



# Harmony Day Poster Competition: Teacher's Lesson Guide

Years 11 & 12

2026 Theme: *Harmony – Stronger Together*



Dear Teacher,

Thank you for engaging your students in this conceptually demanding design challenge. For your Senior Secondary students, the theme "**Harmony – Stronger Together**" serves as a launchpad for a sophisticated investigation into the ideologies that shape contemporary society.

At this advanced stage, students are capable of formulating a unique artistic thesis. This competition challenges them to move beyond mere communication and into the realm of social commentary, creating a conceptual poster that interrogates, subverts, or re-frames the theme itself. The goal is to produce a piece that sparks dialogue and reveals a unique, well-reasoned perspective.

This guide provides a complete, **60-minute Conceptual Design Studio** for Years 11-12. Aligned with the Australian Curriculum, it is structured to guide students in developing a defensible artistic position and translating that position into a powerful, conceptually layered artwork.

We are excited to see the intellectual rigour and creative courage your students bring to this task.

## 1. Connecting to the Australian Curriculum

This lesson supports key learning outcomes for Years 9 & 10, focusing on Visual Arts/Design, critical inquiry in HASS, and the articulation of a complex ethical and personal viewpoint.

Learning Area	Curriculum Code	Content Descriptor (in plain English)
The Arts (Visual Arts)	AC9AVD12D01	Students will <b>conceive, develop, and resolve a body of work</b> that challenges conventions and communicates their personal, cultural and/or political views.
HASS (Society and Culture)	AC9HSF6S05	Students will <b>develop and justify an evidence-based argument</b> about a contemporary social issue, synthesising information from diverse sources.
General Capabilities	<i>Critical &amp; Creative Thinking</i>	Students will <b>critique and deconstruct complex concepts and assumptions</b> , and synthesise their own coherent and logically-defended point of view.
General Capabilities	<i>Ethical Understanding</i>	Students will <b>analyse the ethical implications of social structures</b> and the artist's responsibility in representing complex social and political ideas.

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## 2. The 60-Minute "Stronger Together" Conceptual Design Studio

**Lesson Objective:** Students will formulate and defend a unique conceptual thesis in response to the theme, and plan a poster that uses semiotics and sophisticated visual language to communicate this thesis.

**Materials Needed:**

- Projector/smartboard for displaying an image
- A conceptually challenging image for the "Spark" activity (e.g., a Banksy artwork, a powerful political poster, or an abstract photograph)
- Whiteboard or smartboard and markers
- The provided "**Artist Statement & Design Rationale**" for each student

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### Step 1: The Spark – Deconstructing an Image (15 mins)

- Project a complex, ambiguous image for the class to see. Without giving any context, ask students to write down a one-sentence answer to the question: "**What is the artist's argument?**"
- Ask a few students to share their interpretations. Highlight the diversity of readings.
- Now, provide the full context for the image: the artist, the year it was made, the social or political events it was responding to.
- Lead a discussion: "How did the context change or deepen your understanding? Does the artwork simply 'show' something, or does it make a complex argument? What visual choices (colour, composition, symbolism) lead you to that conclusion?"
- Introduce the task: "Your challenge is not just to illustrate the theme 'Stronger Together,' but to make an *argument* about it. Is it always true? Who is included and who is excluded? What are the complexities or paradoxes of unity? Your poster must be a piece of visual commentary."

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### Step 2: The Art of Visual Rhetoric (15 mins)

Introduce key concepts for creating a conceptually-driven artwork:

1. **Develop a Visual Thesis:** This is the core argument of your poster, distilled into a single, defensible sentence. (e.g., "True strength comes not from forced unity, but from the celebration of radical diversity.")
2. **Use Semiotics (Signs & Symbols):** Deconstruct the theme. What does the word 'Harmony' signify? What about 'Strength'? Your poster should intentionally use or subvert these symbolic meanings.
3. **Employ Juxtaposition:** Create meaning by placing two unexpected or contrasting ideas/images together. (e.g., Juxtaposing a woven tapestry with a broken chain to comment on the fragility of unity).
4. **Consider the Gaze:** Acknowledge that your audience brings their own biases. Your poster can either meet their expectations or challenge them directly.

