



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

History of Art

HART3

(Specification 2250)

Unit 3: Investigation and Interpretation (1)

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2011 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.

HART3

General comments

Overall it was felt that the standard of responses was somewhat higher than last year, although there was still a proportion of students who entered the examination with a range of examples that they were determined to incorporate into their answers whether or not they responded to the demands of the question. In extreme cases, it was impossible to reconcile the subject of the answer with any of the questions in the particular section of the examination paper. A proportion of students had also memorised whole essays and often these rarely corresponded to the demands of the questions. Some students wrote three discrete sections on their chosen examples without an introduction, conclusion or any connecting sections. Even a very short introduction can be very useful in clarifying a candidate's ideas about the discussion or argument to be followed or in defining the terms of reference by which the question is to be approached. Often, a sense of chronology was weak or absent.

This year there were more instances of students failing to identify works of art clearly. Titles such as Portrait of a Man/Woman, Madonna/Mother and Child, Nude, Landscape with....., or even Untitled (for some modern works), when accompanied by extremely vague descriptions, caused great problems of identification for examiners. While this was not such an issue with architectural examples, there were nevertheless some buildings inaccurately named or given the wrong locations and then further obscured by imprecise descriptions and discussion. Examiners take great pains and spend considerable amounts of time to track down examples, but this year some works simply defied recognition. If examples cannot be verified, they cannot be given full credit and marks are inevitably sacrificed. Students are therefore urged to take great care over the identification of their chosen examples.

All examiners agreed that handwriting has become worse, at times to the point of total illegibility. Examiners go to great lengths to decipher writing but if they are unable to read responses, they cannot award marks. Spelling and grammar have also deteriorated and too often even the names of artists and architects and titles of works were spelled incorrectly. At A2 such an expectation is not unreasonable. The apostrophe was used very infrequently, the American form of 'centre' often occurred and far too often 'altar' was given as 'alter'. The use of specialist terminology for the architectural questions was often lacking or used inaccurately.

In many cases it was clear that students had seen the particular work being discussed and their answers benefitted from the insights and understanding that first-hand experience brings. Although it is increasingly difficult to take students out of class, the benefits of such visits are often very apparent to examiners.

Topic 1 *Art and Architecture in Fifteenth-Century Europe*

Question 1

Analyse **three** fifteenth-century sculptures of the human figure, discussing the relationship between form and meaning in each.

There were many excellent and full responses to this question. The most cited examples were Donatello's David and Mary Magdalen, Pollaiuolo's Hercules and Antaeus, Michelangelo's Bacchus and Pietà, and Verrocchio's Colleoni. A few students paid more attention to minute description of the examples at the expense of a discussion of the relationship between form and meaning. For Donatello's David students too often waxed lyrical on the sexuality and effeminacy of the figure without giving much thought to how it could symbolise a political or family message. A few students unwisely used portrait busts as examples.

Question 2

Analyse the use of the Gothic **and/or** Renaissance style in **three** fifteenth-century buildings.

This was a popular question and most students chose Renaissance examples from Italy, including the Foundling Hospital, the Palazzo Medici, the Old Sacristy, the Pazzi Chapel, and San Andrea, Mantua. For the Gothic the most cited examples were the Ca d'Oro, the House of Jacques Coeur and King's College Chapel, Cambridge. These appeared to be known in slightly less detail than their Italian counterparts, but usually provided a sound discussion on the Gothic style. Some analyses were over reliant on description and did not consistently identify the Gothic or Renaissance architectural characteristics.

Question 3

Fifteenth-century religious pictures often included donors. Examine **three** appropriate examples and comment on the purpose and meaning of the inclusion of the donors in each.

Although not very popular, examiners reported numerous very full and detailed responses that combined detailed examinations of appropriate examples with accurate commentaries on why donors chose to be depicted within holy scenes. Examples came from both Northern Europe and Italy and included Campin's Mérode Altarpiece, van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece and the Madonna of Chancellor Rolin as well as Masaccio's Trinity, Ghirlandaio's Sassetti Chapel, Gentile da Fabriano's Strozzi Altarpiece and Botticelli's Adoration of the Magi. In discussions of Masaccio's Trinity fresco students rarely identified that the donors excluded themselves from the 'holy space' and were kneeling rather than standing. There were a few answers that presented examples that did not include donor portraits but instead discussed at length the donor's intentions when commissioning an altarpiece to be viewed by the public. The Tribute Money was frequently used, giving long accounts of Felice Brancacci's connections with the Pope and papal policies. Such examples did not satisfy the requirements of the question.

