



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2012**

History of Art

HART4

(Specification 2250)

Unit 4: Investigation and Interpretation (2)

Report on the Examination

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HART4

General

There were some truly excellent responses that were a delight to read. The range of student knowledge and engagement with individual objects and buildings was sometimes breathtaking and considerable scholarship, advanced understanding and independent thought was in evidence.

At the other end of the scale, the trend for students to produce entirely rehearsed essays continued. While some pre-learnt material can have a role to play in examinations, it is a dangerous tactic to gamble on a particular question appearing. In many cases, examiners noted that the essay they were marking was an answer to a somewhat different question than that posed.

In constructing their responses, a number of students simply wrote three discrete and unconnected paragraphs on their selected examples. This is to be discouraged since it offers little opportunity to engage directly with the particular demands of the question. The writing of an introduction is often the most effective method to clarify thoughts and ideas and to assist in ensuring relevant material is delivered. The order in which students discussed examples often seemed arbitrary and no sense of chronology or of any other organisational principle was present.

Some students assumed that because their examples were relevant, that they had no further need to justify or discuss how and why these examples related to the question and proceeded to give wholly descriptive responses.

Architecture questions continued to elicit widely variable responses. While the very best were accurate, detailed and wholly addressed the demands of the question, there seemed to be more students who were unfamiliar with architectural terminology and of what an architectural analysis of a building might consist of. Published mark schemes provide a basic template:

- Style;
- Plan, elevation and composition;
- Architectural elements and features, including decoration/ornament;
- Materials and structure;
- Scale;
- Location/site;
- Circumstances of the commission.

Of course, most questions have additional requirements beyond basic analysis and so issues such as the relationship between style/form and function could be profitably studied.

This year there were more instances than ever before of students using the same example in both responses. A warning against this appears on the front cover of the question paper and teachers are urged to alert their students to this requirement. Examiners also encountered increased instances of students answering three questions and also of students answering questions on one topic with examples from another topic which is not acceptable. Teachers should ensure that all students are completely familiar with the requirements of the question paper.

Instances of illegible handwriting were even more common this year and examiners had to go to great lengths to attempt to decipher it. Grammar, spelling and expression continued to

deteriorate. The possessive apostrophe was used by fewer than half of students and the American spelling of 'centre' was insidiously pervasive.

As noted in previous reports, it was often very clear when students had experienced, at first hand, the particular work being discussed. Although visits are often difficult to negotiate, they do bring undoubted educational benefits, especially for the three-dimensional and spatial qualities of sculpture and architecture.

TOPIC 1 ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THIRTEENTH- AND FOURTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

1. Analyse **three** examples of religious sculpture from the thirteenth century **and/or** fourteenth century and discuss the purpose of each.

Nicola Pisano's Adoration of the Magi, the portals of Notre Dame de Paris and the cathedrals of Rheims, Strasbourg and Burgos were frequently analysed. Although many students wrote fully about the specific purpose of their examples, a few simply attributed vague practical, devotional or didactic motives to their choices.

2. Analyse **three** religious buildings of the thirteenth century **and/or** fourteenth century and discuss the relationship between style and function of each.

The Cathedrals of Chartres, Amiens, Rheims, Notre Dame de Paris, and Salisbury were most frequently discussed. The Gothic style in all its 13th and 14th century manifestations was most usually considered. Unfortunately, some students gave wholly descriptive answers and gave little or no consideration to the relationship between style and function

3. How did painters of this period convey religious narratives? Discuss with reference to **three** paintings.

Scenes from Giotto's Arena Chapel, predella from Duccio's Maestà and Simone Martini's Sant' Ansano Annunciation were often chosen. Although almost all students could identify three relevant examples, in some cases the responses were mostly descriptive and did not consider narrative methods and strategies. A lack of biblical knowledge and understanding sometimes compromised students' responses.

4. Discuss how patronage affected the appearance of **three** works of art **and/or** architecture during this period.

This was a very popular question and for the most part it was well done. Frequently cited examples included the Wilton Diptych, the Arena Chapel, the Palazzo Pubblico and its decorations in Siena, Simone Martini's St Louis Altarpiece and Claus Sluter's sculptures on the portal of the Chartreuse de Champmol. Occasionally, patronage was only mentioned in passing and little attention was paid to how it affected appearance.