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### Step 3: Let's Create! (20 mins)

- Hand out the "**Artist Statement & Design Rationale**".
- Explain that in the art and design world, a concept is only as strong as its rationale. This document is their intellectual blueprint, forcing them to articulate and defend their artistic choices before execution.
- **Important Teacher Note:** For this age group, the rationale is as important as the final artwork. It demonstrates the depth of their critical and creative thinking. The final A4 or A3 artwork is the visual execution of this rigorously planned statement.
- Circulate, acting as a sounding board. Challenge their assumptions and prompt them to deepen their thesis and the clarity of their conceptual links.

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### Step 4: The Poster Pitch (5 mins)

- Conduct a "Critique Session." A few volunteers present their completed rationale to the class. The class then offers constructive feedback, questioning the thesis, the choice of symbols, and the proposed execution, helping the artist refine their concept.

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## 3. Teacher's Tip Sheet: 5 Strategies for Powerful Visual Advocacy

Help your students develop a rigorous and insightful artistic practice:

- **Formulate a Question:** The best conceptual art doesn't provide answers; it asks powerful questions. What question is your poster asking about "Harmony" or "Strength"?
  - **Research is Fundamental:** Your concept cannot exist in a vacuum. Research artists, designers, philosophers, or social movements that have explored similar ideas. Ground your work in a broader intellectual context.
  - **Embrace Ambiguity:** Don't feel the need to spell everything out. A powerful poster leaves room for the viewer to bring their own interpretation, creating a more memorable and engaging experience.
  - **The Medium is the Message:** Your material choices are part of your concept. A digital illustration feels different from a rough collage or a stark photograph. How does your choice of medium reinforce your thesis?
  - **Refine, Refine, Refine:** Your first idea is rarely your best. Interrogate your own concept. Is it a cliché? How can you push it further? Be willing to deconstruct and rebuild your own ideas.
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## 4. From Classroom Creation to Competition Submission

The most important outcome of this lesson is the rich conversation and the pride students feel in creating their artwork. Here is our recommended process for celebrating their work and participating in the national competition.

### Step 1: Create a School "Stronger Together" Gallery

We strongly encourage you to celebrate the work of **every student**. Creating a "**Stronger Together Wall**" in your classroom, library, or school hall is a fantastic way to:

- Give every child the recognition they deserve.
- Showcase your school's commitment to the values of Harmony Day.
- Visually reinforce the powerful message that your school community is stronger together.

### Step 2: Select Your School's Finalists

The Moving Forward Together competition receives thousands of entries from across the country. To ensure every poster gets the attention it deserves, we ask schools to participate in the first round of judging.

Please select the posters that you feel best represent your school's creativity and understanding of the theme. As a guideline, we recommend submitting your top 3 entries per Year (e.g., 3 from Year 1, 3 from Year 2, etc.).

This makes being selected for submission a special achievement for the students.

### Step 3: Submit Your Finalists Online

Once you have selected your school's finalists, please proceed to the submission guide below.

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## 5. Competition Submission Guide

### 2026 Competition Theme: Harmony – Stronger Together

#### Key Rules:

- Artwork must be the student's own original work and connect to the theme.
- Posters should be A4 or A3 in size.
- Any art materials can be used (crayons, paint, markers, collage).

#### How to Submit:

1. Take a clear, bright photograph or scan of the completed poster.
2. Visit our website at [www.movingforwardtogether.org.au/harmony-day-competitions](http://www.movingforwardtogether.org.au/harmony-day-competitions)
3. Fill out the online entry form with the student's details and upload the image file.

