change impacts, as a focus for creative and impactful visual responses.



# Sustainable materials and methods

Promote the use of recycled, natural and locally sourced materials. Encourage reflection on the full life cycle of artworks.



# Critical thinking and ethical design

Explore how design affects behaviour and consumption. Encourage students to consider sustainability and impact, developing their ideas by studying eco-conscious artists and designers, past and present.



# Cross-curricular collaboration

Work with Geography and Science departments on projects related to urban greening, environmental challenges, eco-fashion, and waste management.



# Communities acting together

Working within groups cultivates vital skills such as listening, negotiation and empathy. These skills are key for understanding diverse perspectives and building resilient, environmentally conscious communities.



# Easy-to-adopt ideas for Art & Design departments

**Digital portfolios:** Help to cut down waste by working digitally to create a portfolio of work. Where projects require physical formats, aim to use recycled resources. Use less energy throughout all Art and Design activity.

**Exhibitions of work:** As a department, commit to using reusable materials, boards, minimal packaging, or outdoor exhibition spaces.

**Local engagement:** explore and connect to local community projects and initiatives which focus on protecting ecosystems and are aligned to green priorities.



# Thematic foci

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# Thematic Focus:

Themes, projects, tasks or briefs can be part of a larger thematic or standalone project for 6–12 weeks, on themes such as **Regeneration**, **Circularity**, **Elimination**, **Empowerment**, and **Green behaviours**, encouraging investigation, experimentation, recording and presentation of environmentally conscious artwork.

Core to every engagement with green skills is to consider:

- Equity and justice for effected communities (who is excluded and how can we engage them through art)?
- What can we learn from the past to inform the present and the future around our climate?
- How big is our footprint, the things we consume, the emissions, the impact?

# Overarching themes with suggested project titles:

**Regeneration:** Renew and Reuse, From Waste and Worth, Roots of Renewal, Transformation, New Beginnings, Life Cycle

**Empowerment:** From Seed to Strength, Roots of Power, The Power to Grow

**Circularity:** Reuse and Repeat, The Circle of Life, Beginning and End, New to Old, Circle of Change, Cradle to cradle.

**Elimination:** Less is More, Goodbye to Waste, Erase to Save



**Green behaviours:** Footprints of the Future, A Greener Tomorrow, From Action to Impact, Justice through action.

# Educational resources and examples:

These sub-headings are taken from the Pearson GCSE Art and Design exam paper. They act as generic categories covering all titles and areas of study.

- **People** – Empowering Green Communities. Creating art that develops awareness of climate topics and ways in which the school and local communities can help to protect their local environment.
- **Human-Made** – Circularity. Creating art that supports a circular economy by keeping materials in use and eliminating waste.
- **Environment** – Elimination. Creating art that has a net zero (or carbon negative) impact throughout its process and lifecycle.
- **Natural World** – Regeneration. Creating art that is informed by and could protect and restore the natural world.

# Contextual References:

- Our [Artist Directory](#) could be a valuable place to start for ideas on artists.
- [Art2Day](#) website. Search by topic: [artist search - ART2DAY](#).
- NSEAD have some resources: [Environment, sustainability and the world around us | NSEAD](#).
- [Home - Climate Outreach](#)
- [‘The Blue Planet’](#) on the BBC iPlayer
- Local Councils have Environmental strategies on their websites that give examples of local success stories.



# Resources

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# Aim

To support centres in integrating sustainability and green skills into their current Art & Design schemes of work at KS3, KS4, and KS5—without the need to replace existing projects.

# Rationale

In Art & Design, one-off lessons often lack the depth and continuity needed for meaningful learning. Instead, embedding green skills into ongoing projects allows students to explore environmental themes in a more personal and sustained way, using a shared and common language. Even with limited curriculum time, this approach enables centres to enhance their provision without starting from scratch.