TOPIC 2 ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

5. Discuss the High Renaissance characteristics of **three** works of art, each by a different artist. You may choose your examples from painting **and/or** sculpture.

This was a very popular question and, on the whole, examiners saw many excellent and comprehensive responses. The more successful students gave some definition of the High Renaissance in an introductory paragraph and then considered how the sixteenth-century

renaissance differed from that of the fifteenth century. Some students immediately launched into descriptions of three examples and references to High Renaissance characteristics were implicit rather than explicit. Almost every student chose Michelangelo's David as one of their examples and Leonardo's Mona Lisa was also popular. There were also many discussions of scenes from Raphael's Vatican Stanze. Venetian examples such as Titian's Bacchus and Ariadne were also considered. Regrettably, a few students wrote essays wholly about Mannerism and others included architectural examples when the question specified painting and/or sculpture.

6. Analyse **three** sixteenth-century religious paintings and discuss the purpose of each.

This was by far the most popular question in this topic. Examples included Raphael's Sistine Madonna and Transfiguration, Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece and Titian's Assumption and Pesaro Family Altarpiece. The purposes of examples, such as aids to devotion, didactic narratives, or as familial commemorations, were often very well discussed. A few students treated this as a 'Madonna and Child' question and although this could be a valid approach, more often than not such answers were more descriptive than analytical and focussed on identifying differences, neglecting consideration of 'purpose'.

7. Discuss how power and authority are conveyed in **three** sixteenth-century portraits of rulers **and/or** religious figures.

The most popular religious examples were papal portraits by Raphael and Titian, although portraits of both Martin Luther and Erasmus were also discussed. For rulers, Titian's Charles V at Muhlberg and Holbein's Henry VIII were most often discussed. Considerations of power and authority largely concerned pose, expression, setting, clothing and accessories, scale and the relationship between the viewer and the sitter. As the question only required 'portraits' and did not stipulate a particular art form, a few students used Cellini's sculpted portrait of Cosimo I. Examples such as the Mona Lisa could not be accepted. A number of students incorrectly used biblical figures or saints.

8. Analyse **three** sixteenth-century buildings and discuss the relationship between the form and function of each.

Fewer students attempted this question. Bramante's Tempietto was widely discussed and most students understood that its function was symbolic and commemorative rather than liturgical. Giulio Romano's Palazzo del Te was also popular, although some students supposed that it was a conventional urban palace rather than a suburban building dedicated to pleasure and entertainment. Other examples included Sansovino's Zecca (Mint) and Marciana Library, Vignola and della Porta's Il Gesù, Palladio's Redentore, San Giorgio Maggiore and Villa Rotonda and Smythson's Hardwick Hall. Not every student considered the relationship between form and function and some demonstrated a very weak grasp of architectural terminology.

TOPIC 3 ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

9. Discuss the relationship between form and function in **three** eighteenth-century commemorative sculptures **and/or** monuments.

This was a fairly popular question and examples included Slodtz's Tomb of Lanquet de Gergy in St Sulpice, Pajou's Monument to the Count de Buffon in the Natural History Museum, Paris, Roubiliac's Tomb of Sir Joseph and Lady Elizabeth Nightingale in Westminster Abbey and Wilton's Monument to General James Wolfe, also in Westminster Abbey - incorrectly called a tomb by many students. Wolfe is actually buried at

St Alfege, Greenwich. Although examples were often known in some detail, the functional aspects of commemorative sculptures and monuments, such as mourning, memory, consolation and celebration were not always linked to the visual imagery that was employed.

10. Analyse and interpret **three** eighteenth-century works of art depicting mythological subjects. You may choose your examples from painting **and/or** sculpture.

Almost all students understood what a mythological subject was, although there were a few isolated examples of Fragonard's The Swing being used. Numerous examples by Canova were discussed - Apollo crowning himself, Theseus and the Minotaur and Cupid and Psyche. Boucher's Hercules and Omphale was also very popular and students seemed to relish discussing this highly erotic and explicit image of carnal desire. Many students also wrote about Watteau's Pilgrimage to Cythera and Vien's Cupid Sellers, which were both accepted as valid examples since the titles of both immediately linked the subject with mythology. The interpretative aspect of the question was not always fully explored - eg Canova's Theseus and the Minotaur was rarely considered in terms of the victory of reason over passion and intelligence over brute force.

11. Discuss how character and identity are conveyed in **three** eighteenth-century portraits of two or more figures.

Examples included Hogarth's Graham Children, Gainsborough's Mr and Mrs Andrews, Reynolds' Montgomery Sisters and David's Monsieur and Madame Lavoisier. Character and identity were often considered through considerations of differences in pose, clothing, age and gender. Unfortunately, some students wrote about single figures or chose genre scenes or modern morality subjects such as Wright of Derby's Experiment with an Air-pump or Hogarth's Marriage à la Mode.

12. Analyse **three** eighteenth-century domestic buildings and discuss the relationship between the style and function of each.

Not many students attempted this question, but the identification of appropriate domestic buildings presented few problems for those who did. There were isolated instances of churches being discussed. Examples were mostly drawn from Blenheim Palace, Chiswick House, Kedleston Hall and Castle Howard. The late Baroque, Palladianism and Neo-Classicism were successfully identified as the styles employed and were frequently linked to the grandeur, monumentality and cultural and social status of the examples.

TOPIC 4 ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BETWEEN 1900 AND 1945

13. Examine and interpret **three** paintings that are concerned with modern urban life.

This was a very popular question and a wide range of examples was used, especially Futurist works such as Boccioni's The City Rises and The Street enters the House and Balla's Street Light. Kirchner's Berlin Street Scene and Mondrian's Broadway Boogie Woogie were also widely discussed. A number of students also wrote about modern urban alienation and isolation in Edward Hopper's works. At times, students seemed to treat this as a Cubist or Fauvist question and no obvious connection with 'modern urban life' was evident, especially when conventional or traditional depictions of still-lives or nudes were chosen.

14. Discuss the subject matter of, **and** the use of materials in, **three** sculptures produced during this period.

There were a number of excellent responses to this question where students were in full command of information concerning the subject matter and materials of their chosen examples. The diversity of examples reflected new attitudes to sculpture and to the sculptural object in the first half of the twentieth century.

Boccioni's Unique Forms of Continuity in Space was the single most popular example, closely followed by Picasso's Glass of Absinthe. Brancusi's Kiss and Giacometti's Woman with Her Throat Cut were also frequently discussed. For some students this question became their 'Ready Made' answer. This often elicited very fine responses, but occasionally such an approach focused far more on materials than on subject matter. Notable 'Ready Made' examples were Duchamp's 'Fountain', Hausmann's Mechanical Head (Spirit of Our Age) and Oppenheim's Object: Fur Breakfast.

15. Analyse and interpret **three** works of art that were influenced by 'primitive' **and/or** non-European art. You may choose your examples from painting **and/or** sculpture.

Students responding to this question produced many fine answers and they offered persuasive explanations of why and how 'primitive' and non-European art forms inspired artists in the first half of the twentieth century. Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.) formed the cornerstone of the majority of discussions and almost every student could distinguish between the African and the Iberian influences displayed. Matisse's Joie de Vivre and Blue Nude (Souvenir of Biskra) were also widely discussed. At times, Fauve and Cubist works were considered without any close analysis of exactly which elements had been influenced by 'primitive' and/or non-European art forms. In sculpture, works by Brancusi and Moore were most often discussed.

16. What do you understand by the term 'modernism' when applied to the architecture of this period? Discuss with reference to **three** buildings.

The question invited students to discuss their understanding of the term 'modernism' and a wide range of examples was discussed and accepted. Some students associated 'modernism' with functionalism, simplification of form and rejection of ornament of the International Style. Others took a broader approach and discussed the 'modernism' of materials and building types. Popular buildings were the Austrian Postal Savings Bank, the Villa Savoye, the Barcelona Pavilion, the Bauhaus at Dessau and Falling Water.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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