



Student Design Awards

SUBMISSION HANDBOOK

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Student Design Awards**
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About the RSA Student Design Awards

This handbook includes tips and tricks to help you craft an impactful and memorable submission.

The RSA Student Design Awards are evaluated against a judging criteria.

A winning proposal will demonstrate detailed engagement with this and address it with a high level of understanding and explanation.

The judging process

Each RSA brief is judged by a different panel of designers, industry experts and social innovators in two stages: anonymous shortlisting, followed by interviews with finalists. At the first stage of judging, judges view all the entries submitted for a brief and agree on a shortlist to interview. Keep in mind that the judges have a very limited time per project, so it's important you communicate your proposal in a clear and concise way. For the second stage of judging, shortlisted candidates are invited to interview. The candidate's submission boards will be used as support for the interviews.

Showcase your unique style

You have complete creative freedom on the layout, style and design of your boards and this is a great opportunity to showcase your own original style.

Further links

- [RSA Student Design Awards](#)
- [Judging criteria](#)
- [Useful resources](#)
- [Learn how to apply systems thinking to your work by watching a presentation](#) with Rebecca Ford (Head of Learning and Collaboration Design, RSA).

Please note: all boards presented in this document are examples only of the work made by past RSA Student Design Awards participants. You are not expected to replicate their style.

OPEN BRIEFS 1–5

Boards

Open Briefs 1–5 boards

Judging criteria

The most important thing to remember is that the judges will be evaluating your work against the judging criteria, so make sure your submission boards address the questions:

Social and environmental impact:

How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? How have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? How have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

Rigorous research and compelling insights:

How have you combined your own first-hand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people's needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

Systems thinking:

What's the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you're exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

Viability:

Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

Creativity and innovation:

How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?

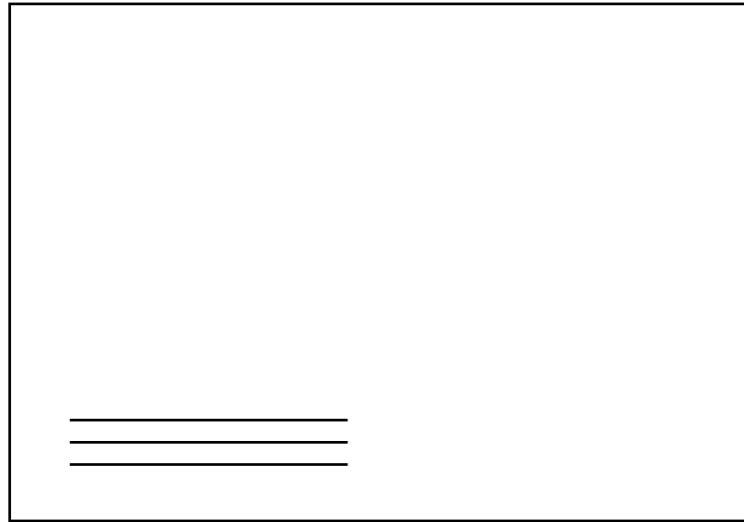
Further links

→ [Download all of this year's open briefs](#)

→ [View gallery of work from Student Design Award winners](#)

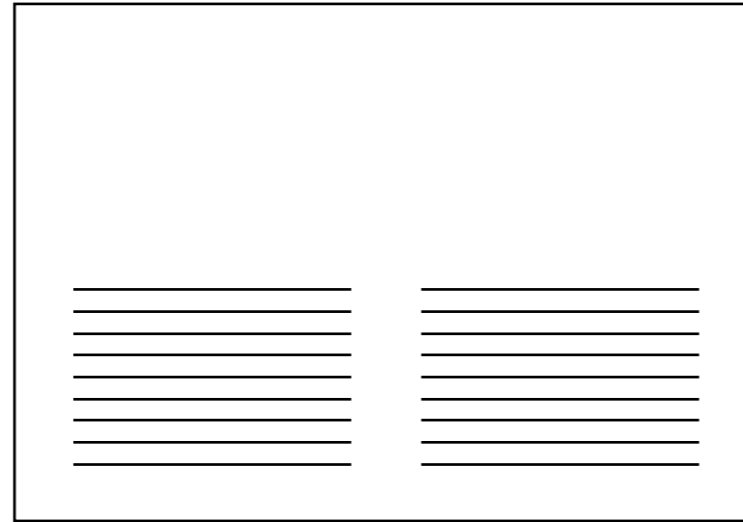
Open Briefs 1–5 boards

Submission requirements



1 x A3 PDF hero image with a one sentence description – a singular ‘poster image’ that conveys the essence of your project, includes your project title and a one sentence description.

For example: ‘Bare technology: a product and service design proposal to convert old computers (e-waste) into simpler, more straightforward, accessible computers for older people’.