# Approach

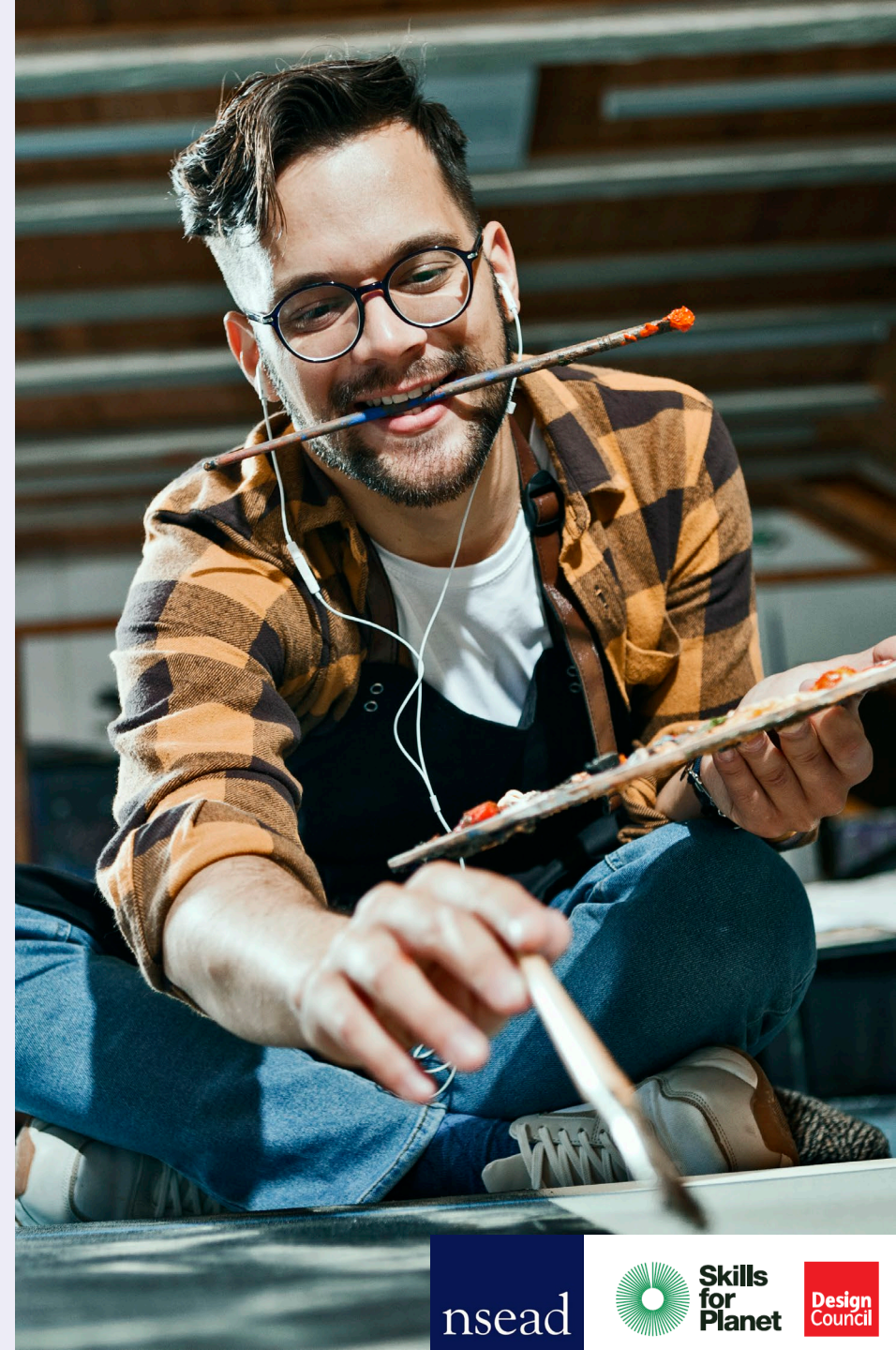
We have used the green skills framework to build flexible resources that slot into existing schemes of work. These resources are designed to enhance, not replace, existing programmes of study, making it easier for teachers to embed the green skills into their creative practice.

# Green Skills in Art and Design

The following resources are designed to support teachers in planning and delivering Green Skills projects, themes, tasks, or briefs within their schools.

Primarily developed for **KS3** and **KS4** students, these resources can also be adapted for use with other year groups.

