

ART HISTORY

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 14	15 - 25	26 - 37	38 - 51	52 - 66	67 - 80	81 - 100

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 32

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Candidates submitted works on a great range of subjects from all topics. Many candidates clearly demonstrated that they were equipped to tackle such varied subject matter; many showed evidence of having investigated subject matter from outside the topics chosen, adding depth and breadth to their investigation. The general quality of investigations ranged from outstanding, (thought-provoking, well-written and thoroughly researched), to poor work with little substantive analysis. This range of quality perhaps indicates that teachers' interpretations of the assessment criteria vary considerably. A significant number of candidates submitted work that did not adequately address a *cross-cultural analysis* of any kind, which continues to be a concern and one that has been addressed in previous years' reports. Several others disregarded the word-count limit, submitting essays that at times exceeded it by over 1500-2000 words.

It is assumed that teachers make time to advise students on the suitability of topic of inquiry and research plan, as allowed by the IB (see *Guidance and Authenticity* in the Internal Assessment section of the subject guide) though it was apparent that this was not always the case in the work submitted.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Visual Analysis

There was a range of performance in relation to this assessment criterion. Teachers are encouraged, as ever, to consult their individual school feedback reports for specifics on overall school performance and suggestions for future teaching. Candidates often performed very well in this area and, in fact, visual analysis was often given more emphasis than warranted by the overall weighting. Stronger students were able to tie their visual analysis closely to both form and context, analysing and presenting evidence of what they perceived as supporting artistic skill, intent and meaning, based upon what they saw as solid evidence

in the form and composition of the artworks concerned. Weaker students usually didn't go beyond simple description. Others had difficulty in handling even description, often (more so than in previous years) submitting descriptions or observations made by other critics and art historians as their own, or taking as given the visual analysis of an artwork. As stated in previous reports, the visual analysis of critics is of no interest to the examiners and candidates are advised to bring in the opinions of art historians in other contexts rather than in visual analysis.

Context and evaluation

Clearly this is a key area in presenting a 'cross-cultural' investigation and if candidates fail to adequately address this criterion, it will often be a result of having not fulfilled the basic nature of the task of conducting such a comparative analysis. Teachers are encouraged to look *carefully* at the IA requirements and to review the markband descriptors for this particular criterion, and to draw candidates' attention to what is expected before they begin work on the IA essay. Higher achieving candidates were able to present a balance of both formal and contextual consideration to support their discussions, fulfilling the requirement of 'perceptive analysis'. Weaker candidates frequently misunderstood or disregarded the general framework or the time period and culture ("original context") in which the works in question were created or confused them with what they have come to be understood as meaning today.

This component represents an ideal opportunity for candidates to bring to bear a great deal of what they have gleaned from their experiences in Theory of Knowledge (TOK) classes, especially as they struggle to deal with problems of knowledge as they relate to areas associated with the Human Sciences. Again this year it was noted that in the IA work there was often too little discussion of the problems of knowing about the meaning and function of artworks within the original context in which they were created. Too many candidates' essays gave the impression that there really are no problems of knowing and understanding meaning and function in a historical context at all, when, in fact, the exact opposite is true.

Evaluation of sources

As in previous years, candidates of all levels of achievement consulted and drew upon a diverse range of sources.

Certain issues remain problematic for much of the work submitted:

- Candidates continue to list sources in their bibliography that are, ultimately, neither cited nor mentioned in the body of their text. Listing a work in a bibliography and referring to it critically in the main body of the text, as the assessment model envisages, is not the same thing, though many candidates believe that it is. Generally, if a work is not cited in the essay, the candidate should consider carefully whether it needs to be in the bibliography. Conversely, if a source is cited in the bibliography, the candidate should consider whether (and where) it should be referenced in the essay itself.
- Many candidates felt that simply referring to a source in relation to the description of an artwork is sufficient use of academic citation, when it is not.
- Weaker candidates often had as few as four sources in their list of works referenced, which is woefully inadequate. Several outstanding candidates made use of a full range of both digital and text-based sources in their investigations and properly cited them. At times, these sources could be from ten to fifteen in number, all properly referenced within the essay itself.