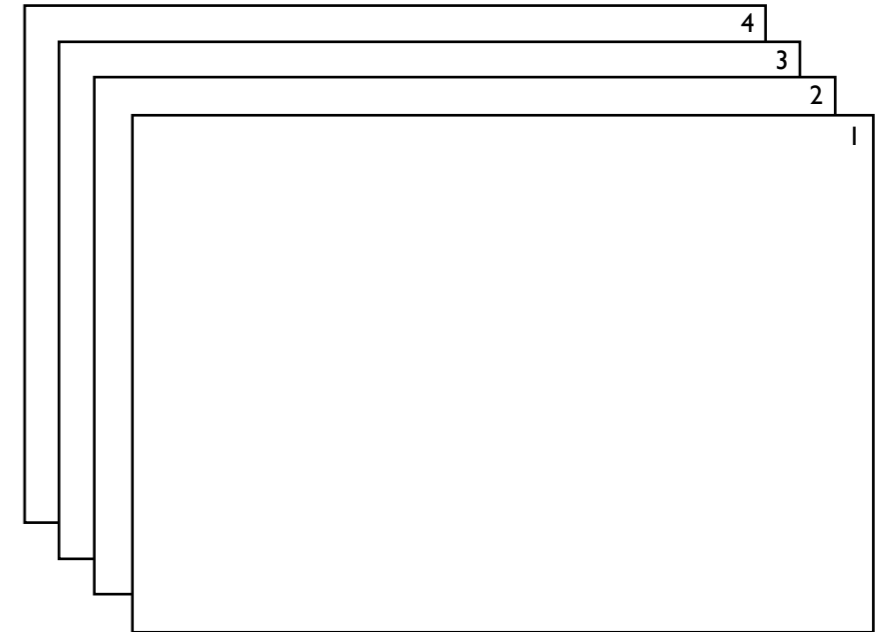


1 x A3 written summary – a single page that summarises your big idea using the following format:

Problem (50 words max). What is the specific problem you identified within the brief topic? Who experiences this problem and how does it impact them?

Process (75 words max). How did you investigate this issue and what were your key insights? What journey did you go through to get to your final proposal?

Proposal (50 words max). What is your proposed intervention? How will it address the problem?



4 x A3 PDF boards outlining your proposal – 4 pages describing your proposal and responding to the 5 sections of the judging criteria.

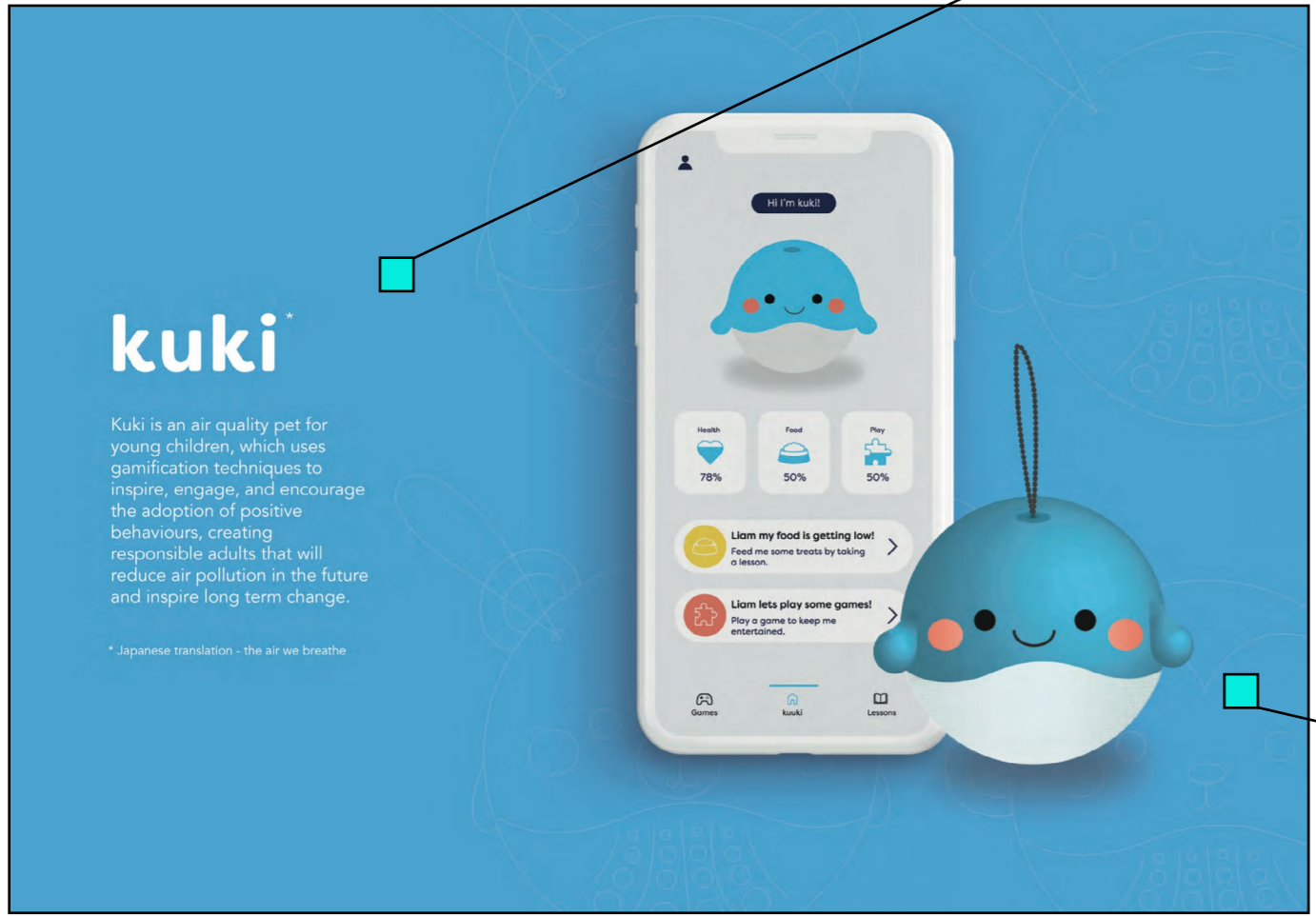
Each board does not have to directly map onto the criteria, but judges should be able to understand how you are answering these different categories.

We advise numbering each board in the top right-hand corner, in the order they should be viewed by the judges. You may include relevant hyperlinks in your boards however we cannot guarantee this will be viewed by the judges.

