

# Writing a curatorial statement:

A well-written curatorial statement is your chance to guide the way the audience perceives your exhibition. It represents an opportunity to communicate directly with viewers, and help them recognize your intent and purpose in your body of work, understand your point of view, and generate intrigue and curiosity about the body of work they are about to experience.

For SL students, the word limit is 400 words. For HL students, it is 700 words. If you exceed this, parts of your statement will not be considered in your assessment. It can be helpful to follow a basic structure:

## Writing exhibition text:

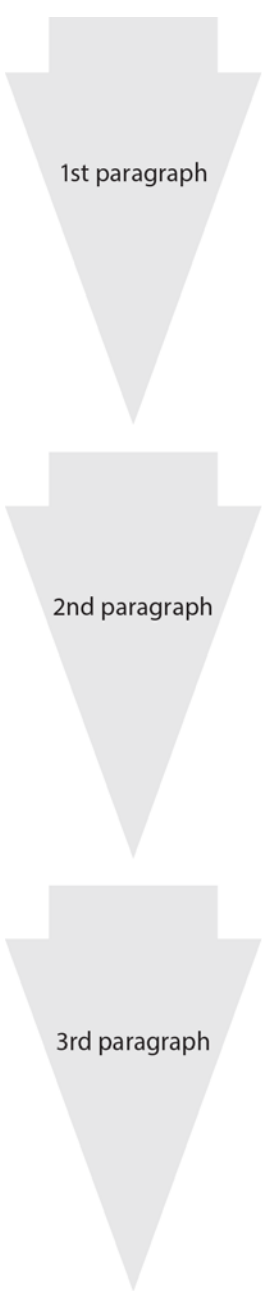
For each artwork you submit, it should be supported by exhibition text that outlines the title, medium and size of the artwork. The exhibition text should also include a brief outline of the original intentions of the work (500 characters maximum—including spaces—per artwork). This can be presented in the following way:

**Student name**

**Title of work** (month and year of completion)

medium

dimensions



### Establish the overall premise of the exhibition

- What are you hoping to achieve by presenting this body of work? What impact will this body of work have on your audience? What are the concepts and understandings you initially intend to convey?
- What is the vision for presenting this body of work? (HL)

### Identify the range of artistic approaches you have used

- How have particular issues, motifs or ideas been explored, or particular materials or techniques used?
- What themes can be identified in the work, or what experiences have influenced it?

### Explain your decisions about arrangement and display

- How does the way you have exhibited your artwork contribute to the meanings you are trying to convey to an audience?
- What strategies did you use to develop a relationship between the artwork and the viewer (for example, visual impact)? (HL)
- How does the way you have arranged and presented your artworks support the relationship and connection between the artworks presented? (HL)
- What do you intend your audience to feel, think, experience, understand, see, learn, consider from the work you have selected for exhibition? (HL)

Explanatory text that explains the intent of the work, and should reference any sources that have influenced the individual piece. If in a piece you are deliberately appropriating another artist's image as a valid part of your artmaking intentions, the exhibition text must acknowledge the source of the original image.

When completed, these can be printed out and included in your exhibition to help your audience appreciate your work more fully. Mounting printed exhibition text on foam core board can give your exhibition a professional feel.

## Further advice for students:

- If there is a particular work that was especially instrumental in the way you perceived your exhibition, it might be interesting to describe that work in more depth to draw the audience into your thought process.
- It is important to remember that you have an opportunity to write a short statement to accompany each artwork in the exhibition, so do not use up your word limit describing each work. Rather, identify thematic and/or stylistic connections between works.
- Consider the style of the statement. There are two audiences for your exhibition: your school community and the IB assessment system, which will include your teacher and IB moderators. You want to avoid using the kind of art-world jargon that might alienate a general audience but still be specific enough when articulating your vision to engage the teacher and moderator. If there is a specific art term that is central to the main idea of your exhibition, be sure to define it within your statement.
- Your statement should be written in an informative and persuasive tone, but because you are writing about your own work, personal pronouns (I, my and so on) are appropriate.
- Be realistic, frank and honest about your work. Statements that do not reflect the work that is presented cannot score highly against the marking criteria.
- Less is more. While the word limits for SL and HL are 400 and 700 words respectively, most curatorial statements written for exhibitions in galleries are between 300 and 500 words.