



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2011**

History of Art

HART2

(Specification 2250)

Unit 2: Themes in History of Art

Report on the Examination

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HART2

General comments

All six questions were attempted. Question 6 was the least popular.

AO1 was generally sound and secure. Sometimes artworks were imprecisely or incorrectly identified and only vague titles were given such as Henry Moore's Reclining Figure or Mother and Child. There were many incorrect dates and misspellings of artists' and architects' names. Very occasionally, examples were cited which were outside the date range of the specification, such as Archaic Greek sculptures from before 500 BC.

AO2 was usually clearly demonstrated. Cases of subjective and unsubstantiated judgment and speculation were, however, common. Sometimes students resorted to writing everything they had learned about a work without clearly addressing the requirements of the question.

AO3 was evidenced to a high level in the majority of cases. The most successful responses were fluent, concise, coherent and well-structured. However, lack of clarity and organisation were common flaws in some responses, as were ambiguity and repetition. Padding was abundant and students regularly employed irrelevant material or long-winded digressions which gained no credit.

Question 1 Materials, techniques and processes

Discuss how the use of different media has an effect on the appearance of **two** paintings.

On the whole this question was successfully addressed, with the majority of students demonstrating sound knowledge of different materials and techniques in a range of media, such as oil, fresco and tempera. The most popular examples were van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait, scenes from Masaccio's Brancacci Chapel fresco cycle, Gentile da Fabriano's Adoration of the Magi and the Wilton Diptych. There were also many references to Impressionist examples. The more successful students effectively linked examples of how the media impacted on chosen works by citing specific details. On the other hand, less successful students tended to list the steps of a process or made generic references to the media characteristics without relating that knowledge to the appearance of the work they were discussing. In a significant number of cases, students chose two works which used the same media or had wrongly attributed the media employed. There was in some cases a considerable amount of digression focusing on iconographic analysis, historical/social context and/or patronage.

Question 2 Form and style

Analyse the formal features of **two** sculptures which are stylistically different.

This was a very popular question with a wide range of examples used, spanning the time period of the specification. Most commonly selected were Gormley's Angel of the North, Boccioni's Unique forms of continuity in space, The Kiss by Rodin and Brancusi and David by Michelangelo and Donatello. Many students dealt with their chosen examples as two 'stand alone' sections of analysis; listing valid formal features for each but without effectively considering the stylistic differences. Responses from Band 5 and above acknowledged the contrast between distinctive 'signature' elements and also understood the significance of the materials when analysing the stylistic qualities inherent in each sculpture. However, students who chose two examples that used the same medium were sometimes unable to make strong cases for stylistic difference.

Question 3 Form and Function

Discuss the formal aspects of **two** buildings, each of which fulfills a different function.

This question was generally well answered with the most frequent examples being the Parthenon, Colosseum, Pantheon, Falling Water and the Villa Savoye. The most successful responses maintained a focus on the relationship between the formal features and the function of the building throughout. In some cases, the discussion was unevenly developed with students having full and thorough knowledge of one example but struggling to sustain the second. There were instances of poor sourcing where both buildings fulfilled the same function or where students had not made a case to differentiate their choices, such as two domestic buildings where there may have been more than one function - as in the Palazzo Medici which functioned as both home and business place. The formal aspects of examples were not always discussed.

Question 4 Historical and social contexts

Select **two** works of art, each by a different artist, and comment on how each artist has responded to the time in which they lived.

The vast majority of students choosing this question selected their examples from a few works - namely Guernica, The Raft of the Medusa, Liberty Leading the People, Marat at his Last Breath and The Third of May, 1808. The quality of responses varied considerably and covered the complete range of marks. The more able students demonstrated a breadth of contextual background specifically relevant to the artist's life and times with a high level of detail. However, often historical context was either not developed or was poorly understood. Some students took a narrow art historical approach focusing on stylistic or technical developments which was limiting. Others drifted into a general and vague analysis lacking factual accuracy.

Question 5 Patronage

How are the motives of the patron(s) reflected in **two** works of art and/or architecture?

Many of the responses to this question were excellent. A wide range of examples were cited and many students were knowledgeable on the role of the patron and their motives. This was evident in centres specialising in the Renaissance. Examples included Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital, Michelozzo's Palazzo Medici and the Orsanmichele guild sculptures by Donatello and Ghiberti. However, a number of students opted for examples where motives were not always known, such as van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait or Botticelli's Venus and Mars which led to speculative responses.

Question 6 Gender, nationality and ethnicity

Show how national identity is evident in the appearance of **two** buildings.

This was the least popular question with a variable standard of responses. A wide range of buildings was used and successful examples included the Colosseum, the Parthenon, the Houses of Parliament and Paxton's Crystal Palace. In the main, the appearance of each building selected was addressed, but some students were unable to establish the link with national identity.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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