Stronger students were more able to demonstrate a comprehensive appreciation of their sources, taking a mature, scholarly approach, with a clear sense of their own interpretation

and opinion evident in the discussion. Weaker students often merely paid lip service to sources, referring to them in passing without making any solid ties between the nature of the contribution the source made and the overall investigation the candidate was conducting.

Research, planning and presentation

Planning is key in this component, and it is in the planning that the teacher can be most helpful to candidates. Weaker students usually had a simplistic plan, often focusing on the work of only one artist, which didn't adequately emphasise cross-cultural comparison. This is where the teacher can and should be involved in encouraging and guiding the candidate to adopt a more comprehensive approach that adequately addresses work from varying artists and/or periods and which achieves a conclusion clearly linked to their original line of enquiry. This was frequently not the case in some of the work submitted. Proper organization and presentation is also of importance, and while standards vary from centre to centre, basic expectations were sometimes not met, for example: substandard citations, inadequate bibliographies, and poorly chosen, poorly placed, or poorly sized images submitted.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers themselves should thoroughly review the requirements of this component (the nature of the task) and familiarize themselves with the four assessment criteria so that they can accurately share expectations, from the outset, with their students. They should seek to establish their own best-practice model, maintaining a growing library of previous years' IA essays and sharing these with their students, developing a bibliography of exemplar sources and fostering a culture of critical awareness in their lessons that regularly makes use of proper terminology, description, formal analysis and contextual evaluation. Teachers need to ensure that special attention is paid to the differences between simple description, formal analysis and interpretation; the meaning of context; proper use and evaluation of source material, and the development of appropriate, *cross-cultural* comparisons in the visual arts.

This also includes making certain that candidates maintain a proper focus (avoiding topics that are too general or too broad to allow for substantial analysis and conclusions). To this end, teachers should make individual candidate guidance a priority in their preparation for this component. The key to a successful comparative essay begins with a proper guiding question, a line of inquiry for this task – one that can, eventually, be answered in as clear and unambiguous a manner as possible. Such questions can begin "Is there a link between...?" or "To what extent does X influence the imagery of Y?" and so on. Conversely, candidates should be discouraged from taking on subjects that are so broad that a single guiding question fails to apply. What conclusions can they possibly derive from a line of inquiry that fails to pose any questions? Therefore, an essay entitled, for example, "An examination of the works of Painter X" does not lend itself well to addressing this component.

Finally, as advocated in previous years, it has proved helpful for teachers to encourage students to look further afield in selecting artworks with which to make their cross-cultural comparison. It is often the case that the most interesting essays involve comparing some of the most widely disparate works (many from outside the western canon of art history). Additionally, teachers might find it useful to encourage a certain personal link on the candidate's part to the essay. A majority of the most engaging written submissions this year focused on comparing artworks, objects or traditions that had personal meaning/relevance for the candidate. Focus on the criteria-based expectations should not be overlooked in this, however. Teachers need to bear in mind the IA requirements and keep their candidates on task accordingly, both before the students begin writing and when reviewing them after submission. Teachers need to keep in mind that they may (and should) advise on the candidate's first draft.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

The two questions (a) and (b) that comprise this component test the candidate's ability to first analyse the visual/formal aspects of an artwork and then to provide a brief yet comprehensive account of its contextual associations and meanings. The test paper instructs candidates to write two distinct responses to these two different questions, but to select works for both answers from one topic only. This year's responses were more consistently in the form of two distinct essays, as opposed to previous years when a significant number of candidates attempted to respond to the two questions in a single, longer essay; there is no penalty or down-grading for this approach, but it does tend to lead candidates into writing responses that can be repetitive and somewhat disorganized. This development is encouraging and suggests that more teacher guidance is happening in terms of making candidates aware of the nature of the exam instructions.

Significantly, in contrast to previous years, very few candidates incorrectly referred to more than a single topic in their responses. This dismal mistake, rampant in previous exam sessions, occurred far less often and this trend, which again suggests more teacher instruction and guidance, is encouraging and it is hoped that it will continue into future exam sessions.