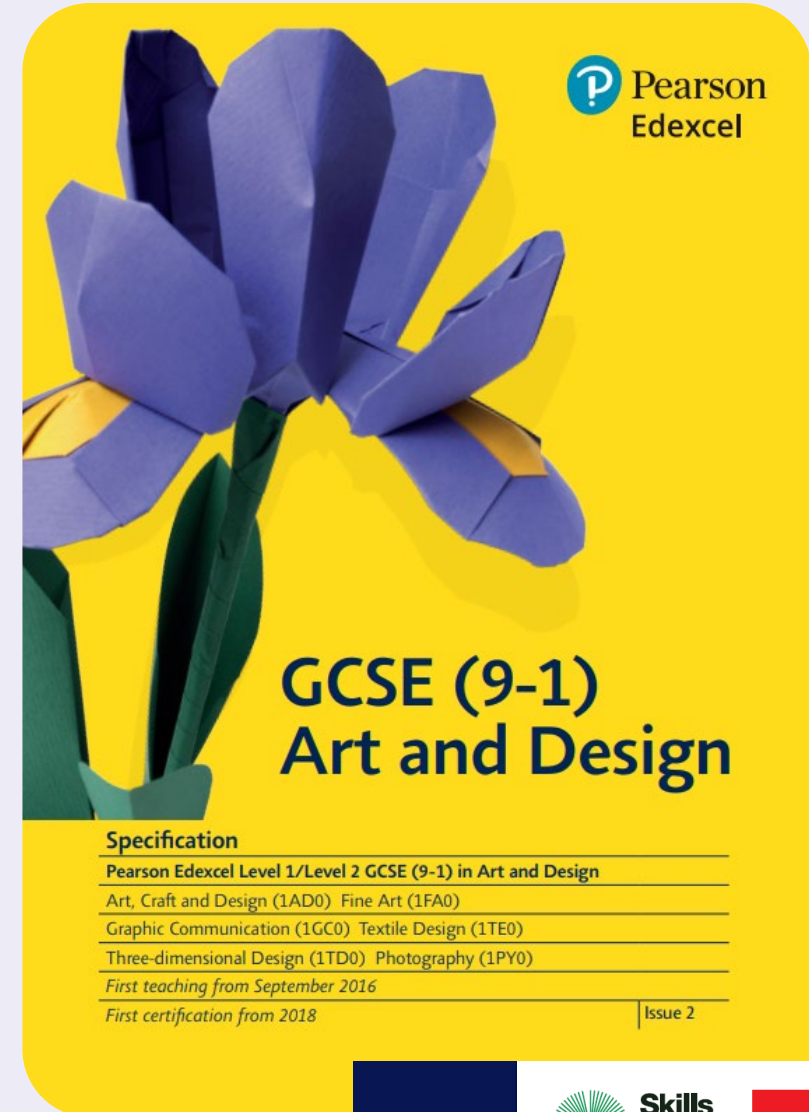
Teachers are encouraged to select and modify sections to best suit the needs of their centre and course structure.



# Green Skills in Art and Design

The resources are interconnected and provide a flexible framework that can be applied across all titles and areas of study:

- Fine Art
- Photography
- Textile Design
- Graphic Communication
- Three-Dimensional Design.



# Use the links below to download these project documents

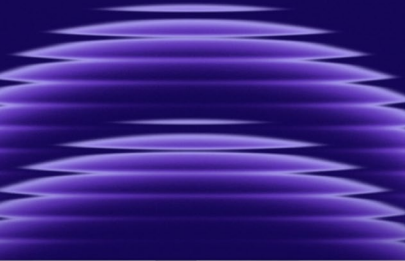
## People

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**People**

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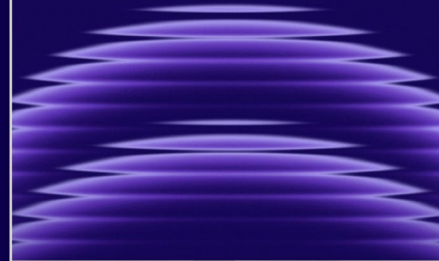
## Human Made

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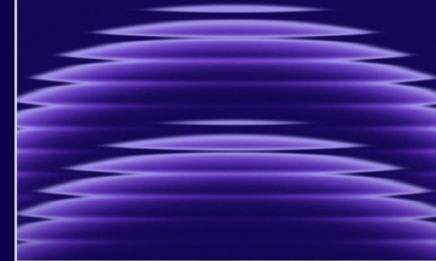
## Environment

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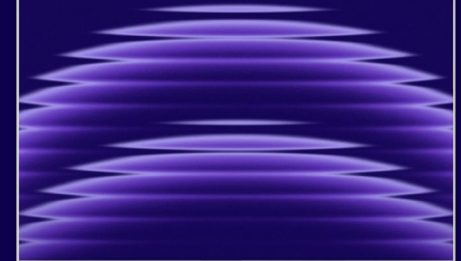
## Natural World

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Accenture Song



DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION

EC[s] Ecological Citizen[s]



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V&A Dundee | V&A

The Design Council Skills for Planet



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