Open Briefs 1–5 boards

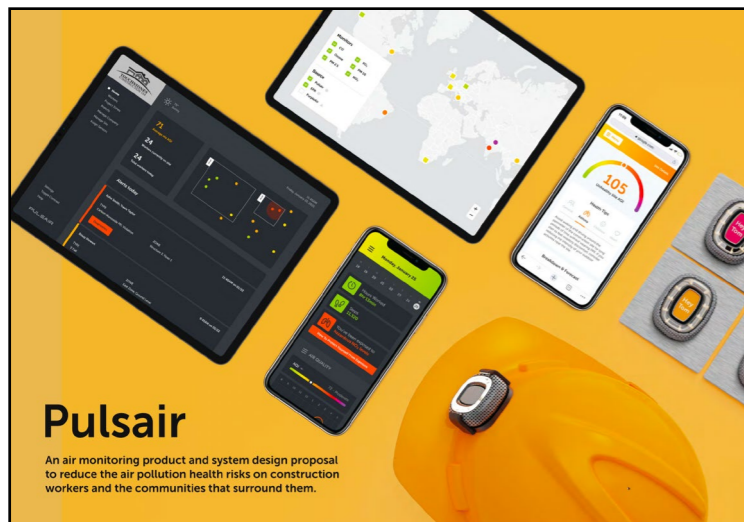
Hero board examples

One descriptive sentence



Visual of project

Kuki - Emma Brookes



Pulsair - Emily VanderMey, Liz Wang and Samantha Tung



Create together - Sophie Cane

Tips:

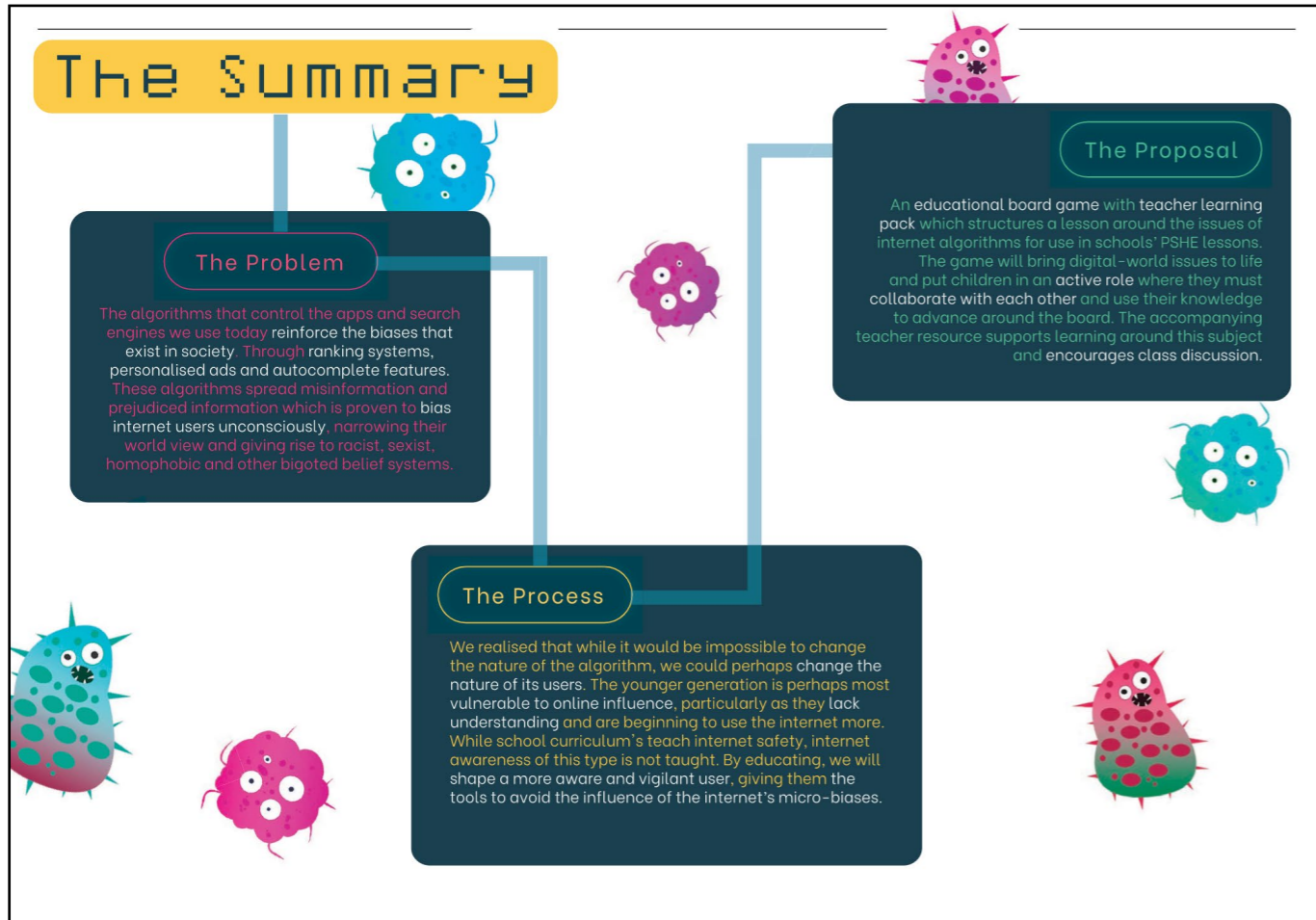
Take time to carefully craft an impactful sentence that describes your project and supports your hero image.

Choose one engaging and vibrant image - this generally works best than a collage of small pictures.

Test your hero image to ensure it conveys the essence of your project, captures the attention of judges and is memorable.

Open Briefs 1–5 boards

Written summary examples



Clear broken down summary of project

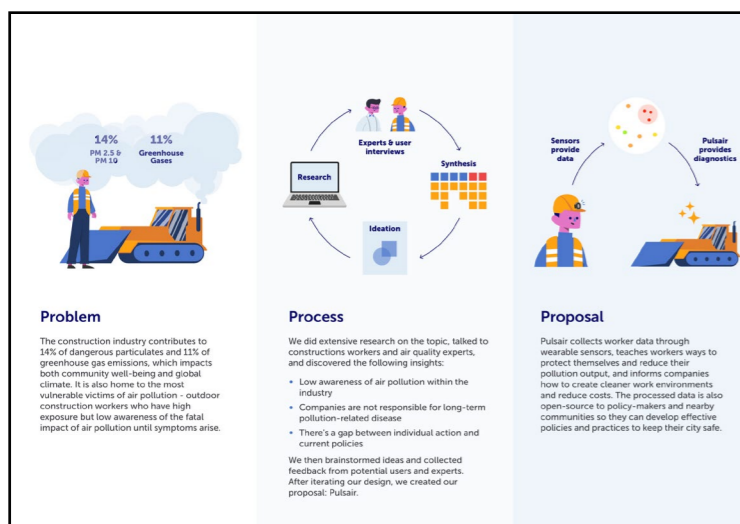
Tips:

Highlight the root cause of the problem you are addressing and share the key insights you identified through your process.

Communicate your project clearly and concisely so that the judges can quickly understand your approach and your proposal. Clearly detail how your project makes a positive difference.

Follow the word count outlined for each section of the written summary board. This requires you to describe your research process and outcomes in the simplest possible terms.

Hacked



Pulsair - Emily VanderMey, Liz Wang and Samantha Tung



Travel-ease - Emma Sutcliffe

Open Briefs 1-5 boards

Proposal examples

Tips:

Share your design-led process and highlight how you've met the judging criteria:

Social and environmental impact:
Demonstrate how your proposal makes a positive difference for the people and/or natural world in your chosen context.

Rigorous research and compelling insights:
Communicate the different types of research you've carried out and how your insights are grounded in users' needs and desires. Show how you've prototyped and tested your idea.

Systems Thinking:
Illustrate how you investigated the root causes of the problem and considered the wider set of issues related.

Viability:
Show you have considered the potential viability of your proposal.

Creativity and innovation:
Convey your unique, forward thinking and creative problem solving approach.

Rigorous research and compelling insights

Social and environmental impact

Systems Thinking

Viability

Creativity and innovation

Social & Environmental Impact

Kuki aims to encourage sustainable behaviour and advocacy for clean air strategies in both children and their parents, promoting long term change. By using this bottom-up approach for change it ensures that the barrier to entry is low, promoting inclusion and diversity as all can make an impact.

The key to effectively managing this approach lies in communicating the goals and strategies for implementing these changes. Kuki does this by providing the tools - air pollution monitor and filter, and information - pollution levels and news, needed to protect and make informed decisions.

Material consideration:
Kuki uses a filtration system to protect children from harmful pollution. The filtration system uses a combination of a HEPA filter and an active carbon core that filters out the most toxic pollutants that can't be trapped in HEPA material. Active carbon can be recycled through a process called thermal reactivation, reducing the need for additional raw materials. HEPA filters unfortunately can't be recycled however, there is no effective alternative currently available on the market.
The mainframe of kuki is made from a variety of sustainable materials, ranging from recycled plastics to aluminum mesh and key chains, helping to reduce environmental impact on the wider system. Aluminum is one of the most eco-friendly and widely recycled metals, and is also very lightweight making it extremely suitable for the portable nature of kuki.

03

Research Process

Secondary Research
INITIAL FINDINGS
Target Group: Children 4+ and their parents.
Barriers:
• Inaccessible information
• Limited power
• Cost of monitoring equipment
• Reliance on government policy.
Stressors:
• Lack of understanding
• Invisibility of issue
• Lack of engagement
• Covid 19

Primary Research
INTERVIEWS
Parents: To discover their understanding of air pollution and identify any everyday barriers that are preventing action.
Teachers: To understand how kids are being educated about air pollution.
Children: To discover how children view air pollution and its impacts.

Systems Thinking
ROOT CAUSES
Lack of Understanding: There is a need for improved communication about air quality and environmental health.
Inaccessible Information: Many are unaware of where to go for information on air pollution furthering gaps in public understanding.
Invisibility of Issue: Air pollution is largely invisible and thus out of the public consciousness.

Preliminary Responses
INITIAL IDEAS
Clean Air Dispenser: A portable dispenser which enables dirty air to pass through an internal filter enabling the user to breathe clean air.
Toy Filter: A toy which protects children from harmful pollutants due to an internal filter.
Alert Monitor: A portable device which monitors air quality around the child and alerts parents to dangerous conditions.
Education Platform: An educational platform that provides engaging workshops and classes for parents and children.
Playground Equipment: Outdoor playground equipment which filters the air, providing a safe space for outside play.

Defining Boundaries
RESEARCH
Physical Design: The blending of digital and physical experiences to create a unique and effective user experience.
Air Quality Monitors: I looked into existing air quality monitors and found that many weren't portable or were based off of generalised data.
Air Filters: I found that using HEPA and active carbon filters simultaneously was the most effective method.
Gamification: An effective example of gamification through a virtual pet game, engaging children and encouraging them to perform activities. This also informed the kawaii aesthetic of my device.

Proposed Solution
FEATURES
Pollution Monitor: Kuki measures air quality, monitoring PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO₂, SO₂ and CO₂ levels, using a coloured light system its alert users to dangerous conditions.
Pollution Filter: Kuki comes equipped with a high functioning HEPA filter & active carbon core that filters out toxic pollutants.
Gamification: Kuki provides children with motivation and understanding, acting as a contextual reminder for their health needs, and providing rewards for positive behaviour.
Education: The kuki app keeps parents up to date with the latest air quality information, whilst their child can take short lessons for kuki treats.
Data Visualisation: The kuki app helps parents visualise what's in the air through intuitive graphs and forecasts.

Potential unintended consequences
Reliance on privately funded solutions: Whilst there is a need for immediate action on air pollution in order to mitigate the environmental and health impacts, placing the responsibility to protect children on their parents or privately funded solutions may undermine the severity of the issue to governments and local authorities, leaving needed investment. However, this could also have the opposite effect, as through using people engaging with the issue local authorities may feel that clear strategies are an effective way of gaining public support.
Counter-substitution: As lessons become educated on the quality of air around them and the causes of this there may be an increased demand for car travel, as they leave urban areas to protect their health. However, if this impact was widespread enough to affect the housing market this could help drive systemic change, as local authorities could be forced to take action on air quality in order to make their area desirable to buyers.

04

User Journeys

Kuki links to an app with features for both parents and children. Within the app children can earn points and receive rewards for their 'pet' kuki, encouraging positive behaviour. The health of their 'pet' is reflective of their own pollution exposure levels, acting as a contextual reminder. Intended positive behaviour includes choosing cleaner routes to school, avoiding polluted areas, and playing outside when it is safe. Parents can use the app to monitor their child's exposure, find areas of high pollution, and stay up to date on air quality news.

05

Viability & Creativity

Viability
It was vital to understand the technology and user journey behind kuki to validate the concept and ensure that the product would be successful in the consumer market. I therefore studied existing monitor devices to ensure that kuki's internal framework was viable and suitable for its intended purpose. To ensure that kuki is enduring and long term it needs to be easily maintained, I therefore mapped the service journey a user may take.
The success of kuki will be measured through the uptake of the device as well as the adoption of positive behaviours, and changes in attitudes towards air quality solutions on a personal and government level. There is also the potential for information on air quality from kuki to be collected and uploaded, allowing access by governments and local councils to help track areas with poor air quality, further encouraging policy change and government funded solutions.
Whilst kuki is intended to be a privately funded solution, this big data possibility could encourage the UK government to invest in the portable technology and distribute it within schools as part of their Air Quality Grant Scheme (2020 to 2021).

Creativity
Kuki uses innovative gamification strategies to educate and engage through the contextual use of an interactive range of 'pets', helping to modernise and enliven responses to climate issues. Whilst kuki may not directly solve air pollution, it has the potential to improve health, save lives and change behaviours, encouraging long term change from the bottom up. It also takes into account a range of future possibilities in relation to air pollution, being adaptive for extreme areas of pollution and new ways of living as seen in the outbreak of COVID-19.

06

Kuki - Emma Brookes

Open Briefs 1-5 boards

Proposal examples

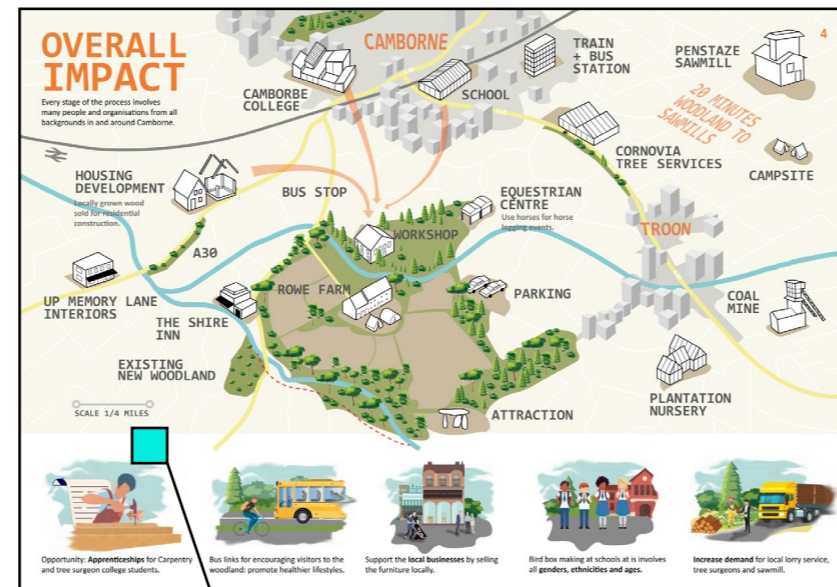
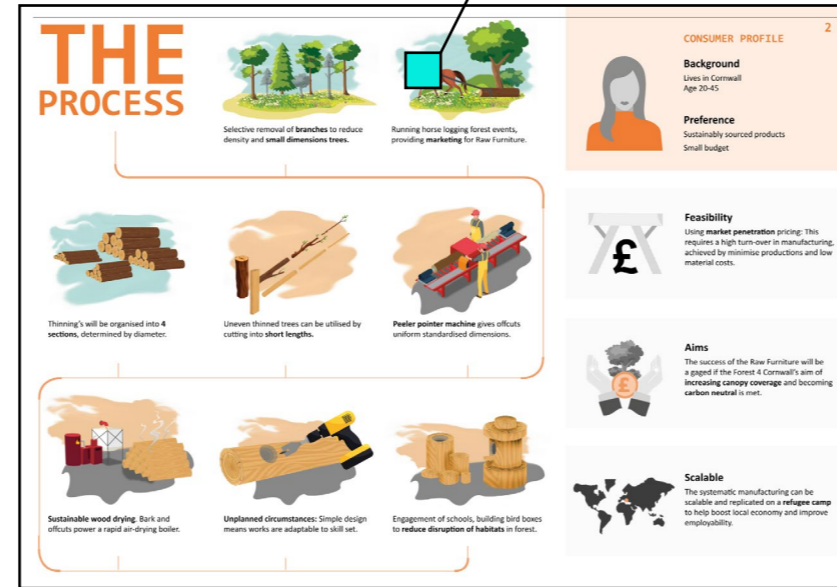
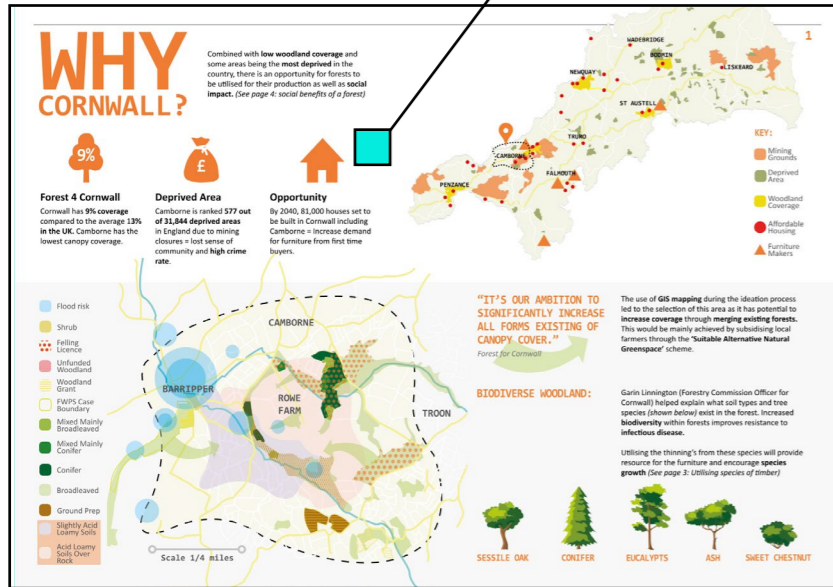
Tips:

These boards can have any layout, so think about the best way to display your research creatively and communicate your unique proposal. Whatever your choice, try to avoid large blocks of uninterrupted text.

Explanation of proposal opportunity and innovation

Storytelling of the proposal

Visual map details wider systems impact of proposal



RAW Furniture - Harry Peck

BRIEF 6: CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Boards

Brief 6: Centenary celebrations boards

Judging criteria

The judges will review your submission boards (and animation file if applicable to entry). They will evaluate them against the judging criteria so make sure you address the questions:

Rigorous research and communication

How did you investigate the subject matter? How did you go about the process of iteration, gathering, and incorporating new ideas and feedback? How did you apply your research insights to most effectively communicate the SDA's history and enhance the viewer's understanding of the narrative explored?

Aesthetic quality and originality

How does your output engage and delight the eye? What did you consider in order to make the visuals striking and memorable? How have you applied a distinctive style, concept, storytelling approach or choice of visual metaphors to make sure your idea stands out in a crowded landscape and reaches the widest possible audience?

Execution

How did you approach the planning and design? What have you considered and implemented to ensure the output is executed to a high technical standard? How have you considered the structure and the flow of the narrative? What key decisions did you incorporate to ensure your final output lives on for the next 100 years? If producing an animation, have you considered the structure and pace?

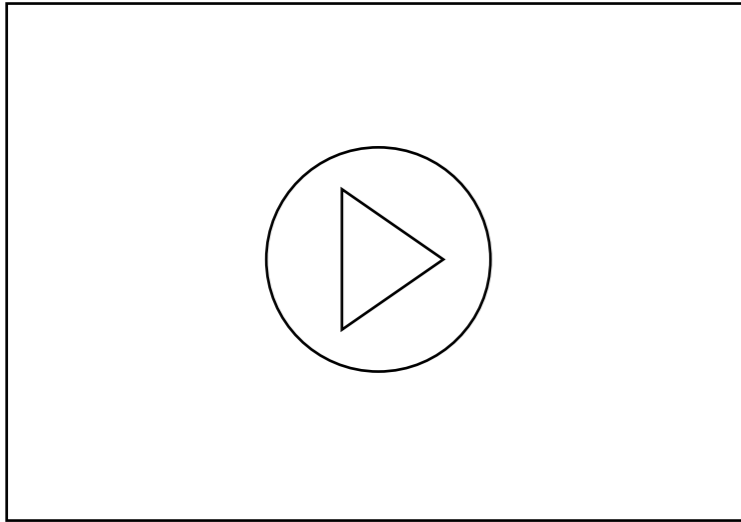
Further links

- [Download this year's Centenary celebrations briefs](#)
- [View previous Animation category Student Design Award winners](#)
- [Centenary celebrations toolkit](#)

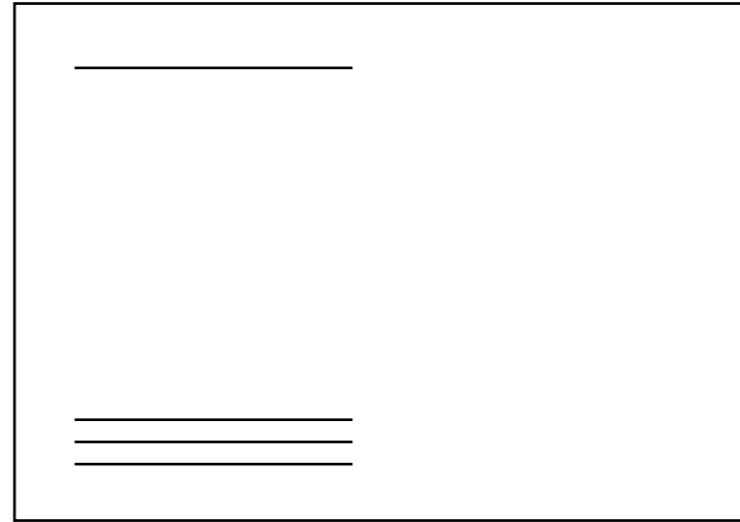
Brief 6: Centenary celebrations boards

Moving image response

Submission requirements

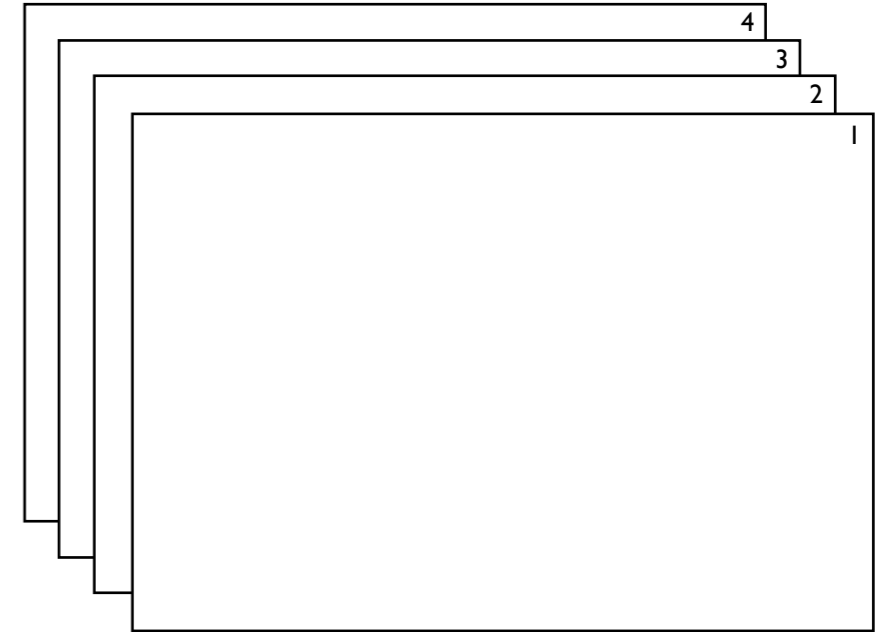


1 x animation file submitted in either MP4 or MOV format – the maximum file size is 60MB, and your animation must not exceed the original audio file length plus 5 seconds. You may choose the ratio or dimensions for your video that best convey your message.



1 x A3 PDF hero image with a one sentence description – a single image that conveys the essence of your project and includes your project title and a one sentence description. Your image should aim to bring your concept to life – make sure it is vibrant and engaging.

For example: 'Age pride, an animation that highlights the negative stereotypes our western culture has of older people and argues that these views are wrong and outdated, emphasising the message that age really is just a number and is not what defines us'.



4 x A3 PDF pages of supporting material illustrating your development process – the purpose of this material is to show to the judges the thinking behind your design choices and the work required to complete your style of animation. Share further relevant information about your concept and research process as applicable, this could be scanned pages of your sketchbook, storyboarding, etc.

Brief 6: Centenary celebrations boards

Moving image response

Hero image examples



→ **Watch the animation**

Age pride
by Eleanor Russell-Jones

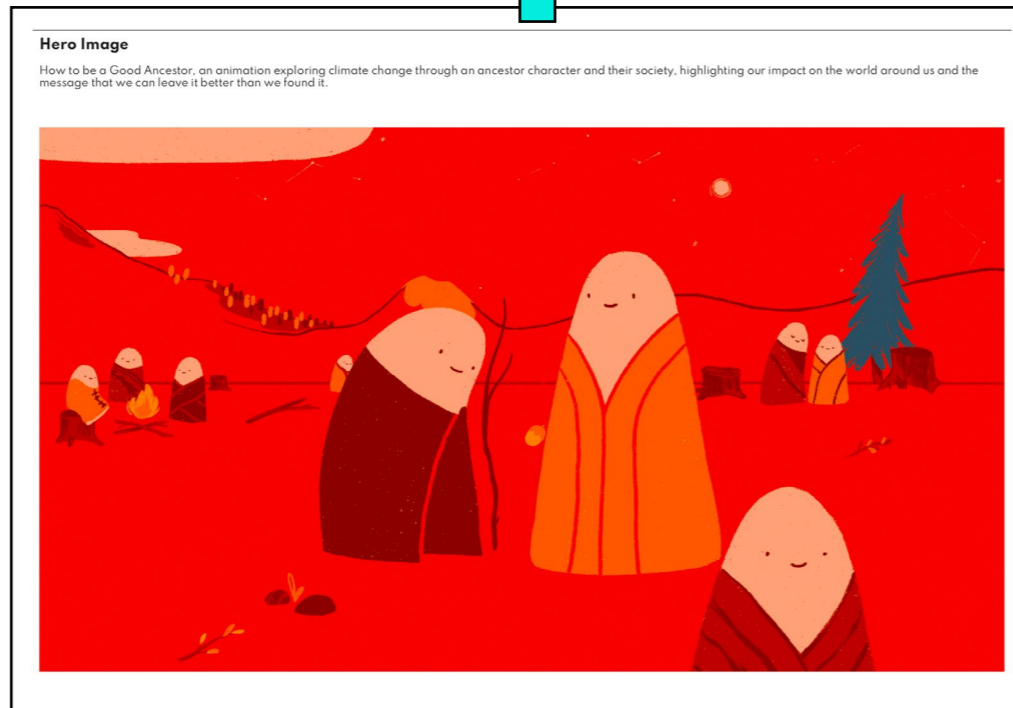


Clear and concise
description of animation



→ **Watch the animation**

How to be a Good Ancestor
by Zoe McCarthy



Tips:

We're interested in the shareable potential of your animation. Make it [accessible](#) and consider where you would want this animation to be shared.

[Investigate](#) your topic and use this to influence and inspire your animation.

Be organised and spend time on every element. Think about [pace](#) and how to keep a smooth flow throughout without long pauses.

Create a striking start and end, make it visually impactful. Technical skills will be taken into consideration, but the real value is in [originality](#).

Choose the right [medium](#) for you - stop motion, illustrative 2D animation, kinetic typography and more! There is no limit to the kind of creative direction you can take.

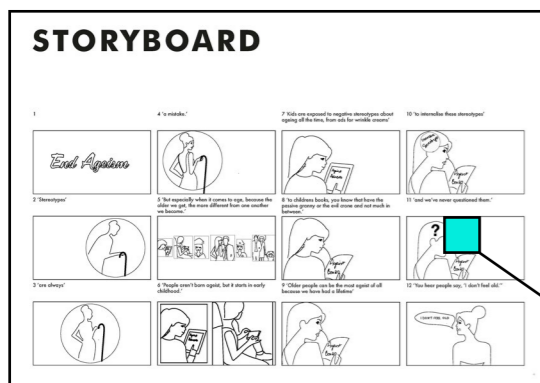
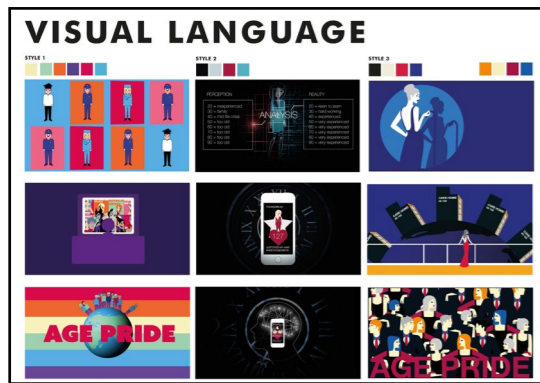
Get inspiration from the rich archive of videos the RSA has produced including RSA Animates, RSA Minimates, RSA Shorts and RSA Insights.

→ **Watch on RSA YouTube**

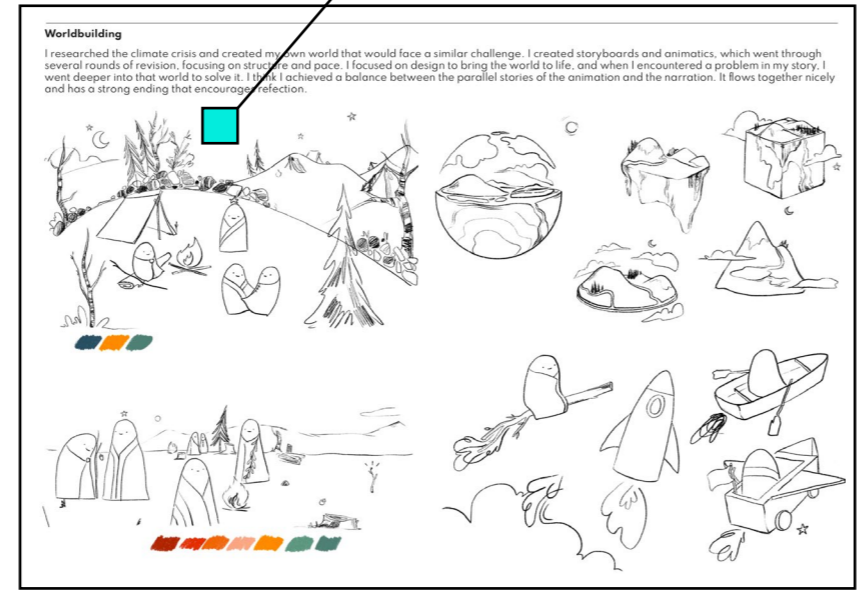
Brief 6: Centenary celebrations boards

Moving image response

Supporting page examples



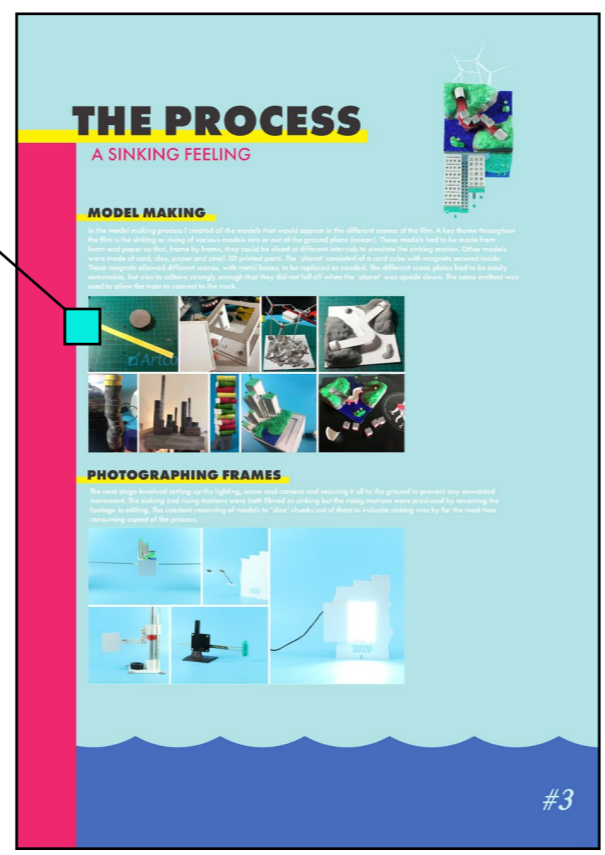
Identified key insights and research informing visual development



How to be a Good Ancestor - Zoe McCarthy

Documented experimentation

Sketchbooks and storyboards illustrate process of development



A sinking feeling - Mark Churcher

Tips:

Include any further work that expands on how your animation meets the judging criteria.

Rigorous research and compelling insights:

Communicate the different types of research you've carried out and how you applied these insights to enhance communicating the key message of the video.

Aesthetic quality and originality:

Detail the reasons for your creative choices and how you have created a uniquely memorable video.

Execution:

Don't forget to document your work as you go. These boards allow you to showcase the work-in-progress. You could include additional images of your storyboards, experimentation with different visuals and more.



Student Design Awards

Submissions open for entries in January and close in March.
Find out more about the RSA Student Design Awards and
submit entries online → [Visit our website](#)

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development → [Subscribe to our newsletter](#)

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