Clearly, however, the difficulty for candidates in this component continues to lie in *differentiating between the two questions*. It was noted that, though a much higher percentage of candidates followed instructions and wrote two distinct essays, there was often repetition between the two responses. Many candidates made comments about meaning, significance and context in their first response (to the question about formal analysis) and then repeated much of what they had already said again in their second essay.

In their response to question (a), a high number of students focused more on description, itemizing objects or features within the work. At times, these were incorrectly identified. Often, description carried over straight into interpretation, without more proper formal analysis, i.e. without making links between forms and features and the possible meaning and consideration of the artistic processes, techniques, materials and stylistic analysis. While most candidates were able to assess at least some formal aspects of their selected works, more detailed visual analysis remains a challenge for a significant number of candidates and only the strongest candidates adequately considered all aspects of this approach.

It was noted also that candidates, in general, found writing about architecture a distinct challenge. Many either avoided questions on architecture or, in the rare cases where they attempted them, found it difficult to structure their answers adequately and instead, just wrote down what they knew about the architectural works that were offered.

In addressing the second question, there was often a strong reliance on reading images symbolically in an attempt to contextualize them, but a general dearth of candidates who could successfully address larger contextual issues that could help account for much about the origins, meaning and function of a work. Also, as noted previously (in discussing the challenges of the IA component), it was noted as well that there was often too little discussion

of the problems of knowing about meaning and function of artworks within the original context within which they were created. Too many candidates' essays gave the impression that there really are no problems of knowing and understanding meaning and function in a historical context at all.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The very highest achieving candidates included specific criticism from noted historians and correctly cited them in their essays. A few even included direct quotes from these sources in support of their arguments, suggesting significant knowledge of the material and more than adequate preparation in their coursework. Almost all candidates were able to identify and describe their selected works, often providing an itemized list of objects or elements they present. In most of their responses, it was clear that teachers had addressed some of the primary issues of context and that candidates were able to recall information relevant to defining historical, social and/or cultural significance. A vast majority of the candidates followed the instructions to write distinct responses to questions (a) and (b).

Other areas of the program and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared were in describing and analysing the imagery of paintings and sculptures. As some candidates discussed images as if they were only familiar with digital or printed version of them, the general level of discussion of meaning and function was often better than their discussion of style and technique. Candidates often appeared to be well prepared in the discussion of the imagery in relation to its social, political or historical context. Less common were candidates who appreciated why certain stylistic innovations were significant in their art historical context.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

As stated, most candidates answered both questions in relation to the same topic: thankfully this year, there were very few who didn't do this. There was a tendency in some scripts to take the visual analysis as given, with only the barest descriptive account undertaken and candidates leaping to the task of contextual analysis without adequately answering the first question.

A separate note is required for topic questions:

Topic 1: *Anonymous ("The Niobid Painter"), Heracles and the Gathering of the Argonauts (or "Heracles in Marathon"?)*

This was a popular choice for many candidates. Strong answers discussed both the stylistic innovations of this piece and the problems of identifying the particular subject. They gave keen-eyed descriptions of the work in detail and showed both knowledge and understanding of the process of making, and particular features of, Attic style, with particular emphasis on figural representations that belie its origins. They were able to relate differing readings of the meaning of the work and different suggestions as to its narrative. Weaker answers showed a fundamental lack of understanding of the techniques of glazing and of the red-figure technique in particular.

Topic 2: Alexander the Great fighting at the Battle of Issus against Darius III of Persia (“The Alexander Mosaic”).

This was also a popular choice for candidates. The strongest answers showed a familiarity with both particular materials and techniques associated with mosaic making and the details the work represented, as well as with the possible meaning and function of such an image within the context of a Roman villa in the first century BC. Weaker responses ignored techniques and tended to degenerate into confused discussions of compositional details, including which figure was Alexander and which was Darius. Surprisingly, many weaker responses indicated that they believed Alexander was a Roman emperor and/or that the image marked a Roman victory over Persia.

Topic 3: Santa Sabina, Rome.

