

RATING CONTROVERSIAL ART STATEMENTS

Annotation guide

A. What is this task about?

You will read five texts about art. For each sentence in the texts, you will judge how controversial it is, considering only debate about artistic issues (artists, art practices, artworks, or audiences), and not about other topics.

Controversial means: reasonable people would disagree about what the sentence says.

You do NOT need to agree or disagree with the sentence yourself. You do NOT need to be an art expert. You just need to judge whether other people would likely have different opinions about it.

B. The scale you will use

In this task, you will use a simple 3-point scale to judge how controversial each sentence is. Remember, “controversial” does not mean “false” or “bad”, it means that reasonable people would disagree about what the sentence says.

Here are some examples showing how the scale works. These examples are not part of the actual task — they are only here to help you understand what each score means.

Read the scale carefully before you begin, and keep it in mind as you work.

1 — Not at all controversial

A straightforward, widely accepted statement with no real disagreement.

- *"Museums preserve and display artworks for the public."*
- *"Paintings can be created using different techniques and materials."*
- *"Artists often use colour to express ideas or emotions."*
- *"Sculptures can be made from materials such as stone or metal."*
- *"Art can be found in many cultures around the world."*

2 — Unclear whether it is controversial

A statement that is open to interpretation, making it unclear whether it would generate disagreement.

- *"Art can reflect the values of the society in which it is created."*

- *"Some artworks invite multiple interpretations from viewers."*
- *"Modern art challenges traditional ways of seeing."*
- *"Art can influence how people think about social issues."*
- *"The meaning of an artwork can change over time."*

3 — Clearly controversial

A statement that is likely to generate disagreement among reasonable people.

- *"Digital art should be valued as much as traditional painting."*
- *"Art should prioritise message over technical skill."*
- *"Commercial success is a valid measure of artistic value."*
- *"Art education should focus more on creativity than technique."*
- *"AI-generated works should be considered art."*
- *"Only works created by trained artists should be considered real art."*
- *"Most contemporary art lacks real value."*
- *"Art that offends people should be banned from public spaces."*
- *"Art without technical skill is not true art."*
- *"Museums should remove artworks that do not align with current values."*

C. How the task is structured

Before starting the task, you will see a short paragraph summarising the article, including its title. Please read it carefully to understand the general context. Then, go sentence by sentence and assign a score (1–3) to each.

Use the arrows to move forward or backward in the form and take a short break at the end of each article.

D. Important rules

To ensure high-quality work and fair payment, please follow these rules carefully:

DO

- Use your own human judgment
- Judge based on what the sentence says
- Look at the surrounding sentences for context
- Take your time (5–10 seconds per sentence is normal)
- Ask yourself: "Would people argue about this?"

DON'T

- Use AI (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, etc.)
- Judge based on whether you personally agree
- Judge each sentence in complete isolation
- Rush through (if you go too fast, your work may be rejected)

- Ask yourself: "Is this true or false?"

E. Quality Control (please read carefully)

You may notice that some sentences in the survey do not fit naturally with the text or seem slightly out of place. This is intentional. These are attention checks designed to ensure that participants are reading carefully and responding thoughtfully.

There are different types of attention checks. They are all easy to recognise and straightforward to answer if you read the text carefully. Attention checks must be answered using the same response scale as all other sentences. For example:

- A **factual sentence** like "*Water is wet*" should be scored 1 (Not at all controversial), because it states an obvious and non-debatable fact that does not involve any disagreement.
- An **absurd sentence** such as "*Picasso painted the Mona Lisa*" should also be scored 1 (Not at all controversial), because it is simply false, not controversial.
- A **direct instruction** sentence such as "*For quality purposes, please select 'Clearly controversial' for this statement*" should be scored 3 (Clearly controversial), because it explicitly tells you which response to choose.
- A **genuinely debatable sentence not related to art**, such as "*The government should impose stricter limits on free speech to protect national security*", should be scored 3 (Clearly controversial), because it presents a claim about which reasonable people disagree due to differing values, ideologies, or political beliefs.

IMPORTANT: If you fail too many attention checks your submission may be rejected.

F. Common questions

Q: What if I'm not sure whether a sentence is controversial or not?

A: Go with your first instinct. If you really can't decide, choose 2 (Unclear whether it is controversial). But try to avoid using 2 too often.

Q: What if the sentence is part of a longer argument?

A: That's why we show you the full fragment of 10 sentences. Look at the sentences before and after to understand the context.

Q: What if I personally strongly agree with a controversial sentence?

A: That doesn't matter. Judge whether others would disagree.
Example: If you believe "AI art is worthless," but you know many people disagree, you should still score it as 3.

Q: How long should I spend per sentence?

A: About 5–10 seconds. Reading the full fragment first (30–45 seconds) will make individual sentences faster.

G. Declaration (to be completed at the end)

Before you submit, you will see this statement. Please read and check the box:

☐ I confirm that I completed this task without using AI assistants (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, or similar). I understand that false answers may lead to rejection of my submission and reporting to Prolific.