Question 4

Analyse and discuss **three** secular paintings (excluding portraits) produced in the fifteenth century. Select your examples from the work of **at least two** painters.

There were some truly excellent responses to this question. A highly developed understanding of the function of the chosen secular works and of the operation of patronage often formed the basis for a successful essay. Botticelli's mythologies frequently formed one or two examples and Mantegna's work for the Gonzaga and Isabella d'Este were also discussed. Uccello's San Romano scenes were often discussed, but a surprisingly large number of students were unable to make meaningful distinctions between the content and action of the three separate panels.

Topic 2 *Art and Architecture in Seventeenth-Century Europe*

Question 5

Analyse and discuss **three** mythological paintings **and/or** sculptures from the seventeenth century.

There were some good answers to this popular question and most students were able to give a sound descriptive analysis of their three examples. However, the discussion of the mythological subject matter was often very brief and at times inaccurate with figures identified inaccurately. Examples by Bernini were most popular - Pluto and Persephone and Apollo and Daphne and in paintings, works by Poussin and Rubens were most frequently used. Some students incorrectly cited religious examples. The function of mythological works of art was rarely considered.

Question 6

Analyse how the relationship between man and nature is depicted in **three** seventeenth-century landscape paintings. Select your examples from the work of **at least two** painters.

This was a popular question and most students chose appropriate examples by Poussin, Claude, Ruisdael, Hobbema, Rubens and occasionally other Dutch painters. Some townscapes were selected but these did not provide students with much scope to address the relationship between man and nature. Labelling of examples for this question was particularly poor, place names were incorrectly spelt and misattributions led to difficulties in identifying the examples being discussed.

Question 7

Discuss **three** religious paintings **and/or** religious sculptures from this period, examining how patronage affected the appearance of each.

Many students wrote thoughtful essays about how both individual and corporate patrons influenced the appearance of religious paintings and sculptures, using such examples as Bernini's Cornaro Chapel, Caravaggio's Contarelli and Cerasi Chapels and guild and monastic patronage in Northern Europe and Spain. A significant minority simply cited 'the catholic church' as patrons, which allowed little room for the development of a detailed and precise discussion.

Question 8

Analyse **three** seventeenth-century churches and explain how each building communicates religious faith and purpose.

This question was the least popular of this topic and was generally not answered as well as the others. Only a few students were able to give an accurate analysis of their examples, most of which were by Bernini or Borromini. Defining distinctive features of these churches was often lacking in the weaker answers, but most students were able to make some comment relating to religious faith and purpose. Outside Italy, the Westerkerk Church in Amsterdam was used but at times inaccurately placed in Antwerp. English examples were usually by Wren, although very few students mentioned them as 'auditoriums' and related the architecture to the Protestant focus on the pulpit rather than the altar.

Topic 3 *Art and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Europe*

Question 9

Analyse **three** nineteenth-century paintings of leisure **and/or** entertainment and discuss how the style used in each painting conveys the subject matter. Select your examples from the work of **at least two** painters.

Scenes from post-Haussmannisation Paris were frequently used and examples by Renoir, Manet, Monet, Seurat and Toulouse-Lautrec were often cited. At times the definition of leisure and entertainment was stretched to its very limit and beyond. Some students simply assumed that selecting any scene that was not directly associated to work or labour absolved them of any further need to discuss how their selections related to leisure or entertainment. Students often neglected to address the 'style' component of the question and simply described the content of their examples.

Question 10

Analyse **three** nineteenth-century painted **and/or** sculpted portraits, discussing how character and identity are conveyed in each. Select your examples from the work of **at least two** artists.