Disappointingly, very few candidates opted for this image and none of the responses were particularly strong. A rare few candidates were able to identify this structure and to place it within the larger context of ecclesiastical architecture as it emerged from the Roman basilica model, correctly identifying some of the key Roman elements it presented and discussing the general longitudinal axis of the building. Very few were able to discuss the fact that this use of Roman architectural vocabulary in any way represents a new meaning for such form.

Topic 4: Benedetto Antelami, *The Deposition*.

Again, only a very small number of candidates opted to discuss this image. Higher achieving responses showed attention to detail in the relief carving, and to techniques and materials and stylistic conventions of the time. A few keen-eyed candidates were able to bring into their discussion a few of the details of the carving that have been seen by some historians as evidence of anti-Semitism, and to place this within the context of medieval European society.

Topic 5: Giorgione, *The Tempest*.

Not surprisingly, this was one of the most popular images this year, with almost half of the candidates electing to address their responses to this work. The strongest answers noted the distinctively Venetian High Renaissance features of this work and meticulously examined the various objects and figures it presents with an eye towards demonstrating its allegorical content. Many went on to discuss the differences this work has with more general Italian Renaissance imagery and established clear comparisons and contrasts with works of Florentine imagery of the same period. Most candidates who selected this image seemed to be aware that X-ray analysis had revealed changes made by the artist during execution, but only a few were knowledgeable enough to discuss this with any significance or to bring that fact into their discussion of meaning and function (or lack thereof) effectively. Stronger responses listed possible interpretations and gave reasons for the strength or weaknesses of these readings.

Topic 6: Jan Steen, *The Effects of Intemperance*.

Also a very popular choice for candidates, Steen’s allegorical work lends itself quite readily to discussion in regard to both questions. Most of the candidates who chose this image were able to quickly identify most of the main figures within the painting and to discuss at least rudimentary interpretations of the roles they play. Higher achieving responses did so with depth and awareness of possible alternative readings and showed a familiarity with the greater context in which this painting was “read,” with reference to Biblical proverbs as well as to the popular writings of

contemporary Jacob Cats. Only a few of the strongest candidates were able to discuss aspects of individual and/or period style. Rare was the candidate who cited other artists of the same period or drew comparisons or distinctions between Steen's work and the works of his contemporaries.

Topic 7: Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews*.

There were a high number of responses to this image, most of which easily identified the work and attempted to describe it as a formal patrician portrait in a hybrid of French Rococo and Dutch landscape style. Stronger answers were able to discuss in depth the historical context of the image and its unique compositional arrangement. A number of more able candidates demonstrated an awareness of Gainsborough's position as a relative unknown at the time of the commissioning of this work, as well as his contempt for the upper classes, and attempted to draw conclusions as to the possible underlying meaning and function of the image in its context. A few were able to correctly include references to the use of Jethro Tull's seed drill in the background. Weaker answers tended to be purely descriptive, with little or only passing references to context, composition or stylistic choices of the artist. Many of the lesser achieving responses got lost in a maze of wild speculation about 18th c. gender roles and fanciful speculations as to the nature of the marital relations between Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, all of which tended to be based upon anything other than formal or historical evidence and therefore implausible.

Topic 8: Antoni Gaudí, *Casa Vicens, Barcelona*.

Another architectural offering, this image drew relatively few responses. Most of the answers to this image were markedly weak in distinguishing style and technique from form and function. Weaker responses tended to dwell on descriptions of the structure, the use of colourful tiles and Catalonian/Moorish influences. Stronger answers, though rare, managed to address Gaudí's evolving style and attempted to establish contextual links through the use of applied arts, sculpture and traditional Iberian crafts. A few mentioned the connection with the brick/tile manufacturer for whom the house was built.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should continue to encourage their students to address the two questions, (a) and (b), in separate, distinct essays. Students who attempt to answer both questions in a continuous essay invariably fail to address the questions adequately (or lose track of what they are trying to say).
- Teachers should continue to emphasize the importance of following the directions and referencing only one topic (the same one) in both of their responses. Candidate responses that reference more than one topic will be discounted, or heavily penalized.
- Teachers would do well to ensure that students understand the distinctions between the two questions and what each of them asks of the candidate.
- As noted in previous reports (and is still very valid), to do well on this task candidates need to have learnt to analyse and dissect the visual components of works of art – they should be taught how to do this in class. Training the eye by practising on works of art with which the candidates are unfamiliar is the best way of doing this.
- When possible, it is highly recommended that candidates be given the opportunity to study *actual* works of art. Their instruction should not be limited only to digital or printed facsimiles of artworks. By examining actual paintings, sculptures and buildings firsthand, it is hoped that candidates will gain a deeper appreciation of the

materials and techniques involved in their making, as well as a fuller understanding of the artist's or architect's chosen way of using them. These do not have to be masterpieces or selections from the syllabus. Even the most insignificant work of art or architecture can function as an example to help open doors to deeper understanding.

- It is recommended that candidates, whenever possible, be given the opportunity to practise by answering past papers. By practising under exam conditions, it is hoped that candidates will become more familiar with the expectations of the examination instructions and questions; mock examinations will also help reinforce better handwriting skills, so minimizing problems with legibility and basic essay structuring.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 16	17 - 23	24 - 30	31 - 37	38 - 48

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

In the report for May 2013, it was noted that one of the most challenging aspects of this assessment task for many candidates was simply following directions. Last year, there was an alarmingly high number of candidates who simply ignored or overlooked the instructions at the top of the first page of the exam sheet, which clearly directed them to answer three questions, each from a different section (A to E), further stipulating that one of those questions must be in reference to one topic (1 to 8) and that the other two questions must be in reference to a different topic. **While the number of candidates not following these instructions seems to have dropped slightly this year, a significant number (estimates are 10 to 12 percent) of those taking the exam failed to follow the directions as stated, resulting in partial or no credit for their overall Paper 2 mark. Thus, following instructions remains a critical issue in this component.**

A few candidates answered more than one question from the same section, though this was indeed rare. Some answered a question drawing upon works from more than one topic. There were many candidates who answered all three questions with reference to the same topic. Candidates **must** be taught how to follow the instructions. Instructions should be read aloud from the cover of the exam sheet and all candidates should be given the opportunity to ask for clarification before beginning the exam. More specific recommendations regarding this are to be found below under "Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates."

The responses to the questions in this exam were as varied as usual. There were some very strong essays, demonstrating insight and genuine competency with the material, as well as weaker work that generally lacked significant connections between work and context, description and meaning. Weaker responses usually showed evidence of poor planning and organization of thought. Many of these also seemed to indicate that candidates who fared poorly often had difficulties selecting appropriate questions to answer from the ten question provided, failing to recognize which of the questions would best fit with their knowledge of at least two works from a particular topic. More than one examiner noted that it was not clear that **all** the candidates responding to these questions were familiar with the general

expectations (as described in the criteria). Many seemed to attempt to show that they were meeting the expectations, but were unable due to a lack of familiarity with them.

In a number of responses, candidates suffered from attempting to draw upon too many examples. Often, these were scattered over a very long period of time (at times even bridging several Topics). Candidates should be encouraged to narrow their focus to two or three carefully selected examples in their responses and confine their analysis to these only.

Art History is a study of art through the ages, and the use of proper dates and terminology is fundamental to the discipline. A number of candidates found using appropriate dates and titles, as well as art-related vocabulary in their essays, challenging, which suggests that teachers should emphasize the importance of these in the future.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

It was noted by more than one of the examiners how well candidates seemed able to recall in considerable detail works of art that they had studied. In almost all cases, candidates were able to draw upon their own knowledge of artworks from two or more historical periods and attempt to establish a context in which to discuss those works. Some of the strongest candidates appeared to have been prepared so thoroughly as to be able to access even the top markband descriptors and make “reference to a range of appropriate sources as evidence with a critical approach to source material, leading to thoughtful and well-reasoned interpretation, qualified by different points of view, including personal opinion.” In these cases, it was very clear that teachers had introduced candidates to writings of a range of art historians where different conclusions may have been reached in relation to the same works of art.

It was likewise clear that many of the candidates were well prepared to describe the works they had selected for discussion and recall, with quite specific detail, many of the significant aspects of form that they presented. This suggests thorough exposure to images and regular reference to details that can only result from teacher-led discussion and study.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The variety of questions in this paper this year was significant and left candidates a great deal of freedom both in interpretation and strategy of approach. Teacher feedback this year indicated that there was overwhelming approval of the questions as presented and that the breakdown of questions referencing artists, artworks and patronage was quite balanced. The spread of responses for each of the ten questions from the entire pool of candidates seemed fairly even, with questions 3, 4 5 and 6 being the most popular choices and questions 7 and 9 being generally, though not entirely, avoided.

Question 1

“The style of the individual artist or architect initially derives from the prevailing stylistic tendencies of the period in which they work.” Using examples as evidence, evaluate the strengths and limitations of this claim.

This question, like Question 2 below, would seem to address concepts that are fundamental to art history. It essentially asks candidates to consider and discuss how style evolves and to address issues of convention versus innovation. Too often, however, in responses to this question, candidates simply did not have enough familiarity with their selected examples (as opposed to printed or digital reproductions) to be able to formulate strong answers for this.

The few higher achieving responses provided carefully considered discussions of the formal elements of works that contributed to style, and made solid connections between changing styles within specific contexts, attempting to account for both how and why those changes were brought about. Weaker answers tended to get mired down in loose descriptions of stylistic change without making any serious effort to place this in context or provide possible explanations for how such evolution occurred.

Question 2

To what extent is there a relation between artistic form and content? Refer in your answer to at least two works you have studied.

This question is about the nature of meaning in art and tasks the candidate with discussing how style gives rise to content through such things as convention, technical competency and innovation. Again, there was an inherent challenge in this question in that it demanded a very high familiarity with the works the candidate selected, as well as a thorough awareness of the context in which the works were completed. Stronger responses were able to describe and analyse carefully the formal elements of the works chosen and account for how artists conveyed meaning through their use of form, not only in regard to iconographic convention, but also in terms of individual contribution and stylistic innovation. Lesser achieving candidates were usually able to recall works that they believed might be good examples of how artists use form to convey meaning, but sometimes confused form with general technical competency or degree of realism. Others took this as an opportunity to discuss how a single artist evolved throughout his/her career and got lost in chronological and biographical details that did not address the question.

Question 3

To what extent is the study of iconography by itself sufficient in trying to understand the meaning of a work of art? Use examples to support your answer.

Question 3 gave rise to some strong answers. This question asks candidates to consider the limits of iconography. Higher achieving candidates recognized this and devoted much of their response to analysing selected images for their iconographic value. But they also recognized that iconography is not simply how artists make use of symbols in their work, but also how art historians access meaning in works of the past, and several of the best answers considered what other means there are of accessing meaning in art. Others reversed the question, asking instead if a work is able to convey meaning without iconography, which produced some rather interesting discussions. Many began with an answer to the question (either yes or no) and then proceeded with analysis to back up their initial claim. Weaker candidates often got confused with their own line of reasoning, sometimes contradicting their initial claim or reversing their position by the end of the essay, which simply suggests poor planning. Other weak candidates merely provided examples of iconographic (or non-iconographic) works instead of analysing them for their meaning (or lack thereof). This was a very popular question for responses.

Question 4

*Examine in detail **one** work of art whose meaning is open to interpretation. Does awareness of this ambiguity enhance or hinder your appreciation of the work?*

Also a popular question, this might have been one of the easier to which candidates could respond. Many candidates selected fairly predictable works as examples (Giorgione's *Tempest* was quite popular, as were the works of both Vermeer and Bosch). Stronger candidates built up careful arguments about how both form and style can give rise to certain meaning within the context in which their selected work was made, but also considered how meaning can change over time and what kinds of circumstances can lead to ambiguity in meaning. Poorer responses attempted to demonstrate that certain elements of a given work

were believed to have meant something in the past but were understood differently now, without really addressing how or why new understanding occurs. This question also prompted a healthy dose of personal opinion, which many of the stronger candidates recognized, and they provided considered evaluations of works by art historians as well as carefully supported personal views about the work they selected. Lesser achieving responses usually offered brief and cursory descriptions of works that were open to interpretation or failed altogether to offer a personal viewpoint as to whether ambiguity helps or hinders.

Question 5

“Works of art cannot be properly or fully understood unless they are related to their original context.” Using examples as evidence, evaluate the strengths and limitations of this claim.

One of the most popular questions on the exam, this question was sometimes answered in pairing with Question 3 above, which is intriguing as it also suggests (in subtext) that there are limits to how works can be understood and that the tools of hermeneutics are often imperfect on their own. This question was recognized by a few of the more accomplished candidates as a brilliant complement to the question about iconography, because it asks if art can be understood based solely on style and technique, disregarding its original context. Several of the stronger responses transitioned rather nicely from their first response to Question 3 to this response. A few strong responses saw the relationship between these two questions and used elements of their first response (especially as regards organization) to give added depth to the quality of discussion in their response to this one, commenting on the relationship they saw between the two, which was admirable. Poorer responses tended to merely describe literary sources and meanings without discussing context or the audience with whom the works would have been shared. A few got mired down in paraphrasing Panofsky and insisting on the importance of context without considering alternative approaches to the question. A fair number of the weaker responses to this question fell victim to poorly organized essays and/or a lack of familiarity with the works selected and the context in which they were executed.

Question 6

*Does art and/or architecture need to have a function? Discuss with reference to **at least two** works you have studied.*

This question was fairly popular, perhaps because many candidates regarded it (at least initially) as an easy one to answer. However, this question confronts candidates with a rather difficult task: to consider whether art or architecture *must* have a function. This is not as easy as trying to argue that art does not have to have a function, as it places the onus of proof on the candidate to demonstrate that a certain condition exists (or does not) for a work to be considered an artwork. Many candidates saw this as an opportunity to draw upon architectural examples (which presumably, because they are built to fulfil a need, by default *must* have a function). Topics 1 and 2 were frequently invoked here with examples from the Parthenon, Flavian Amphitheater and Pantheon being recurring images drawn upon. Clever responses focused on contextual considerations and drew conclusions from links with historical facts. Some strong answers gave consideration to the idea that function may not be an essential element of a work of art or architecture, but may be secondary to aesthetic and/or stylistic considerations.

Question 7

*With reference to **two** works of art and/or architecture for which preparatory designs survive, examine what these designs reveal about artistic production.*

This question was universally avoided, which in itself is interesting. It could suggest that candidates are not familiar with the artistic process involved in creating the many works that

they have studied. Alternatively, it could suggest that many of them viewed this as too open a question – in asking to review what preparatory designs have to reveal about artistic production, candidates could conceivably take their discussion in almost any direction, focusing, for example, on processes, techniques, materials, patronage, stylistic influences, content development and/or contextual issues relating to the artist and his/her work. In devising such a question, it was hoped that this would afford some of the more able thinkers in the pool of candidates the room to explore their own knowledge base and follow their own interests within the parameters of formal and contextual analysis of works of their own choice. But perhaps it was simply too broad a topic for comfort.

Question 8

“Most artists have had to earn their living by supporting dominant ideologies which they have come to both share with their patrons and reflect in their work.” To what extent do you agree that this claim is justified? Use examples to support your answer.

This question on patronage and ideological influences prompted many candidates to undertake discussions of artists primarily as producers of propaganda, who served their patrons and their political aims through imagery – especially in the Napoleonic era and the Vatican of Julius II. Weaker candidates served up examples of obviously propagandistic images without much consideration of context. Some tended to get caught up in tawdry, Vasari-like biographical sketches (especially many of those focusing on Michelangelo’s relationship with the pope and Caravaggio’s relationship with his cardinal) and failed to focus on formal aspects of the artworks they had chosen. A few of the lesser achieving essays simply did not address the second part of the question, which asks the candidate to evaluate the extent to which the quote is justified. Stronger answers considered form, style and context of selected examples and considered these in relation to the ideologies of the patrons in question, taking into account differing viewpoints of various art historians and biographers, and establishing a larger contextual picture that would support their conclusion as to the validity of the quote.

Question 9

*“In art, there is a tension between the intended idea in the maker’s mind and the skills and techniques needed to express it.” Discuss this claim with reference to **at least two** works you have studied.*

This was not a popular question. Most candidates avoided it. Of the few who addressed this question, most seemed to find it rather difficult to handle, and the majority of the handful of responses were somewhat confused, disorganized and muddled, suggesting poor planning more than a lack of familiarity with works selected. Several of the responses, unfortunately, saw this as a question only about artistic intent and the abilities of an artist to express what he or she wishes to express without considering techniques or materials. The more accomplished responses drew upon sources such as Wolfflin and Gombrich to discuss complex issues of representation, stylistic innovation and the viewing audience in relation to what their selected artists intended to express. They made considered links between contextual considerations, prevailing styles and technical developments.

Question 10

*Compare and contrast the interplay between light and dark in **two** works of art and/or architecture. Which work, in your opinion, uses this technique most successfully, and why?*

This final question was a fairly popular one, especially for those who had studied Caravaggio and Gentileschi in Topic 6. Not, surprisingly, the greatest hits of *tenebroso* were the most frequently cited works here. Stronger answers had taken time in the planning and organization so that the two works were considered formally and contextually before finally being evaluated as required in the second half of the question (which work uses the interplay

most successfully and *why* – a qualification that some of the weaker responses omitted, unfortunately). This was another example of a fairly wide open question that gave candidates a great deal of free rein to draw on their own knowledge base and to exercise their skills in analysing and comparing two of their favourite subjects with an eye to formulating a judgment. Weaker candidates either failed to make a comparison or failed to demonstrate an adequate familiarity with the works they had selected or the circumstances in which they were made.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Despite the emphasis on this issue in last year's subject report, it was clear that some candidates are not being adequately prepared for following the instructions and responding to the questions in paper 2. The questions are designed to test a candidate's knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of visual arts and architecture throughout history (Sections A to E). One response is to draw upon imagery from one topic (1 to 8), while the other two responses are to draw upon imagery from a different topic. This is to test the candidate's general awareness of art form rather than of just a narrow historical range or culture. It is absolutely necessary for candidates to respond in the prescribed manner so that the fullest evaluation of their performance against the syllabus material can be made. **Candidates need to be warned of the risk of not following these instructions, which include no credit for answers that do not comply with the above parameters.**

Some suggestions for better facilitating this, put forward last year and repeated here, include setting past papers as test exams for candidates prior to actually undergoing exam in May. This could help familiarize them with the instructions and command terms (action verbs) in each exam component. Teachers might also consider taking a personal role in guiding students immediately prior to the administration of the exam.

Examiners would like to see: well-structured responses that answer the questions; a wide-ranging knowledge of the contexts in which works of art were produced; deployment of a high level of visual analysis when describing works of art; the handling of complex ideas; argumentation backed up by reference to appropriate sources (i.e. an awareness of what art historians and critics have written on the subject); and the expression of the candidates' own personal opinions, as relevant. To achieve this, it is essential that candidates read the individual questions carefully and answer them in their entirety.

As discussed above with regard to Paper 1, teachers should review the criteria used to assess the Paper 2 exam, familiarize themselves with the criteria and then share the same with their students. It is imperative that students understand the criteria and the expectations of these in order to understand what they will need to do in the exam in order to achieve the highest markbands.

Finally, it is highly recommended that teachers familiarize themselves with what their students are learning in Theory of Knowledge classes, in order to help them to make practical connections between this subject and that part of the IB core. The idea of personal and shared knowledge is particularly appropriate and relevant to the discussion and study of art history. Similarly, problems of knowledge, especially those impacting the human sciences, are of tremendous importance to the discipline. Finding parallels between what students learn in both subjects will only enhance their experience in both classes and help to expand their own awareness and knowledge of the material being covered.