This David Hockney: prints education resource encourages students to engage with contemporary art practice through responding and making. It explores the ideas and processes that underpin British-born artist David Hockney’s innovative work in the techniques of etching, lithography, paperwork, and digital drawing. This resource offers a cohesive thread that invites students to explore the influence of art history, culture, collaboration and technology on Hockney’s work.

David Hockney: prints is perfectly suited to foster students’ critical and creative thinking skills. By applying a sequence of exercises, students will develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of problem-solving processes and interpretation. Through the creation of their own works of art students are required to identify, explore and organise information and ideas.

This resource is directly linked to the Australian Curriculum and is designed to develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active, informed citizens. Students are encouraged to reflect on David Hockney: prints from a contemporary perspective and to consider and question values, attitudes, perspectives and assumptions. The resource provides an opportunity for students to develop their understanding of how and why artists realise their ideas through different art practices, processes and viewpoints.

This resource may be used to:
- complement an experience of David Hockney: prints through activities and ideas to assist with preparation for the gallery visit
- as a reference when students are viewing the work
- deepen understanding and engagement post-visit
- support in-depth research into David Hockney’s art practice.

The resource includes the following learning activities, paired with major themes of the exhibition:
- **Speak your mind**: Talking points or provocations to facilitate contemplation and discussion as well as offer opportunities for students to engage with art history and theory through exploratory research tasks
- **Get to work**: Creative art making suggestions that explore key concepts
- **Think it through**: Ideas, considerations and extensions to aid students in their art making.

The NGA values the feedback of students and teachers on the education resources we have produced. To share student work or your feedback on this resource please email education@nga.gov.au.

The exhibition catalogue David Hockney: prints, available online from the NGA Shop, is an invaluable resource that offers a case study on the artist and an examination of experimentation in printmaking practice.

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This resource is designed for:
- secondary students and can be adapted for upper primary or tertiary students
- Visual Arts students, but also has relevance for English, Philosophy, Technology, and Humanities and Social Sciences students
- senior secondary Visual Arts students undertaking in-depth case studies of contemporary artists.

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(c) (cover image) David Hockney Afternoon swimming 1980 (detail), colour lithograph, National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1980 © David Hockney
I love new mediums. I think mediums can turn you on, they can excite you; they always let you do something in a different way, even if you take the same subject, if you draw it in a different way, or if you are forced to simplify it, to make it bold because it is too finicky, I like that.¹

British-born artist David Hockney is an important and influential figure in modern-day printmaking. Since his early studies at college, making prints has been an integral part of his art practice and he has excelled in the field. During a period that has witnessed a revival in this art form, Hockney has created a significant body of work. Through constant experimentation and innovation, he has pushed the boundaries of printmaking in terms of style, subject matter, technique and scale, giving him a different point of view in his art practice.

For much of his life as an artist, he has been freer, more experimental and less inhibited in his approach to creating art when making prints, and later iPhone and iPad drawings, than when painting. Hockney’s artistic development has been characterised by one obsessive focus replacing another. This is especially evident in his career as a printmaker, highlighting his natural way of working.

¹ David Hockney quoted in Nikos Stangos (ed), David Hockney: Paper pools, Thames and Hudson, 1980, p 10.
Hockney’s travels to the USA in the 1960s provided him with a sense of freedom to experiment and ignore convention. There the young artist experienced firsthand the major post-war changes in printmaking and a new age of innovative print publishing. His arrival coincided with the revival of lithography as artists were enticed to again consider it as an art form, rather than a primarily commercial medium.

The artist’s experience at master printer Ken Tyler’s workshops became a major factor in his own artistic development. Tyler was a key figure in the revival of printmaking in the United States and collaborated with Hockney in many of his print ventures. Hockney was the only artist to work at all four of the master printer’s workshops—these did not just consist of real estate and machines, but were dynamic spaces fostered by Tyler, where technical experimentation, risk taking, boundless daring and exploration blossomed.

Tyler’s approach to working with an artist was to never say no, therefore challenging the conservative nature of traditional lithography. If there were technical issues, he would seek to solve them away from the artist’s gaze then return with solutions. This marriage of composition and technique is evident in the many series Hockney and Tyler produced, including A Hollywood Collection, Weather and individual portraiture, created at Gemini G.E.L (Graphic Editions Limited) in Los Angeles. Later, Hockney and Tyler worked together on the East Coast of America to produce further remarkable paperworks and the Moving focus series.
Discover more of David Hockney’s work in the [NGA's Kenneth Tyler Printmaking Collection](#) and find a glossary of printmaking terms and techniques.

Watch the video [David Hockney: Moving Focus](#) to see David Hockney and Ken Tyler at work and learn about their collaborative printmaking process.

**Speak your mind**

- After watching the video [David Hockney: Moving Focus](#) discuss the unique skills that artist David Hockney and printmaker Kenneth Tyler bring to their collaboration. In what ways do you see Hockney and Tyler working together? What do you think has made their collaboration so successful and long-lived? What more would you like to know about Ken Tyler and his workshops? The [NGA's Kenneth Tyler Printmaking Collection](#) website is a good place to start if you are interested in finding out more.

- After watching the video [David Hockney: Moving Focus](#) discuss the printmaking processes that you have observed. What have you learnt about how a print is made? How do you think the process of printmaking might allow Hockney to realise outcomes differently to other mediums? What questions do you have about lithography, the printmaking process featured in the video? Tamarind Institute’s [What is Lithography?](#) webpage is a good place to start if you are interested in finding out more.
What I liked was telling a story just visually. Hogarth’s original story had no words, it’s a graphic tale. You have to interpret it all.²

Hockney’s personal experience travelling to America during the summer of 1961 became the subject for his series *A Rake's Progress*. William Hogarth’s pictorial narrative *A Rake’s Progress* 1734, which tells the story of the downfall of young man Tom Rakewell, served as inspiration. After receiving an inheritance, Hogarth’s ‘Rake’ leaves for the city where he leads a lavish life of excess and debauchery. Indebtedness leads to ‘a marriage of convenience’, but gambling brings Rakewell undone. Now ruined, he is thrown into prison. From there he ends up in a madhouse—Bedlam. Hockney follows the same sequence but composes an autobiographical series of compositions loosely based on his own experiences in New York.

² David Hockney quoted in Nikos Stangos (ed), *David Hockney by David Hockney*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1976, p 91.

(above) **David Hockney** *The arrival* 1961–63, colour etching and aquatint, National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1973 © David Hockney
David Hockney  *The start of the spending spree and the door opening for a blonde* 1961–63, colour etching and aquatint, National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1973 © David Hockney

David Hockney  *Bedlam* 1961–63, colour etching and aquatint, National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1973 © David Hockney
Get to work

- Create a rough outline or storyboard of 8–16 scenes based on a journey you have taken. Whether you have travelled overseas or down the street, think about how the journey has influenced you. Feel free to use your imagination to embellish, exaggerate or transform your personal experiences into a fictional tale. Select three key moments to develop into finished drawings that tell a story without words.

Think it through

- Remember that the kind of marks you make and the colours and tones that you emphasise can help to communicate the emotions connected to an experience. Consider the arc of your narrative—will it be a tale of downfall like A Rake’s Progress, or will you build towards a positive resolution?

Speak your mind

- In his series A Rake’s Progress, Hockney combined personal experience and imagination to create loosely autobiographical images based on his trip to America. Examine the visual elements in the opening scene The arrival. What does Hockney’s approach to drawing and mark-making say about his first impressions and experiences in New York City? How does Hockney’s The arrival compare to your own memories of arriving in a new place?

- While in America Hockney dyed his hair blonde. The start of the spending spree and the door opening for a blonde depicts this moment and references the Clairol hair colouring advertisement ‘Doors open for a blonde’. What might dying his hair have represented for Hockney? Consider what the slogan ‘Doors open for a blonde’ reveals about American culture and values in the 1960s. Debate the idea that ‘Doors open for a blonde’ in the context of today’s society.

- Hockney’s 1961–63 series A Rake’s Progress borrows its basic storyline and themes from William Hogarth’s 1734 series of the same title. Look at the final scene in each visual narrative: William Hogarth’s The Madhouse and David Hockney’s Bedlam. Discuss what you can see in each of these prints. What do you think might be going on and what are you left wondering? Discuss how and why the circumstances of the main character’s downfall are imagined differently by each artist. How could the culture and values of eighteenth-century London compared to twentieth-century New York City have influenced ideas about what a ‘downfall’ might look like?

Relevant Links

- Whitworth Art Gallery’s Hockney to Hogarth resource
VISUAL PROBLEM SOLVING

The point really was that as the prints grew, the subject matter which on the surface is the weather is really the weather drawn. Because in each one the problem was not just making a representation of the weather ... but how to draw it.³

³ Ken Tyler in the documentary Reaching Out: Ken Tyler, master printer, Avery/Tirce Productions, 1976.

David Hockney Rain 1973, colour lithograph and screenprint, National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1973 © David Hockney

At Tyler’s LA workshop Hockney produced a group of innovative, eclectic and amusing prints—the Weather series. He explored the visual problem of how you depict the weather, as he had previously sought to solve the problem of how to represent water or reflections in a mirror. He began with Rain, inspired by Japanese woodcuts. Hockney then turned his attention to other ideas relating to the theme of the weather, inventing the series as he proceeded. He drew directly on his personal experience of Californian weather and explored different kinds of lines, tones and colours as he investigated the sun, mist, storms and wind.
David Hockney Wind 1973, colour lithograph and screenprint, National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1973 © David Hockney
Speak your mind

• Examine David Hockney’s lithographs *Rain* and *Wind*. Discuss the visual strategies that Hockney has used to represent the weather. In what ways have Hockney’s chosen technique and materials influenced his approach to representing the weather? How are visual elements like colour, line and tone used to carry your eye around each composition?

• Break into small groups to brainstorm how you could represent a weather event without using words. Present or perform your idea as a group and see if your class can guess what weather event you are representing. Discuss what you found fun, challenging or interesting about communicating without words.

• Hockney’s lithograph *Rain* was inspired by woodcut prints and paintings he saw on a visit to Japan in 1971. Examine how weather is represented in the work of Japanese artist Katushika Hokusai. Discuss the similarities and differences that you see in the prints of Hokusai and Hockney. Consider that art reflects culture and investigate how Indigenous Australian artists express weather knowledge through art. Look at depictions of weather in works such as Rover Thomas’s *Cyclone Tracy* and Emily Kam Kngwarray’s *The Alhalkere suite*, in the NGA’s collection. Discuss how depictions of weather from other cultures compare to Hockney’s *Weather* series.

Get to work

• Work with a partner to create a list of invisible forces or phenomena, for example gravity or love. Select a subject that is of interest to you and work together to solve the problem of how to make a visual representation of something invisible. Consider whether your choice of materials and processes can help to communicate your concept.

Think it through

• In the video [David Hockney: Moving Focus](https://example.com), Hockney talks about working through multiple possibilities before finding a way to make an interesting drawing that represents his idea. Before settling on an idea discuss how it could be pushed further and sketch a variety of concepts or compositions before selecting one that will have a strong visual impact.

Relevant Links

• [Bureau of Meteorology Indigenous Weather Knowledge](https://example.com)
After working on set designs, Hockney left England in August 1978 and returned to America with the ambition to return to paint. He arrived in New York only to realise that he had lost his driver’s licence—essential for living in California. Since moving east to New York State from Los Angeles, Ken Tyler had repeatedly encouraged Hockney to visit his new workshop in Bedford Village and was keen to show the artist new paper works made there.

Fortuitously for Tyler, Hockney was now stranded in New York waiting for the reissue of his licence and the artist agreed to visit for three days. Over time, Hockney was intrigued by what he saw at the studio, growing increasingly captivated about the possibilities of making paper from a watery concoction. He ended up working with Tyler for 49 days experimenting with this new medium.

This process provided Hockney with fresh avenues of exploration of representing water, and the *Paper pools* project became a marriage of medium and motif. The subject for Hockney became the swimming pool at Tyler’s house at Bedford. Or rather, how to depict a pool and what you choose to look at—the water, figures diving and gliding, flickering light and shadows during the cycle of the day, the steps and the diving board. As with Claude Monet almost a century earlier, Hockney became captivated with how you view a subject in changing circumstances, at different times of day and through shifting seasons.
I had never seen a piece of paper made before ... It's all done with these chewed up rags and water and you put it in a vat ... you have this thin mould which is all made of wire and as you dip the mould in the vat ... the water runs through the wire and this thin layer of mush stays and you tip it out ... and it becomes a piece of paper

4. David Hockney Lecture to the San Francisco Institute, 1979, transcript p. 3, in possession of the author.
**Speak your mind**

- David Hockney made many experimental works to see what watery effects he could achieve with wet paper pulp. Compare his *Paper pool studies* with works such as *Green Pool with diving board and shadow* from Hockney’s *Paper pools* series. Describe the unique visual qualities of the paper pulp and discuss what strategies Hockney has used to create the impression of surface and depth in the water. Consider how he used tone, composition, colour and shape.

- What kind of feelings arise when you look at Hockney’s *Paper pools*? Do you think they are the same emotions Hockney might have intended to provoke? In small groups talk about memories you have that are associated with water and swimming pools. How might you use these as starting points to create your own series of water-inspired works?

- Compare the visual qualities and emotions evoked by Hockney’s *Paper pools* with Claude Monet’s painting *Waterlilies* in the NGA’s collection. What similarities or differences do you notice in Monet’s approach to light, colour and composition?

**Get to work**

- Create a series of photographs that explore the significance of water in your life. Think about different water sources you could access, from your domestic environment to ponds, rivers or lakes near where you live. Consider the importance of light in your photographs and how it contributes to the mood you wish to convey. Use one of your photographs as the starting point for abstraction in another medium, e.g. watercolour. Experiment with how your chosen medium can be used to emphasise the visual qualities or emotions that water represents for you.

**Think it through**

- Hockney often creates large-scale works by combining individual elements into a grid structure, for example *A diver, paper pool 17* and *A Bigger Grand Canyon* in the NGA’s collection. Consider how the scale of a work affects the way it is experienced by viewers. How might you approach creating a large-scale version of your work?

**Relevant links**

- [PHILLIPS: David Hockney’s Paper Pools](#)
Since seeing a Picasso retrospective as a student, the artist has held an important place in Hockney’s artistic world. When Picasso died in 1973 Hockney began to better appreciate the great artist’s lifetime of achievement.

Later that year Hockney went to live in Paris, as a way of discovering more about Picasso. In homage to Picasso, Hockney followed in his footsteps going to work with master printer Aldo Crommelynck who, along with his brother Piero, had been responsible for printing almost half of Picasso’s graphic oeuvre.

From 1984–87 a new chapter in Hockney’s history of collaboration with Ken Tyler was the Moving focus series. In collaboration with this master printer, Hockney composed a group of interior views and chairs, views of a Mexican hotel, and portraits in reverse perspective; where the forms grow smaller closer to the picture plane and the viewer becomes the focal point. It was a summation of Hockney’s obsession with space at that time. The series was notable for its technical and compositional innovation. It stretched the boundaries of colour lithography and explored multi-point perspective. On occasions, he focused on the idea of multiple viewpoints by having specially shaped multi-faceted hand painted frames. The title ‘Moving focus’ was derived from an essay title that Hockey found in a book by George Rowley, The principles of Chinese painting, published in 1947. The analysis enthralled Hockney and became a guiding influence on the next stage of his art, as he became determined to rid his art of the single-point perspective.
David Hockney
An image of Celia, state 1 1984–86, colour lithograph, National Gallery of Australia, purchased with the assistance of the Orde Poynton Fund 2002 © David Hockney
It took me a long time ... to realise fully that, contrary to what some people may think, there is no actual distortion in Picasso. What he does may appear distorted only if you think of one particular way of seeing, which is always from a distance and always in a kind of stopped, frozen time. The moment you realise what Picasso is doing, how he is using time ... that is why you could see round the back of the body as well as the front...  

5. Nikos Stangos (ed), That’s the way I see it: David Hockney, Thames and Hudson, London, 1993, p. 102

(above) David Hockney  An image of Celia 1984–86, colour lithograph, screenprint and collage with a hand-painted frame, National Gallery of Australia, purchased with the assistance of the Orde Paynton Fund 2002 © David Hockney

(top left) Steven Sloman  Kenneth Tyler holding collage element in front of ‘An Image of Celia, State II’ from the ‘Moving Focus’ series, for David Hockney to view, Tyler Graphics Ltd. artist’s studio, Bedford Village, New York 1985, black and white photograph, National Gallery of Australia, gift of Kenneth Tyler, 2002
Speak your mind

- David Hockney met his long-time friend and favourite female model Celia Birtwell, a British textile designer, in Los Angeles in 1964. Hockney has drawn and painted many portraits of Celia over the years, while his artistic style has continued to evolve. Compare Hockney’s 1973 lithograph Celia with his 1984–86 works An image of Celia, state 1 and An image of Celia. What similarities and differences do you notice? In what ways can you see Hockney’s interests and working processes shifting over time? How do the visual qualities of each print affect your impression of Celia’s personality?

- Hockney’s 1984–87 Moving focus series references the artistic legacy of Pablo Picasso and the early-twentieth century art movement Cubism. Examine Picasso’s Cubist study (still life with bottle) in the NGA’s collection. How would you describe what you can see in Picasso’s drawing? What do you think this drawing might say about Cubism? What ideas or visual qualities connect Hockney’s Moving focus works with Cubism? Investigate the influence of Cubism on modern Australian artists, such as Grace Crowley.

- Watch the two short videos Behind the Scenes with David Hockney: The Illusion of Depth and What David Hockney’s Brilliant Collages Reveal About Photos. In what ways does Hockney address the challenge of representing time and space in a two-dimensional work of art? In what ways can you relate to Hockney’s ideas about time and space? Discuss how the experience of time and space in the twenty-first century might present unique challenges and possibilities for artists.

Get to work

- Ask your teacher, friend or classmate to act as your model for a series of drawings exploring multiple perspectives. Set a time limit of 2–5 minutes per drawing and focus on looking more at your model than at your paper. Rather than trying to make a ‘perfect drawing’, focus on recording the process of looking. After each interval of 2–5 minutes move to a new position, offering a new point of view, and start on a new piece of paper. After at least 5 intervals stop and examine your drawings. Explore strategies for combining, layering or intersecting your individual drawings to make a single composition, or series of compositions, using hand-cut or digital collage techniques.

Think it through

- You may like to make some of the drawings in white pencil on black paper and some in black on white. After collaging your drawings, consider using coloured media to define shapes and unify your final composition.

Relevant Links

- The Art Story: Cubism
AN ENDLESS SHEET OF PAPER

Between 2010 and 2011 Hockney completed a series of digitally drawn iPad prints of Yosemite National Park in California, ‘You can set up a palette very, very quickly indeed—quicker than any other medium. It’s also an endless sheet of paper, and the colour is literally at your fingertip.’ He enjoyed the freedom of drawing ‘en plein air’, while the iPad allowed him to draw in various ‘layers’ to further refine his compositions. Here he captured the grandeur of the mountain range, with the atmospheric skies and richly textured flora and foreground.

I’ve always wanted to be able to paint the dawn. After all, what clearer light were we ever afforded? ... But in the old days one never could, because, of course, ordinarily it would be too dark to see the paints ... But with an iPhone, I don’t even have to get out of bed, I just reach for the device, turn it on, start mixing and matching the colours, laying in the evolving scene.


(above) David Hockney Yosemite II, October 5th 2011 2011, iPad drawing printed on four sheets of paper, National Gallery of Australia, The Paynton Bequest 2016 © David Hockney
David Hockney The arrival of spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire in 2011 - 31 May, No.2 2011, iPad drawing digitally printed on paper, National Gallery of Australia, The Poynton Bequest 2015 © David Hockney
Get to work

- Have a go at making your own 'plein air' digital drawing on your phone or tablet. Work with the drawing app of your choice. BrushesRedux or Procreate are two good options, but new drawing apps are developed and released regularly. Choose a favourite location in your school or home environment and explore layering colour, line and shape to capture a sense of place. Revisit the same location at a different time of day and make another drawing.

Think it through

- Look at the two drawings you have made and reflect upon changes in light and mood at different times of day. Can you see changes in your approach or development in your confidence with the digital medium from one drawing to the next? Discuss the challenges that you encountered and the aspects that you enjoyed. Can you see further potential for art-making on your phone or tablet?

Speak your mind

- The French term ‘en plein air’, meaning ‘in the open air’, refers to the act of painting outdoors. Have you ever tried drawing or painting outdoors? What aspects of working outdoors do you think would be challenging and what aspects might be inspiring or exciting? In 1889 a group of Australian artists staged a famous exhibition of ‘plein air’ paintings. Discuss the similarities and differences between Hockney’s ‘plein air’ iPad drawings and the 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition works of Tom Roberts, Charles Condor and Arthur Streeton.

- David Hockney was quick to adopt the iPad as a drawing tool following the release of the technology in 2010. Hear Hockney’s thoughts about iPad drawing and see the development of one of his Yosemite drawings in this ABC video interview. How would you describe Hockney’s relationship with technology? What do you see as the positives, negatives or interesting possibilities offered by digital drawing technologies, such as phones and tablets?

- Reflect on all the different materials and processes that you have seen in the David Hockney: prints exhibition. What do you think continues to attract Hockney to new mediums? What links can you find in Hockney’s interests or use of visual elements that carry across mediums? If you were a reporter, what headline would you choose to sum up your experience of Hockney’s work in the David Hockney: prints exhibition?

Relevant Links

- New York Times: iPad is an Artist’s Canvas for David Hockney
David Hockney in front of iPad drawings from The arrival of spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire in 2011 (twenty eleven) in the exhibition David Hockney: Current at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2016, photo: Lisa Mattiazi