



General Certificate of Education

History of Art 2250

**HART1 Visual Analysis and
Interpretation**

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

General

Overall, the responses to the questions were thorough and candidates appeared to have been well prepared for the paper. However, it must be stressed that this unit tests visual analysis and does not reward prior knowledge. The most successful candidates based their responses on careful analysis and discussion of the three images and did not digress into material which was pre-learnt and therefore did not directly relate to the images in the question paper.

Candidates are reminded that they should read the questions carefully noting whether they are being asked to analyse or to describe and to ensure that they understand which elements the question is focused on.

Painting

Question 1

Meindert Hobbema, *The Avenue at Middleharnis*, 1689 (oil on canvas)
(103.5 cm x 141 cm) (National Gallery, London).

Analyse the ways in which the artist has depicted space **and** discuss his interpretation of nature.

In general, this question was answered comprehensively and many candidates covered a majority of the points in the mark scheme. Many candidates were articulate and used clear, accurate language and organised their material competently. The most successful responses analysed the depiction of space in a sustained manner, discussing Hobbema's use of linear perspective, the low horizon, tone, colour, the scale of the figures and referencing their points tightly to the painting.

Candidates remarked on the way interest was created in the large sky by realistic clouds and how the eye was led up into the sky by the tall trees that overlapped it. However, some candidates did not analyse the depiction of space and merely described the painting, some in quite a fanciful way.

The artist's interpretation of nature was covered well by the most successful candidates who discussed, in detail, the contrast between the natural areas on the left with the man-made tracks and crops on the right, the overall domination of man by nature and the flatness of the landscape. Some candidates wasted time by writing about religion, the study of natural sciences and the encroachment of industry, apparently evident on the horizon.

Candidates are reminded to look at the date of the work and to be wary of imposing a modern ethic on an historic piece.

Sculpture

Question 2

Sir Jacob Epstein, *Jacob and the Angel*, 1940-41 (alabaster: a stone-like substance)
(214 cm x 110 cm x 92 cm) (Tate Britain, London).

Analyse the use of material and techniques employed to make this sculpture **and** consider the ways in which they contribute to the interpretation of the figures.

There were some very perceptive responses to this question and many candidates wrote a full, well-structured essay in which they competently organised their material

and demonstrated a good level of analysis. The most successful responses discussed fully how the containment of the figures within the block created a strong bond and a sense of physical strength. Points on the low tensile strength of the alabaster were covered as was the evidence of where the techniques of carving, drilling and polishing had been used and the effects created.

Less successful candidates tended to merely state that a subtractive technique had been used but did not expand on the point or link it to the sculpture. Similarly, many candidates stated pre-learnt facts about carving from a block and 'discovering the secret of the forms within the stone', - again without any reference to the image provided. Candidates also drew comparisons with bronze and wasted valuable time describing, in detail, how this group would have been made in a different material.

The interpretation of the figures was often fanciful in the weaker responses and time was wasted and no marks were gained by the retelling of the story of Jacob and the Angel. Many candidates wrote about the Second World War and the sculpture being a reaction to Fascism; this gained them no marks as credit can only be gained by close analysis of the image. Colour misled many candidates, some of whom said the alabaster had been painted, however, more able candidates linked it to human warmth in the figure of Jacob and purity in the Angel.

Architecture

Question 3

Architect unknown, *Salisbury Cathedral-west front*, (c.1220-58) (stone) (England)

Describe the appearance of this building **and** comment on the relationship between structure and decoration.

Some comprehensive descriptions of Salisbury Cathedral were given in which candidates commented fully on the tall, decorated tower with a spire, the smaller spires of the west front towers, the transept, and the highly decorated west front with rows of pointed arched windows. The relationship between structure and decoration was identified in such elements as the buttresses supporting the walls and dividing them into bays, the flying buttresses of the nave exterior, and the horizontal division created by string courses and traceried bands. However, many candidates wrote about a multiplicity of pointed arches and how these were a vital element in Gothic architecture but did not associate them to the windows, niches or porch. They often went on to discuss the interior vaulting but gained no marks as only the exterior was shown in the photograph. Similarly, many said there was a cruciform plan but as this was not evident in the image no credit could be given, although there is a point for the transept being at right angles to the nave in the mark scheme. Many responses included pre-learnt material such as the west front being the 'bible of the illiterate' and detailing the identity of the sculptures on the west front when the image is not large enough to show this.

There was a wide use of classical terminology when describing the Gothic cathedral, the gables and tympana being referred to as pediments, the buttresses as variously Doric or Corinthian columns which disadvantaged those candidates in AO3 in which very accurate use of language is required to gain a mark in the upper bands.

Very few candidates resorted to merely listing their points at the end.

Conclusion

Many scripts were barely legible and often included so many crossings out that the 'flow' of the essay was badly affected or, in some instances, the sense of the essay

was lost. Candidates should be aware that AO3 rewards a clear, coherent response. Many successful scripts, which met the criteria for the upper bands in the mark scheme, were seen and overall the responses to the three images showed that candidates had been well prepared to look and analyse what is in front of them.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.