Sustained Investigation (SI) Idea Development

Artwork Requirements
Class requirement: 8 works of art
AP College Board Requirement: 15 images

- Images and artworks document an inquiry-guided investigation through practice, experimentation, and revision
- Show a synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas by including photos of both finished works of art and design and images that document the process (this includes ideas, sketches, and progress photos as well)
- Showcase artwork that demonstrates strong 3-D Design skills (see list below)
    - point, layer, occupied/unoccupied space, opacity, variety, scale, line, form, texture, transparency, rhythm, balance, shape, volume, color, time, movement, emphasis, plane, mass, value, unity, proportion, contrast, repetition, connection, juxtaposition, hierarchy

Written Statements to Include in Portfolio:

- Identify the question or questions that guided your sustained investigation
- Describe how your sustained investigation shows evidence of practice, experimentation, and revision guided by your questions (1200 characters maximum, including spaces, for response to both prompts)

Identify the following for each image:

- Materials used (maximum 100 characters, including spaces)
- Processes used (maximum 100 characters, including spaces)
- Size (height × width × depth, in inches)
    - For images that document process or show detail, students should enter "N/A" for size
    - For digital and virtual work, students should enter the size of the intended visual display

Focusing on a Body of Work

There is no single correct approach to explaining the *Sustained Investigation* section of the AP Studio Art Portfolio. However, this definition can serve as a guide. Sustained Investigation is the concept of producing a series of sequential visual forms — forms growing from forms — to explore in greater depth a particular visual concern, inquiry, or question. Here are some strategies to help you understand the concept.

Developing Student Ideas

Identify your personal interests, passions, likes and dislikes. In the beginning, the responses may be simple — single words, ideas, or questions in a list. As you explore further, you can expand on these initial ideas. Consider and explain how *other influences* are brought into, or become part of, the idea you wish to pursue. This makes it easier to explain how your idea can serve as the basis of an **in-depth** exploration. Begin with an initial idea and turn that idea into a question you can explore with your art.

Developing a Question to Guide Your Sustained Investigation

Questions that guide the sustained investigation are typically formulated at the beginning of portfolio development.

- Students should formulate their questions based on their own experiences and ideas
- These guiding questions should be documented and further developed by students throughout the sustained investigation

Tips for a Successful Sustained Investigation

- A Sustained Investigation is **not** a series of work involving cats, cars, emotions, and so on, appropriated from appealing images found online
- The Sustained Investigation idea is **not** discovered one week prior to the submission of a portfolio by searching for commonalities in a group of divergent works.
- A Sustained Investigation **is** under way when students come to "own" their imagery, whether objective or nonobjective, based on personal observation, experience, ideas, research, and experimentation, or a combination of these.

It is important to feel comfortable with your sustained investigation because you will be spending a lot of time creating a variety of projects around this concentration topic.

Spend a good amount of time developing your ideas for your Sustained Investigation. You will be working on it for the bulk of your AP time and will create many works of art regarding a single 'Big Idea' or better yet a 'Guiding Question or Inquiry'.

Keep the Following in Mind When Developing a Sustained Investigation

1. It is not enough to focus on a subject (trees) or a medium (charcoal). If trees, why trees? Is it about growth? Negative space in nature? Protective canopies? Strength and endurance? Branch and leaf structures? The "design" of a forest in compositional relationships? Look at Mondrian, van Ruisdael, Courbet, van Gogh and Fairfield Porter.
2. Your exploration should go deeper than merely taking a subject and executing it in a variety of media or styles. Example: Apples rendered in watercolor, stipple, crosshatch, cubism, fauvism and surrealism.
3. Ideally you should develop a visual language that fits your idea, a style and medium and format appropriate to the theme you are investigating.
4. A sustained investigation can be a series of works that are very consistent in theme and approach OR it may evolve and develop as the visual idea is explored, ending in a different place than where it began. In either case it is best to start out with a clear plan of attack; if the idea changes, the change will usually be the natural result of discoveries made in the process of exploration.
5. Do not choose to work in a medium in which you have absolutely no experience. This is not the time to try something completely new. The point of the investigation is to work in depth. This can usually be best achieved in a medium in which you are already familiar. You are developing concept, not technique.
6. Research artists who have worked in styles similar to your own direction or with similar subject matter. Do not rely totally on yourself for inspiration. Look at historical masters, contemporary artists, the world around you and your peers to cross-pollinate your own ideas.

7. If you choose to work in an area rich in cliché or teenage stereotypes your work must be very original.
8. ALL images must adhere to copyright laws. By using original imagery or drawing/sculpting from life you will avoid any issues.
9. Themes such as "my feelings and emotions", "nature" or "flowers" are much too broad for a concentration. Even the more common concentration themes such as portraits or still life need a specific focus. Still lives that tell a story or emphasize a certain interest in composition or design will be more successful. If the concentration is "portraits", you should consider things like format, intent, point of view, lighting, style and expressiveness.
10. Visit the College Board Website. READ the Concentration Statements and then look at the artwork. Really LOOK at how the artwork is connected and the artist developed the idea.
11. Remember that EACH Piece of art must be tied to or reflected back to your essential question that prompted your sustained investigation that inspired this body of work that you are going to create.

Generating Ideas Exercise

List 3 topics or subjects you are considering for your concentration. Keep this idea broad. Think only about ideas, do not think yet about how this idea will translate as a sculpture.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Fill out one concept/mind map for each topic/subject with as much information as you possibly can.

- In the center circle, #1, write your topic/subject matter (from list above)
- In boxes #2 write down different questions or ideas about this topic
- In bubbles #3 write down subject matter, objects, or ideas that correspond to box #2 or further drill down your ideas. Add additional bubbles if you have more ideas
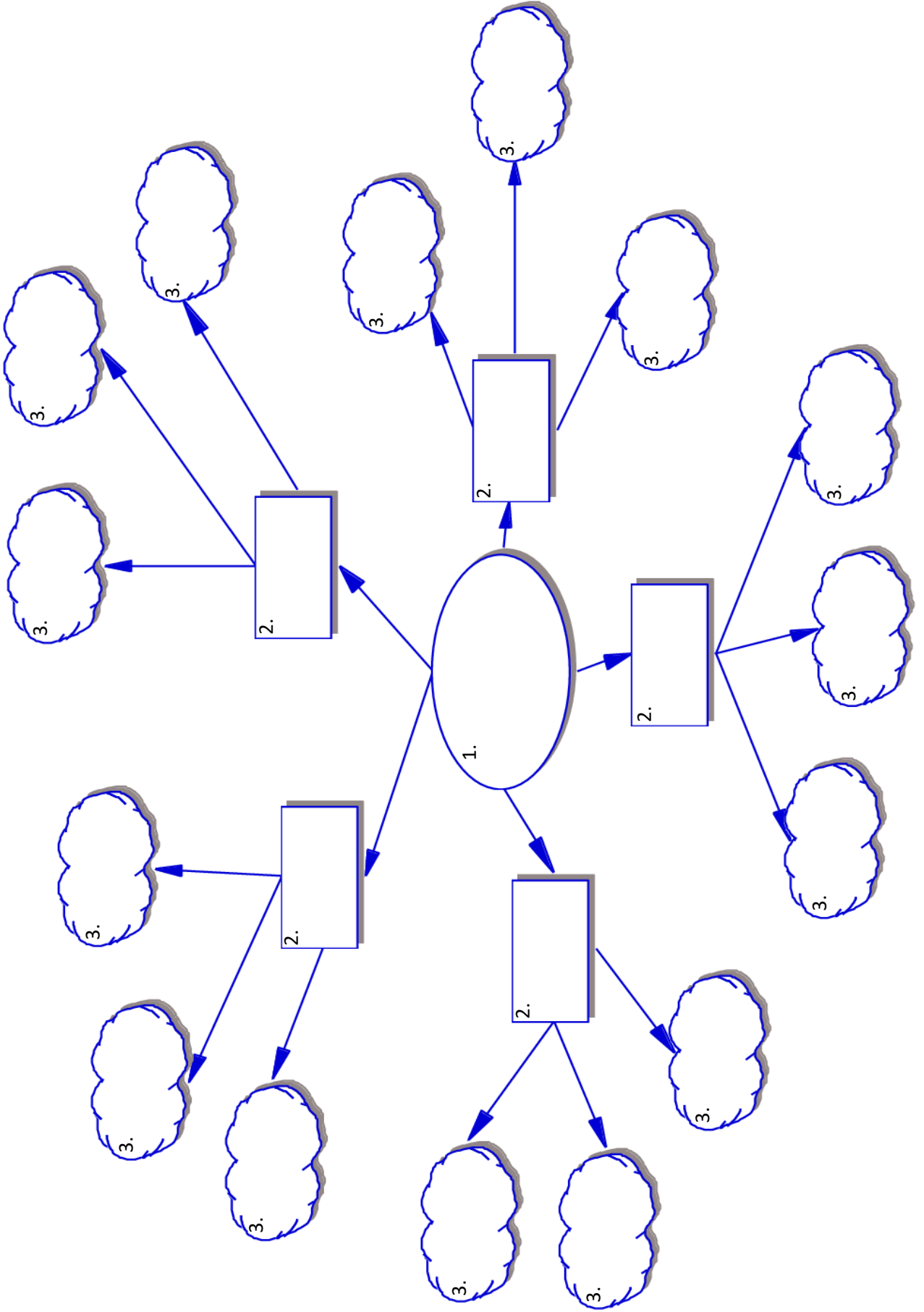- Create other webs from bubbles #3 if you have additional ideas

After filling out each mind map answer these questions.

1. What idea/concept/subject matter appeals most to you from your list in question 1?
   _____
   _____

2. Which map was easiest to fill out/or has the most information?
   _____
   _____

3. Which map was the most difficult to fill out or had the lease information on it?
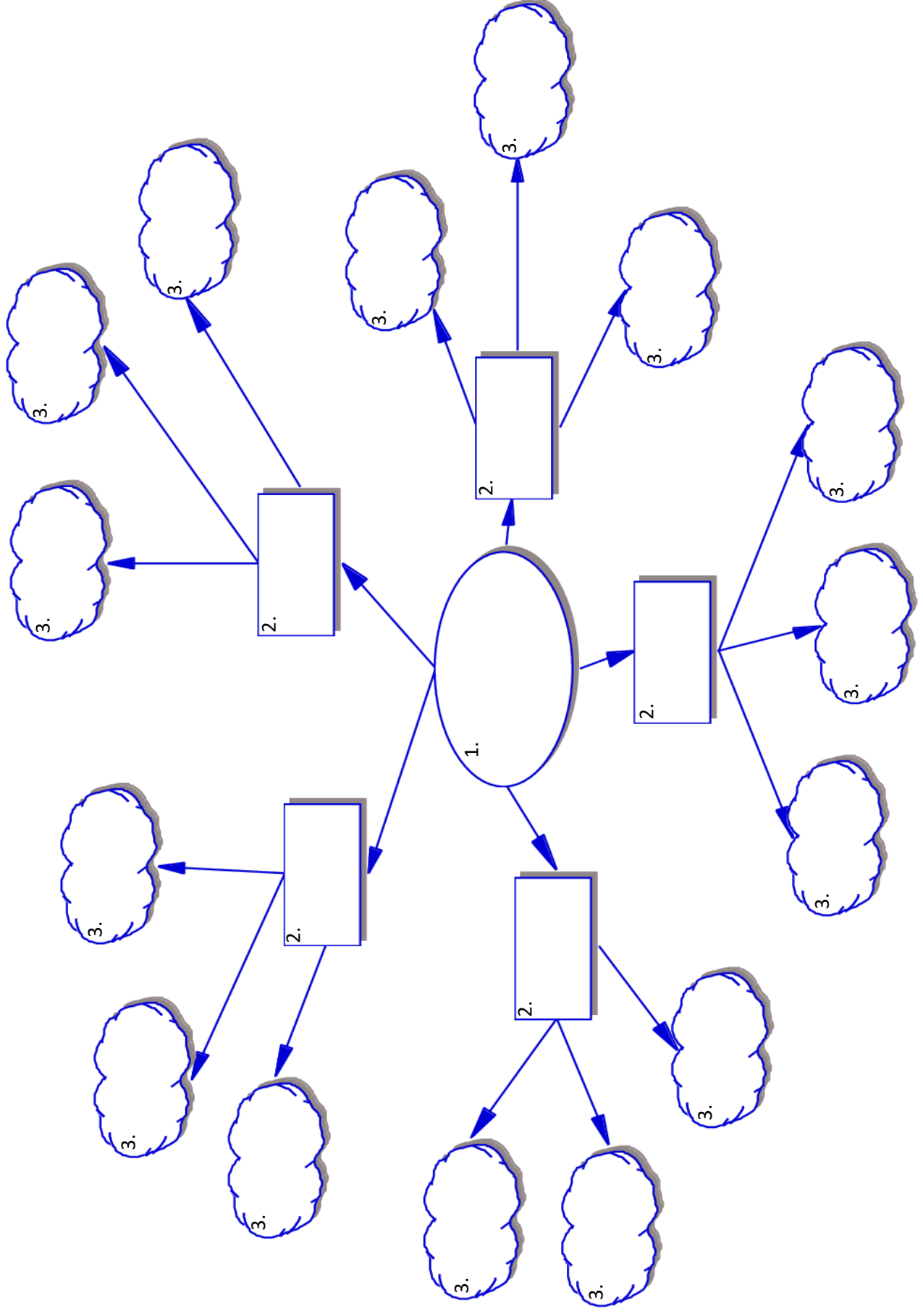   _____
   _____

Create a list of possible inquiry questions that you like best that can guide your sustained investigation for the semester. These can be questions from your concept/mind maps or new ones that you thought of while doing this exercise. Phase these ideas as a question you can investigate and explore by creating sculptural works of art.

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2. _____
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3. _____
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CONCEPT MAP

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CONCEPT MAP

CONCEPT MAP

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