

## May 2017 subject reports

# Art History

## Overall grade boundaries

### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 12	13 - 24	25 - 36	37 - 50	51 - 65	66 - 79	80 - 100

## Standard level internal assessment

### Component grade boundaries

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

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

A very varied and interesting range of subjects were tackled by the students, with examples from ancient to contemporary art and from different cultures around the globe. Candidates were generally enthused by the subject-matter; there was a clear personal interest in many of the works examined, often sparked by first-hand experience of the works in exhibitions, visits etc. As in previous years, the majority of candidates fulfilled the requirement of presenting a cross-cultural comparison. The more successful essays focused on several examples, with tangential reference to further examples, and had a clearly defined research question which required contextual analysis. These essays were able to analyse and draw conclusions coherently, and they worked well within the restrictions of the word count.

As stated in previous reports, insufficient teacher guidance in terms of the overall framing of the task and the suitability of the work still remains an issue in a number of schools. It was apparent that essays which set out a straight comparison, for example, A vs. B, tended to lead the candidates towards description rather than focused analysis. Other essays had titles which were so broad that they were unmanageable within the scope of the word count, while a number had no title at all. On the other hand, clear teacher guidance in the careful wording of the title, preferably in the form of a question, helped to steer candidates in their research and in drawing conclusions.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Visual Analysis

On the whole, candidates continue to demonstrate good levels of visual analysis, showing ample preparation and good use and understanding of relevant terminology. While weaker students did not go much beyond simple description, stronger candidates discussed artistic form with great assurance and were able to link formal qualities to context. However, as in previous years, there was still a tendency among some candidates to quote sources for visual analysis. Visual qualities of works of art should be analysed by the candidates themselves, rather than relying on written sources. Candidates need to ensure they do not give excessive weight to visual analyses of works, however, at the expense of other assessment objectives; only a relatively small proportion of marks go towards this criterion. This can be quite a careful balancing act in such a concise essay. As was noted in last year's report, a number of candidates found the use of specialised vocabulary a challenge, suggesting that more work needs to be done to ensure it is steadily acquired during the course.

### Context and evaluation

There is plenty of scope in the criteria for candidates to approach the issue of context from a variety or combination of angles: historical, social, political or economic. Stronger essays demonstrated convincing communication of both the specific and the broader context of artworks, analysing the meaning and impact of this context, whereas weaker essays demonstrated only very limited understanding of context, not really going beyond a basic connection to a historical event, for example. At times, contextual analysis was more developed for one half of the comparison, perhaps implying the need for more rigour at the planning stage. In general, a sizeable number of candidates needed to focus on addressing the question of context more explicitly, with reference to sources as evidence. As in the previous reports, it was noted that in the IA work submitted this year, 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. Students should be guided to draw upon their Theory of Knowledge course and acknowledge these issues in developing their IA.

### Evaluation of sources

The 'sources' referred to in the marking criteria can take a variety of forms: historical and art historical academic texts, monographs, exhibition catalogues, art historical surveys, art criticism, journal articles, museum websites and documentary films, as well as contemporary documents, interviews etc. Arguments should be supported by the sources selected, as well as by visual analysis of artworks. The stronger essays used a range of sources effectively and demonstrated a critical approach, often expressing complex ideas and interpretations. Generally, the more successful essays referred to between six to ten books, and six to ten articles or websites, although there is no hard and fast rule here. The purpose of the IA is to approximate a research paper, and candidates should thus demonstrate that they have consulted a number of texts to gain understanding, in order to develop and elucidate a research question and to draw conclusions. For some schools, the quality of sources is still an area for improvement; candidates needed to go further at the research stage, seeking out scholarly articles and books, in addition to well-chosen websites, and engaging in explicit critical analysis of these sources. Some essays included interesting reference to innovative theories, but these were not necessarily presented in the context of established scholarship.

The more successful essays made close reference to sources in the text, with correct use of citation referencing. As stated in last year's report, the best responses were those that brought varied and/or opposing points of view together for consideration and then offered up a personal opinion or judgment on the issue, citing reasons and evidence where appropriate. Many of the same issues to do with references and citations that have been flagged up in previous reports continue to be a problem. For example, some essays included long bibliographies, but many of the works were not cited in the essay itself. To reiterate the recommendations of previous reports, only works referred to in the essay should be listed in the bibliography. A few essays cited no sources at all in the text, and others displayed very little real engagement with sources. Several essays had very limited bibliographies—four or five websites only. In some schools, more time should be dedicated at the research stage to exploring (and correct referencing) of a greater range of good quality sources. As in previous years, teachers should ensure that candidates are aware of the need to be explicit in demonstrating their interpretation and personal opinions.