There were some excellent answers that focused on portraits of Napoleon by David, Ingres and Canova and on the portraiture of van Gogh, Manet, Millais and Cassatt. While considerations of Rodin's Balzac were often successful in discussions of character and identity, the Burghers of Calais, as a memorial rather than a portrait group, was not. Disturbingly, there were still some students who did not know what a portrait was. At worst, students decreed that a portrait was any image containing a human presence from any period of time and taken from either reality or literature. Wholly inappropriate examples that were presumably intended for use in prepared answers on Realism and Victorian narrative painting were unwisely co-opted to serve as portraits - Millet's Gleaners and Holman Hunt's Awakening Conscience. Some students also interpreted this question as an invitation to write an essay about the role of women in Victorian society and rarely used portraits as examples.

Question 11

Discuss the political content **and/or** meaning of **three** nineteenth-century paintings. Select your examples from the work of **at least two** painters.

Works such as David's Napoleon crossing the Great St Bernard, Goya's Third of May, 1808, Géricault's Raft of the Medusa, and Delacroix's Liberty leading the People and Manet's Execution of Maximilian were most often written about. While many students had a sound grasp of the political events, there were some frequent historical errors, such as that the Raft of the Medusa depicted Napoleonic settlers and the assertion that the 1830 July Revolution led to the establishment of a republic in France. While a broad interpretation of 'political' was allowed - both with a capital and a small 'p', some examples were extraordinarily fanciful - Rosetti's The Girlhood of Mary. Isolated students wrote about works by Thomas Eakins. Since he was American and working in America, these works were outside the specification.

Question 12

Compare and contrast the design and construction of **either two** nineteenth-century churches **or two** nineteenth-century museums **and/or** galleries.

For churches, almost all examples came from the Gothic Revival in England; especially Butterfield's All Saints, Margaret St and Pugin's St Giles, Cheadle. The most common museums and galleries were The Natural History Museum and the Oxford Museum. While the Crystal Palace was accepted as a gallery since it displayed artefacts, no such allowance could be made for the Eiffel Tower. Only a minority of students gave detailed attention to the 'compare and contrast' instruction.

Topic 4 *Art and Architecture in Europe and the United States of America between 1946 and 2000*

Question 13

Analyse and interpret **three** abstract **and/or** non-figurative paintings produced during this period. Select your examples from the work of **at least two** artists.

The work of Abstract Expressionist painters was most frequently chosen to answer this question. Students were well informed about the gestural 'action' painting of Pollock and the colour field paintings of Rothko. The abstracted figurative works of de Kooning were also discussed, although some students placed too much emphasis on de Kooning's treatment of the female figure. Interpretations of the work of the Abstract Expressionists were mostly concerned with the expressive quality of paint application and the selection of colour schemes as indicative of emotional states. Other examples cited came from Yves Klein and Damien Hirst.

Question 14

Examine and discuss **three** works of art that use ready-made **and/or** found objects.

This was a very popular question and many students were very knowledgeable about how

artists such as Andre, Hirst and Emin incorporated or used ready-made and found objects. Discussions included investigations of the autobiographical impulse behind the selection of objects, the stimulation of spectator experience by means of installations and questions about artistic skill and of what constitutes 'art'.

Question 15

Analyse and interpret **three** artworks concerned with female experience, each made by a different female artist or artists during this period.

This was a very popular question and the most cited examples were Chicago's Dinner Party, Sherman's Untitled Film Stills, Emin's Everyone I have ever slept with 1963 -1995 and Bed, Martha Rosler's Semiotics of the Kitchen and works by Jenny Saville, Yoko Ono and Mona Hatoum. Almost every response demonstrated a greater or lesser awareness of various aspects of female experience, often widening the discussion to gender differences and inequalities.

Question 16

Discuss the characteristics of Post-Modern architecture through an analysis of **three** buildings.

This question was not attempted by many students. While students correctly noted that Post-Modernism was a reaction to the purism and anonymity of the International Style, often the examples used did not support these general observations. Many examples of Hi-Tech architecture were cited, where the Post-Modern characteristics were somewhat limited. Some answers used Brutalist examples or cited works constructed after 2000. The most stimulating answers were about buildings such as Moore's Piazza d'Italia, New Orleans, Bofil's Spaces of Abraxas and the Portland Public Services Building by Graves.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available at www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion