

DESIGN;- BRIEFS

Of course it is not essential to work from a brief, but it can certainly be helpful, to keep the project focussed and help prevent going off on a tangent (and leaving yet another project unfinished!). A brief can help you refine and focus your ideas, and help you think through what you actually want to create, and why.



WHAT IS A BRIEF

A brief is simply a summary of your project - what your goal is and all / any of the details you have brought together so far... It is a set of instructions to help you reach your particular goal.

You can set yourself a brief, if you are working on a personal project, or if you are designing a new collection, for example. You might have a brief from a friend or family member to design a piece of jewellery for them, or you might be working to create a bespoke design as a commission for a customer.

The principle is the same for all of these - it just varies as to how much detail you might have collected to work from.

The brief is a summary of the actual detail of what you are going to work to design or create - as specifically as you can. It can cover what the end result will be, as well as any particular ideas, details or functionality it needs to include, the quantity, the materials, the budget, timeline, and collecting together all the ideas you know so far. It doesn't have to be fixed in stone, or complicated - that is down to you, and the project itself.

In its simplest version - a brief might be something like; - to make a silver bangle for a friend's 40th birthday. This gives you your starting points - it needs to be silver, it is a single bangle, it needs to fit your friend, and it is for a special birthday (your deadline).

A more complex brief might be for a commission - trying to identify exactly what the customer is looking for, their budget, size / length, colours, timeline and any special considerations (might it refer to their favourite hobby, or their 3 children, or celebrate a particular milestone etc).

A brief can be as detailed or as simple as you choose, but it is there to help you make your design decisions and keep you on track, and the more info you can collect into your brief, the clearer you can be about your creative decisions.

You might want, for example, to practice your stone setting skills and use a series of gemstones from your stash, so your brief would be about what and how many end pieces you hope to create, what type of settings you want to use, will the inspiration be from the stones themselves &/ fairly general, or do you want to maybe use the project to also explore some art deco design motifs, for example, inspired by a recent trip to the Empire State Building in New York.

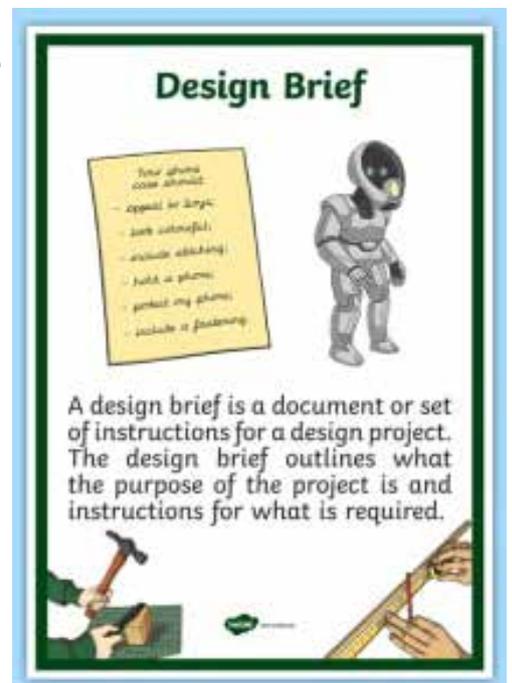
CREATING YOUR OWN BRIEF

To create your own brief - consider giving yourself a theme, something that you can base

the design around. It could be anything - whatever you love (or if it is for a specific person, whatever they might be looking for).

Pick your topic, or your initial inspiration, and then start to think about some of the practicalities. What kind of piece will it be, what materials, what size, and any other questions you can think about - is there a time limit, or a budget, a particular number of pieces you want to create... Jewellery is (generally) made to be worn - who by, when and where can make a big difference to some of your design decisions, so this is one aspect that needs to be considered - how much that is a priority, is up to you.

Collect together all the key information in one place - in a sketchbook, a journal, a document on your computer or phone, or wherever works for you. If you know who the customer is, as much information about them as possible, if the customer isn't known, or relevant at this stage, then collect together your inspiration ideas, brainstorm and research, and the what/why that has drawn you to want to sit down and create this particular piece of jewellery (or collection).



RESEARCH

Once you have your initial ideas clarified - you'll need to do a little research - this could be creating a mood board, some visual research, looking at shapes, patterns, colours, materials, it could be drawing or modelmaking or a mix of everything, It could be researching customer types, fashions, techniques, or looking at other art and/or jewellery. How have other creatives approached a similar topic - and how can you put your own spin on it.

WORKING TO YOUR BRIEF

Use your brief as a tool to help you. Are you creating the best design you can, that will meet all the criteria you have decided with your brief? Your brief may change as the design develops - and if so - it is well worth updating or changing your brief, so that you can continue to use it to help you to keep on track. Check back on your brief as you go through developing and eventually completing your design, otherwise it is pretty much pointless - If you made it digitally, print it out and keep it near your workspace, so that it can be with you as you work on the project. By looking at each criteria on your brief, it might take a little research or experimenting on each point - you might want to look more into details of your client / customer to make sure you end up with something that that specific person, or type of person would actually want to wear, and could afford. You might want to check back against a budget, to make sure you're not spending too much on materials, or designing something that is going to take too long to make and will therefore overshoot a budget, or timeline. If you want to practice your bezel setting, for example, you want to remind yourself of this, in case you get carried away and start adding in a series of tab settings or tube settings instead.

Don't cling to a mistake, just because you spent a lot of time making it...

Most importantly - have fun with your designing - your brief is simply a tool to help you, so you can make it whatever you want it to be!