### Research, planning and presentation

The more successful essays had been carefully planned, with a focused research question/title, and candidates were well-equipped to pursue ambitious lines of enquiry and able to convey a sense of why the examples provided a valid point of cross-cultural comparison. The more specific and focused title in the form of a question helped candidates to produce a discursive, analytical response leading to a clear set of conclusions. Some candidates clearly needed tighter guidance on the choice of essay question; some were rather poorly worded, lacking in the required cross-cultural aspect or not conducive to systematic research leading to a clear set of conclusions. A few had no title at all. Guidance at the planning stage should help students to formulate suitable cross-cultural research questions. A few essays had no discernible cross-cultural aspect and therefore could not justifiably be awarded more than 2 marks for this criterion. From the outset, candidates need to convey a sense of why these works have been selected for comparison, and pursue a systematic response to that question. In some essays, the way that the comparison of works was organized tended towards a description of one work followed by the other, whereas it would have perhaps been better to compare different aspects of the works throughout the essay.

Candidates needed to plan their work and gather relevant evidence to support and substantiate points made. Some responses were limited by incorporating too little evidence to substantiate these points, particularly by restricting themselves to a very limited number of works as illustrations. In the case of one candidate, reference to only one example was inadequate in supporting a point about the whole of the artist's oeuvre. A few essays had no sources at all and, as stated previously, in general the quality of the sources needed to be improved, with less exclusive reliance on web sources. Likewise, some candidates were not consistent in their organisation and use of references. Some essays were well below the word count or incomplete. Unfortunately, a few essays were little more than rough drafts, suggesting that some schools may benefit from establishing more rigorous internal deadlines for submission of work. Lengthy quotations should be avoided or put into an appendix, and an abstract is not required.

As stated in previous reports, overall, presentation was of a good- to high-quality, with proficient use of formatting tools and inclusion of clear and effective images being the norm rather than the exception. It was noted that the majority of essays had all the illustrations at the end; although not essential, it would certainly help the reader if figures were placed where they are first mentioned in the text. There was impressive use of their own photographs by a small number of candidates. Indeed, the majority of higher achieving essays included ones where the candidates had been able to examine artworks first-hand

and had incorporated high quality images to support visual analysis. However, in some essays the images used were rather small and dark, and therefore not effective in supporting the points made. As previously stated, the inclusion of good quality imagery to support the main points of the candidate's thesis should be made absolutely de rigueur.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should allow sufficient time at the researching and planning stage to ensure that candidates have accessed all possible marks, particularly in the selection and use of a range of sources, a critical approach to those sources, and a systematic approach to the research. Thus essays should be planned with clear reference to the marking criteria, so that students are enabled to access all available marks.
- Ideally a suitable title/question should be established early on to help guide the progress of the research. Teachers should guide candidates in the formulation of a suitable essay title/question. A title phrased in the form of a question would lend itself to a more discursive approach from which conclusions could be drawn coherently.
- General instruction of students about correct procedure for citations and references would be useful, and time should be allowed for this. This should also extend to captions and correct referencing of illustrations, which should be good quality images, not too small, and positioned to facilitate the reading.
- The establishing of earlier internal deadlines by some schools for the submission of work would allow time for additional research to be carried out and also help those candidates with easily-remediable issues such as problems of formatting or omissions, for example, to solve them before the final submission.
- It is recommended that teachers share with students and apply the observations made in this and previous years' reports.

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

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

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Most candidates were able to make an adequate attempt at visual analysis and to make use of a few basic art historical terms relating to form, style or technique. Weaker answers this year took the description and visual analysis of their selected image as a given and failed to analyse the image adequately before leaping into discussion of potential meaning and function. Others had difficulty in defining what the original context for a work might have been or failed to address this aspect of the task at all. Some found it difficult to go beyond repeating statements that they had learned from their teachers or other sources. Some found it an even greater challenge to discuss the possible meaning or meanings of works of art beyond simple symbolism or iconographic readings. Indeed, it appeared that a slightly higher number of candidates from certain centres were labouring under the belief that a surface iconographic reading of an image constitutes a full discussion of context, when it clearly does not.

As we have seen in past exams, there was a basic difficulty for many candidates in trying to communicate why there might be a problem in establishing an accurate context for some works of art and then of interpreting the meaning of the work in that context.

Encouragingly, candidates across the board were more consistent in following the recommended format for answering the two questions in separate responses. Differentiating between the two questions and providing distinct answers for each of them was much more commonplace this year. However, some candidates answered question 1 with a discussion of visual analysis and then went on to repeat much of what they had said in their answer to question 2. Similarly, a number of 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 said again in their second response (which should address context, meaning and significance).

As in previous years, a number of candidates struggled with finding a balance between attempting to recite what in many cases was a memorised list of facts they knew about a work and working these into their own observations and analysis. In many of these instances, the list of facts took the form of blanket iconographic readings of images without accounting for the source of the interpretations provided or acknowledging that these were only potential readings and that alternatives could exist. This issue continues to be a matter of concern in certain centres. It seemed that many of these candidates were eager to tell what they knew, as opposed to how they knew it or why they thought that way, clearly allowing their responses to be guided by a bulleted series of conclusions that were unsupported by the rest of their answer. This suggests that some form of preparation (or coaching) is occurring in some

centres but without the appropriate level of formal and contextual understanding of selected works to enable candidates to demonstrate real understanding with a holistic, well-organised response.

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

The best-prepared candidates were able to both describe and analyse the formal aspects of their chosen artwork and then comment specifically on style, techniques used and materials employed. They were able to establish a convincing context for their chosen work with reference to specific historical, social, political or economic events (many included relevant dates) and to explore the problems and limitations of trying to interpret these works within that context. Most candidates were able to show that they understood that they were expected to address both formal and contextual issues surrounding their selected works and most made efforts to ensure that both of these tasks were addressed. Most understood that the works selected had a meaning and a function within their respective contexts, but some had difficulty discussing these.

The highest achieving candidates were those who were able to do as mentioned above but also to reference actual historians and critics associated with the scholarship discussed. The very best responses were the ones that offered critical viewpoints and properly referenced those responsible for them, while bringing alternative viewpoints into the response and offering a personal opinion on the validity of these. While not common, it was clear that certain exam centres were training candidates in this practice and that they were, on the average, enjoying much higher results as a consequence. Therefore, it follows that such training be encouraged in all centres in the future.

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

The number of candidates erroneously answering the individual questions with reference to two different topic artworks was very low this year, suggesting that teacher guidance and exam preparation for following the directions for this component are being given appropriate attention.

A separate note is required for each of the topic questions:

**Topic 1: *The Wedding Procession of Peleas and Thetis*, Sophilos (c.580 BCE). Black-figured bowl (dinos). British Museum London.**

Many candidates responded to this work. Most were able to properly identify the piece as either late-Geometric or early-Archaic Greek pottery and were able to refer to its black-figure technique. Some of the more comprehensive responses offered involved accounts of the process of black-figure pottery and a few were able to draw links between specific steps in the process and the resulting image and form of the dinos. About half of respondents were able to accurately recall details of the actual mythology of the story of Peleus and Thetis, though few of these made direct links between the work and the myth in terms of meaning and function. Surprisingly, none of the responses mentioned Homer. Most of the responses identified the various occupants of the registered levels of the work, from gods and goddesses to chariots and animals. Some of these offered formal evaluations of the use of registering and geometric decoration as enhancing the physical shape the pottery. Weaker responses tended to get lost in trying to include details of the mythological story at the expense of analysing the image in question. Stronger responses explored appropriate contextual issues, such as influence from

Egyptian schema and the emergence of Greek trade in the 6th century BC Mediterranean world. A smaller number of higher achieving responses delved into the relationship between the nature of the scene selected and the possible meaning/function of the work as a ritualistic device (possibly related to marriage) and as a symbol of social standing.

### Topic 2: *Maison Carrée*, Nîmes (c.19 BCE) Exterior.

A popular choice for answers this year; most of the respondents were able to correctly place this work at the end of the Roman Republic/beginning of the Empire period of architectural history. Many of the responses provided a thorough description of the work and were able to specify uniquely Roman characteristics of the structure. Higher achieving answers were able to draw clear links between these and various influences (Greek and Etruscan, etc.) both in terms of structure and decoration. Some of the better answers were able to explore several contextual issues associated with the building, including a few that quite thoroughly discussed Augustus's conservative building agenda and his tendency to commission propaganda architecture that would evoke feelings and ideas that would support his role as autocrat of the empire. A few rather accomplished responses actually mentioned Vitruvius and his Ten Books on Architecture and drew clear links between his writings, his patron Augustus and this structure, which embodies so much of what Vitruvius defined as "Roman." Weaker responses tended to merely describe the structure, pointing out its Roman characteristics but failing to explore aspects of substantive context, while a handful of answers mistakenly (and mystifyingly, given that its location was provided in the title), identified it as a structure in the Roman Forum, perhaps confusing it with the Temple of Portunus?

### Topic 3: *Women at the tomb of Christ and the Ascension of Christ* (Reidersche Tafel) (c.400 CE) Ivory. Bayerisches National Museum, Munich.

Only two or three candidates responded to this work. Of these, all responses were moderately comprehensive. They provided some solid visual analysis of the composition and movement through the image. The better prepared of these few candidates was able to identify evolving Early Christian elements of the work as originating in Roman carving of the late empire (no responses provided possible specific influences of apotheosis imagery, such as that of Antoninus Pius on the pedestal of his column, 161 CE, or that of Julius Caesar in the Divius Julius relief of the first century BCE). All were able to recount the general gospel story (from Matthew) and identify key players in the narrative represented on the panel. None of these responses went much into detail of technique or materials used, though all of them mentioned ivory and the use of files and blades in the relief carving. A few responses correctly pointed out the stylistic shift from Classical realism towards Medieval symbolism in the stunted nature of the figures and their generic faces. A number of responses (presumably not all from the same centre) identified this panel as having been executed by an artist named Reidersche, which suggests the degree to which some candidates rely on the metadata provided in the text accompanying each topic image.

### Topic 4: *Scenes from the Life of David*, Anonymous ("The Master of the Morgan Leaf") (c.1160–1180 CE) Illuminated leaf from the Winchester Bible. The Morgan Library and Museum, New York.

Again, very few candidates responded to this work. Those responding represented a range of preparedness. A weaker answer was unable to identify David in the images or to recall specifics of the biblical tale of the young hero. One noted response identified the character of David as a female (citing hair style). A very few responses referred appropriately to the stories of the legendary king as recorded

in the books of Samuel (Old Testament). One higher achieving response was able to identify this as an illuminate page produced in Winchester and later purchased by Pierpont Morgan in the twentieth century. Most responses took the opportunity to discuss, at least minimally, the lengthy process involved in creating medieval parchment manuscripts and one or two went into greater detail than others with regard to specific materials. While most of the responses to this image were able to identify the flat, abstracted style as typical of Romanesque and Gothic illustration (all called attention to drapery and flat backgrounds, as well as the compacted, staged quality of the scenes) none identified this as a mix of Classical and Hiberno-Saxon influence that impacted on painting on the continent at the time. Generally, none of the responses to this image achieved any significantly high score.

**Topic 5: *An Allegory with Venus and Cupid*, Agnolo Bronzino (c.1545). Oil on wood. National Gallery, London.**

As with previous exam sessions, the volume of response to this particular topic's image was very high. Weaker responses tended to vaguely describe aspects of the overall work and, almost immediately, to launch into a well-prepared list of iconographic readings that were usually presented as fact without consideration of possible alternative readings or interpretations (almost exactly as was seen in last year's image of Bosch's masterpiece). Higher quality answers involved both materials and techniques in the first part of their response and related Bronzino's use of oils on panel to the fine details, sumptuous colours, etc. A few discussed the developing Baroque diagonals identifiable in the composition as well as the use of theatrical lighting and the shallow nature of the image plane as evidence of sixteenth century Mannerism. A few took pains to note the twisted, elongated, pale figures as further evidence. Two or three responses actually drew links between this image and the earlier influential works of Parmigianino and, ultimately, Michelangelo, whose Sistine Chapel images inspired the *la maniera* approach in painting. In discussing context, it was clear that most of the less able respondents considered a quick iconographic reading sufficient in this regard. A majority of respondents clearly understood the importance of allegory in the period and sought to correctly establish this work as a "conversation piece." Those achieving higher results typically identified Vasari as one of the earliest sources of understanding of this image and a few went on to offer alternative readings to the allegory presented (from Panofsky, Hartt and others). The best answers provided and cited this information and then expressed a personal opinion based on their own understanding. Many respondents were able to identify Duke Cosimo as the commissioner of this work and noted his intention to present it to Francis I of France, possibly as a status symbol and to underscore the predominance of Florentine art and culture at the time, possibly as a kind of sophisticated inside (or playfully erotic) joke. Many focused on the image's "lewdness, promiscuity and incest" of which they saw ample "evidence," and not a small number of the responses tended to get lost in this line of discussion.

**Topic 6: *Self-portrait*, Judith Leyster (c.1630). Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington.**

Not unexpectedly, this image garnered a very high number of responses. Most candidates began by quickly describing the image and analysing its diagonals and foreshortened elements in establishing this work as a Baroque example, to varying levels of success. Most also pointed out the differing approaches to brushwork as evidence of a particularly northern approach to this genre. A majority of the lesser-to-moderate-achieving responses usually went from a quick description into a discussion of context that focused on the presence of the artist as a woman, a well-dressed woman and one who is shown working on a genre of painting typically referred to as a "merry reveller" – a common enough theme in Dutch painting in the early seventeenth century. Most of these completed their answers with statements that this image was devised to highlight the female artist's skills and was probably meant



as a self-promotional work to attract sales and commissions. A fair number of these responses included long, tangential discussions of the history of the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and the nature of the divisive religious occupation of the protestant north by catholic Spain. Often this discussion was not helpful in that it was often too broad and revealed more of a lack of specific knowledge as it related to the work in question. More accomplished responses were able to focus on specific contextual issues, including the fact that Leyster was only the second woman to be admitted to the Haarlem Painters' Guild and that the image she is depicted painting has been linked to a painting by Leyster known as "The Merry Trio" in the Noortman Collection. Several well-prepared respondents also noted that the image she is shown working on had been altered. X-ray evidence shows that the canvas behind her once featured an image of a woman, suggesting that Leyster was actually consciously displaying her skills in both portraiture and genre painting. Some of the highest achieving responses settled on a discussion of her choice of depicting herself as young, feminine, happy and well-dressed (comfortable and successful in her trade) as a statement of rare female empowerment in an age and field quite definitely dominated by men.

**Topic 7: *Slavers throwing overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon coming on ("Slave Ship")*, Joseph Mallord William Turner (1840). Oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.**

For many reasons, this work, which was a very popular choice among this exam session's candidates, elicited a much wider range of successful and unsuccessful answers than expected, suggesting that, while many candidates were quite prepared to discuss the formal and contextual qualities of this work, many were not. A good number of respondents began with comments about colour choice, brushwork and scale, which are all appropriate concerns. Some correctly focused on the sweeping, gestural application of paint and the swirling, chaotic composition of the storm depicted as evidence of Romantic painting and, the better prepared candidates noted, its general rejection of the calm, stately and orderly painting that characterized the preceding Neo-Classical era. Most descriptions would usually lead into the tiny ship depicted in the distance and then return to the suggested bodies (limbs, chains, etc) in the foreground being devoured by sea creatures. Better answers usually included commentary of the nature of the depicted storm as Turner's interest in the awe-inspiring and the sublime, his choice to frame the storm high on the horizon and his use of diminished scale for the ship and victims as evidence of increased dramatic impact, also typical of Romantic painting. In terms of contextual analysis, some of the weaker responses evidently were not familiar with either the tale of the slaver upon which Turner evidently modelled his image (the Dutch *Zong*, 1831) or the chronology involved in the establishment of the Anti-Slavery act in Britain (1833) and the painting of this work. Many attributed the work to Turner's anti-slavery stance (which would not be incorrect) but also ascribed credit to the work for having helped pass the Anti-Slavery Act (which preceded it). A number of responses (presumably from North American-based centres) maintained that Turner was an American anti-slavery activist living on the east coast (two answers mentioned his home as Boston), which is inaccurate. A number of better prepared candidates went on to mention that the work was exhibited at the National Academy upon its completion. Some also mentioned anecdotes about the rivalry between Turner and John Constable, though these references were often muddled and not particularly helpful in discussing this work. While the higher achieving responses focused on the role of this work as a condemnation of a particular historical event and as an allegory for the inevitable decline of slavery in its time, for many of the lower achieving responses, the temptation to get caught in the trap of moralizing about slavery and its inhumanity instead of discussing the work in question was simply too great.

### Topic 8: *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, Georges Seurat (1884–86). Oil on canvas. The Art Institute of Chicago.

This was a fairly popular choice for candidates, most of whom were able to describe the work adequately and mention both working technique (most at least cited pointillism) and scale (at over 2 x 3 meters, it is quite large). Most descriptions led to discussing the treatment of the figures. Almost all respondents were quick to point out the generalised, geometric nature of the figures and that there was little distinction made between landscape and figures in terms of texture or detail. Some moderate-to-higher-achieving responses analysed Seurat's use of brightly coloured dots placed in close proximity and discussed this technical advance within the developing canon of Post-Impressionist work at the time. Two important contextual considerations could have been pursued for this work. The first is the role of the painting as a reaction to scientific understanding at the time of vision, optics and the physical theories of light and colour that were arising at the time, which several responses mentioned to their credit. Several better prepared responses actually cited the work of the theorist, Eugene Chevreul, as influential in Seurat's conception of this technique. Other higher achieving candidates also explored the work as a statement of class difference and as testament to the changes in how people spent leisure time during the period of the late-Industrial Revolution in France. There were many varied approaches to this line of inquiry, and many involved much of the same evidence from the painting, including the non-individualised treatment of the figures, the lack of movement, the presence of boats and smokestacks in the background, etc. Many of the lower-to-moderate achieving responses were able to cite these elements as evidence of some contextual relevance, but often failed to be specific or make clear how these were relevant. Higher achieving responses made clear links between formal elements such as the leashed monkey, the clothing and the postures of the figures presented, as evidence of either the effects of the Industrial Revolution itself or the artificiality and posturing of the French Bourgeois class (or both). Some also pointed to evidence of Seurat's intentional mockery of these people by including items that may have referred to prostitution (monkey) and drug addiction/laziness (man smoking pipe). Highest achieving marks went to those who actually referenced specific critics/historians who have made such observations and then (even higher) offered personal opinion on the matter.

### Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should continue to encourage candidates to write in distinct paragraphs and to remind them that, ideally, each paragraph should embody a specific thought or a number of closely related thoughts.
- 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 of referencing only one topic in each of their responses. Candidates' responses that significantly reference more than one topic risk being discounted.
- Teachers would do well to continue to ensure that students understand the distinctions between the two Paper 1 questions and the nature of what each of them asks.
- As noted in previous reports (and still very valid), to do well on this task candidates need to be able to learn to analyse and dissect the visual components of works of art – they should be taught how to do this in class, avoiding formulaic approaches to learning this skill while emphasizing that a personal connection can and should be made with the work. Training the

eye by practicing on works of art with which the candidates are unfamiliar is the best way of doing this.

- Candidates should be encouraged (by their art history teacher and their TOK instructor) to make links between what they learn in art history and what they learn about the problems of knowledge in TOK. This can only help students understand more the problems of knowing about a context in the past and the difficulties in interpreting the meaning of a work produced in that context.
- Teachers should, whenever possible, highlight the fact that art historians can (and often do) come to different conclusions about the same works of art. Teachers should encourage students to get engaged with the question when this happens and to draw their own conclusions based upon their understanding of as much of the contextual evidence and scholarship as they can appropriately reference. The very best responses will always be the ones that offer critical viewpoints and reference those responsible for them, while bringing alternative viewpoints into the response and offering a personal opinion on the validity of these. As noted above, such training is to be encouraged in all exam centres.
- It is recommended that candidates, whenever possible, be given the opportunity to practice with past paper writing. By practising paper writing, including under exam conditions, it is hoped that candidates will become more familiar with the expectations of the exam instructions and questions; such practice will also help reinforce better handwriting skills, so minimizing problems with legibility and basic essay structuring.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 29	30 - 36	37 - 48

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

There were candidates who were well-prepared for questions from all of the five sections of paper 2. Questions from section B continue to be amongst the most popular, suggesting that candidates enjoy the discussion of the iconography and meaning of artworks, though the popularity of this section did not mean that those candidates who chose it were all equally well-prepared. Better prepared candidates appreciated that there can be problems with understanding the meaning of an artwork and its iconography. Many candidates were well-prepared in that they were able to identify a sufficient range of artworks by both title and artist's name, as a minimum. They were further able to discuss aspects of the appearance of these artworks from memory and, for the best-prepared candidates, also aspects of the context in which these works were produced and first seen.

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

A main strength and weakness in the treatment of questions was connected with conceptual understanding or a lack of it.

Questions 1 and 2 required candidates to be able to identify formal qualities. The concepts of style and of formal qualities are fundamental to section A, so candidates need to have grappled with these concepts during the course.

Questions 3 and 4 required a concept of the meaning of a work of art. Stronger treatments were able to appreciate that meaning in art, as in language, can be problematic – the concept of the problem of meaning in language, and by extension visual language, should be familiar from TOK as well.

For questions 5 and 6, the concepts of function and context are fundamental. Implicitly or explicitly, many candidates are trying to argue that artworks function as a kind of propaganda for or against the beliefs or interests of a particular section within society at a given time.

Questions 7 and 8 require a knowledge of patrons and their role/s in addition to a knowledge of art and artists. Here there were very marked strengths and weaknesses in candidates' knowledge of particular patrons and what they did.

Questions 9 and 10 require candidates to have a concept of materials and a concept of techniques, and to have thought about the role of these in changes that have taken place in art in its history. The

weakest treatments suggest that those candidates are not really familiar with the difference between the digital image of an artwork on screen and the physicality of an artwork in a gallery museum or other setting, let alone the processes involved in its making.

### Question 1

**With reference to at least two works of art or architecture, identify three formal qualities associated with a style from one topic area. Discuss the relationship between these qualities, the style and the particular context (historical, social, political or economic) in which the style was prevalent.**

Weaker responses seemed muddled about what they understood to be formal qualities and/or struggled to identify and discuss three examples of formal qualities with much depth or consistency. When it came to making connections to context, the weakest responses struggled to identify works clearly by title and artist's name, let alone to identify correctly the art historical period, style or topic.

However, there were many very good responses to this question where candidates were able to define what they understood formal qualities to mean and to identify three examples for each of the two or more works considered. In general, responses were able to use a range of examples from whichever topic was referred to in individual answers.

The most successful essays were able to make strong connections between these formal qualities and the context—particularly the art historical period, but also the historical, social, political, or economic context more generally.

Where students had an understanding of style and formal qualities and a knowledge of artists and artworks, they were able to show that knowledge and understanding to good effect with this question.

### Question 2

**With reference to works of art or architecture from the same topic area, discuss how two artists or architects used formal qualities to enhance aesthetic appeal in their art.**

Weaker responses seemed muddled about what they understood to be formal qualities and/or struggled to identify and discuss three examples of formal qualities with much depth or consistency. When it came to making connections between these qualities and the aesthetic appeal of the artworks, the weakest responses struggled to show enough familiarity with their examples to be able to answer very convincingly, or else lacked sufficient specific vocabulary.

However, there were also very good responses to this question where candidates were able to make convincing connections and arguments about the relationship between formal qualities and aesthetic appeal for each of the two works considered. Again, in general, responses were able to use a range of examples from whichever topic was referred to in individual answers.

Many candidates showed an ability to draw on relevant knowledge and to deploy it effectively to answer the question asked. It was also encouraging to see that many candidates went beyond thinking of aesthetic appeal merely in terms of appeal to the eye or the arousal of pleasurable feelings in the viewer.

### Question 3

**Identify at least three symbolic elements in one work of art or architecture from one topic area and discuss the relationship of these elements to the wider social and historical context in which the work was produced.**

This was a popular question which allowed many candidates to show their familiarity with artworks and understanding of symbolism. Most candidates were able to identify at least three elements, and to describe or give an account of their symbolism or meaning. Weaker essays tended to struggle to go on to discuss the relationship of these elements to the wider context in which the work was produced.

Basic essays had a simple idea of symbolism in which an object or element of a work was interpreted as having a single, defined meaning, with no consideration of the possibility of ambiguity or connotation. Stronger essays showed understanding of the more problematic relationship between symbols and the way/s in which they might have been seen or interpreted.

The best essays showed familiarity with the work of art historians who have engaged in trying to explore iconography and meaning, and the problems of achieving certainty. These essays understood that art historians might select different things from the context in which a work was produced and so give different interpretations of the same symbolic elements.

### Question 4

**From one topic area, select one work of art or architecture where an “intended meaning” was understood. Discuss it, and decide whether “knowing” this meaning is still important or relevant in today’s world, and why.**

The concept of meaning was at the heart of this question. The question implied an intention on the part of the artist and/or patron that was understood by the audience or viewer/s of the work.

Candidates lacking a knowledge of evidence of the intention of the artist, architect and/or patron they chose should, perhaps, have avoided this question. The best answers considered both what the maker/patron intended and who understood the intended meaning, and how.

Some answers went off track with the second part of the question and wandered into generalised commentary on contemporary culture, with little or no reference to the example they had discussed in the first part of the essay. Better answers kept their example in focus throughout and took the invitation to explore the problems of meaning between that which was intended and the context in which it is, or isn't understood.

### Question 5

**With reference to two works of art or architecture from one topic area, discuss how the social and historical context of a particular time and place is reflected in the functions of the art it produced.**

A number of candidates seem to have used the same two works to answer this question: *Venus of Urbino* by Titian and *Olympia* by Manet, without seeming to know that these are from two different topics (topics 5 and 8 respectively). This meant that they could only score a maximum of half of the possible 16 marks available for the question.

Many candidates made a successful argument for artworks reflecting social and historical context by functioning as propaganda for or against a certain view in a particular time and/or place. Importantly, these candidates knew enough examples from one topic to argue this effectively.

### Question 6

**From one topic area, compare and contrast two works of art or architecture by different artists or architects that were meant to serve different functions (eg, religious, social, personal or political).**

A number of candidates seem to have used the same two works to answer this question: *Venus of Urbino* by Titian and *Olympia* by Manet, without seeming to know that these are from two different topics (topics 5 and 8 respectively). This meant that they could only score a maximum of half of the possible 16 marks available for the question.

Many candidates were able to produce good treatments of this question, using examples from one topic. Many saw artworks as examples of propaganda for or against the political, social or religious views of a particular group or section of society. They were able to explore whether the artist personally identified with this group or not, and if they did, how.

### Question 7

**With reference to at least two works of art and architecture from the same topic area, examine the importance of the support of a patron or patrons, in helping one artist or architect achieve status and success.**

Section D (Artistic production and patronage) questions require that in addition to being able to identify artworks by title and artist's name, candidates can identify the patron/s of these artworks and discuss their influence/s or role/s. In the weakest examples this knowledge was lacking, and those candidates were, apparently, insufficiently prepared to tackle a question from this section.

However, there were many good, and some excellent, responses. The best of these were able to make use of what they had learned during the course in order to construct well-structured arguments in response to the question. Many candidates were able to see that this question allowed or encouraged them to talk about two works by the same artist, or architect, that were created for the same patron.

### Question 8

**Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of patronage on artistic output for two artists or architects from one topic area, with reference to at least two examples of works by each of them.**

Section D (Artistic production and patronage) questions require that in addition to being able to identify artworks by title and artist's name, candidates can identify the patron/s of these artworks and discuss their influence/s or role/s. In the weakest examples this knowledge was lacking and those candidates were, apparently, insufficiently prepared to tackle a question from this section.

However, there were many good and some excellent responses. The best of these were able to make use of what they had learned during the course to construct well-structured arguments in response to the question.

Most candidates understood that this question required them to write about at least two works by two artists or architects for the same, or different patrons. Candidates generally knew enough to be able to do this and to address the question with reference to both the advantages and disadvantages of the artist/patron relationship.

### Question 9

**Examine two works of art or architecture from one topic area that show a use of techniques and materials that were innovative within their particular context (historical, social, political or economic).**

The weakest answers showed little understanding of the concepts of an artist's materials or artists' techniques and could give no relevant examples of these. These candidates did not seem sufficiently well-prepared to tackle a question from section E.

The best answers discussed examples that were innovative because a material was new to a certain period (for example concrete or oil paint), or because a material that existed in an earlier time period (topic) was used, but with innovative techniques.

### Question 10

**“One mustn't let technique be the consciously important thing. It should be at the service of expressing the form” (the sculptor, Henry Moore). To what extent do you agree with this statement? Refer to two works of art or architecture from one topic area to support your answer.**

This question was in a different format from the others –a quotation followed by a question– so it was good to see candidates embracing its challenge. The main difficulty for weaker responses was not the format of the question, but a lack of sufficient understanding of the concept of technique, as distinct from form. These weaker candidates did not seem sufficiently well-prepared to tackle a question from section E.

Candidates with a better understanding of the concept of technique as opposed to form were able to engage with the question and to make well-constructed arguments.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Classes should use a variety of approaches to teaching and learning.
- Of course teaching should be informed by assessment, but not *only* by assessment: assessment should not stifle inquiry. Students should be encouraged to formulate their own questions about art and seek meaningful answers, through teamwork and collaborative learning as well as individually.
- However, students do need to be helped to understand the demands and requirements of the assessed tasks.
- At its most basic level, this understanding has to refer to the general instructions contained in the examination paper. Although this situation has improved, there are still some candidates who are not following these instructions and teachers are recommended to continue to stress the importance of doing this. In paper 2:
  - One question must be answered with reference to one topic, and the two other questions with reference to another topic.



- Only one topic area is to be referred to within one answer.
- Teaching should encourage students to make use of their local environment, museums and galleries to explore examples of art and architecture, as well as global resources such as the world-wide web.
- Teaching **MUST** promote engagement with and understanding of key concepts such as: formal qualities, style, iconography, context, function, patronage, art techniques, art materials.
- Naturally, teaching will need to be differentiated to meet the needs of all learners – and this will need to be informed by formative assessment.
- Rather than just encouraging learning facts and information by rote from Wikipedia or Smarthistory, teaching should:
  - encourage and foster critical thinking skills and self-management skills, including independent learning and inquiry.
  - promote research skills so that students know how to seek answers for themselves.
  - promote the learning of communication skills, which for paper 2 mean especially: an ability to read and understand the questions, to select relevant knowledge, and to write a well-structured response within a limited amount of time.