**Submission Deadline:** 15 April 2026

**Thank you for helping us show that we are all stronger together.**

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## 6. Engaging Parents & Carers: Bring Harmony Home!

Connecting with families is a powerful way to extend the Harmony Day message beyond the classroom. To help you do this, we have created a simple, one-page handout for you to send home with your students.

This guide, titled "**Bring Harmony Home**," briefly explains the "**Stronger Together**" theme and gives parents and carers simple ideas on how to support their child's creative process. It also clarifies that the school will be managing the final competition submissions.

This resource is designed to be a simple, print-and-go A4 handout.  
(Annexed to this document)

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## Harmony Day Poster Competition: Parent Guide: "Bring Harmony Home!"

**2026 Theme:** *Harmony – Stronger Together*  
Years 11 & 12



### Hello Parents and Carers!

Today in class, your child participated in a conceptual design studio, using the Harmony Day theme as a starting point for a deep, critical inquiry:

#### "Harmony – Stronger Together."

The session challenged students to move beyond simple illustration and to develop a unique, defensible point of view on a complex social idea—much like a visual essay or a piece of social commentary.

Using a formal "Artist Statement & Design Rationale," they have articulated the intellectual and artistic framework for their poster. Now, they have the opportunity to create a final, thought-provoking artwork for the **Moving Forward Together Harmony Day Competition!**

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### How You Can Support Your Child's Creativity

The goal is to support their intellectual and creative autonomy as they formulate a complex idea.

- **Be Their Sounding Board:** Ask them to explain their "visual thesis." Listen to their argument and ask clarifying questions. Acting as an engaged audience for their idea is invaluable.
- **Discuss Complex Ideas:** Engage with them in conversations about the nuances of social issues. Explore different perspectives on topics in the news without needing to find a simple answer.
- **Provide the Canvas and Space:** Your child will need a blank A4 or A3 piece of paper and their chosen art supplies, along with the space to think and create.
- **Appreciate the Process:** The most valuable part of this exercise is the critical thinking, research, and refinement of an idea. Applaud their intellectual courage, regardless of the final aesthetic outcome.

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### About the Competition

The Moving Forward Together competition is a wonderful way to celebrate the creativity of students across Australia.

**Your child's teacher will have all the information about the school's process for selecting and submitting posters to the official competition.**

Thank you for helping us build a stronger community, together.

**Visit Website for Details:** [www.movingforwardtogether.org.au/harmony-day-competitions](http://www.movingforwardtogether.org.au/harmony-day-competitions)

**The Moving Forward Together Team**



# Artist Statement & Design Rationale

## 2026 Theme: *Stronger Together*



Your artwork is the visual expression of your intellectual position. This document is its foundation.

### 1. Artist's Intent

- **My Visual Thesis:** State the central argument of your work in a single, clear sentence

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- **Key Questions:** What questions does your work pose to the viewer about the theme?

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### 2. Conceptual Framework

- **Social/Political/Cultural Context:** What specific issue, event, or idea is your work responding to?

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- **Semiotics & Symbolism:** How are you using, challenging, or subverting common symbols associated with "harmony," "strength," or "community"?

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- **Key Techniques:** How will you use techniques like juxtaposition, irony, scale, or metaphor to build your argument?

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### 3. Audience & Intended Reading

- **My Intended Audience is:**

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- **The Intended Reading:** Describe the intellectual and/or emotional journey you want your viewer to experience. What should they understand or question after engaging with your work?

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- **Potential Misreading:** How might your message be misinterpreted, and how does your design attempt to mitigate this?

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### 4. Aesthetic Justification

- **Medium & Materials:** Why did you choose this specific medium (*e.g., digital, collage, photography, illustration*)? How does it support your concept?

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- **Composition & Colour Palette:** Justify your key compositional and colour choices in relation to your thesis.

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### 5. Concept Sketch

Sketch your concept on a blank A4 sheet of paper.

**Artist Name:** \_\_\_\_\_