

Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2019 AP® Art History Free-Response Questions

Number of Students ScoredNumber of Readers	24,476 158			
Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At	
	5	2,905	11.9	
	4	6,025	24.6	
	3	6,515	26.6	
	2	6,036	24.7	
	1	2,995	12.2	
Global Mean	2.99			

The following comments on the 2019 free-response questions for AP® Art History were written by the Chief Reader, Heather Madar, Professor of Art History, Humboldt State University. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Question #1 Task: Comparative Analysis Topic: Ancient Mediterranean

Max. Points: 8 Mean Score: 4.35

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The question asked students to compare the statue of Augustus of Prima Porta, a work from Ancient Mediterranean (3500 b.c.e.), with another work that also depicts a ruler. The students were provided with the image of Augustus of Prima Porta. The question listed two options from the required course content that students could choose from or they could select another relevant work. The intent of the question was to have students demonstrate an ability to compare two works of art from different content areas in the curriculum, focusing primarily on how the two works communicate concepts of political power and authority within their respective cultures. Students had to use visual and contextual evidence from both works to support the explanation.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Many responses were able to describe aspects of the iconography of Augustus of Prima Porta and another image
 of a ruler. This reflected a general familiarity with the works of art, indicating that students know these works
 and are capable of addressing them to some degree.
- Many responses were able to link aspects of the works to ways in which they communicated political power and authority, demonstrating a facility with a major theme found in works of art across the curriculum.
- Many responses chose to go off the list of selected works provided. In many cases these responses were highly successful and reflected strong selections that were relevant and worked well with the question. In some cases, however, responses selected works that were not on the list that were less relevant, for example works that depicted an individual with elevated status who was not a ruler.

- Although the term "iconography" was defined in the question, the responses did not always describe the imagery
 and symbols with specificity. This suggested a lack of familiarity with the term "iconography," which is a
 fundamental concept in art history and part of the course skills and practices.
- Responses often showed difficulty explaining relatable similarities and differences between the two works and often struggled to tie similarities and differences to specific visual evidence.
- Responses did not always address specifically how the two works were linked to power in similar or different
 ways and instead just described how the two works were similar or different visually.
- Responses in some cases neglected to discuss the works themselves, instead focusing on broader points of historical context or discussions of the original settings of the works.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"Below Augustus is a small angel, indicating a sense of divinity."	"With Eros at his knees implicating his strong connection to Venus and thus divine authority, the statue elevates its power further by the iconography present on his breastplate"

- "One big concept that separates the works is that the Palette of King Narmer is made of a stone block and is a 2 dimensional piece of art, whereas Augustus of Prima Porta is a 3 dimensional figure."
- "Another similarity is the artists' use of marble. Marble, as a result of the Greeks, has the connotation of being used for ideal people."
- "Each was also created to demonstrate their reach across their empire."
- "In addition, the two figures are depicted with symbols of peace and unification as Washington is shown with a close-knit bundle of thirteen rods representative of the thirteen colonies while Augustus of Prima Porta's breastplate displays the Pax Romana and the return of the standard."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Teachers should consider having students regularly practice comparing and contrasting works from across content areas.
- Teachers might also consider modeling responses that not only provide relatable similarities and differences, but that also tie these to specific visual and/or contextual evidence.

- The long essay on comparison includes a number of different skills as part of the process. Teachers will find
 resources to support their instruction of these skills on AP Central, addressed in the classroom resources links. A
 particularly useful resource is the "AP Art History Teacher's Guide" which has helpful information about
 addressing the larger concepts in the comparison question.
- SmartHistory resources on Khan Academy also provide information about each of the 250 works in the AP Art
 History Image set that will allow teachers to explore the larger, thematic connections between various works with
 their students.
- FRQs from prior exam administrations are posted after the exam each year on AP Central and include helpful
 resources such as example student responses, scores for those responses, and detailed scoring guidelines that
 clarify how each point may be earned.
- A collection of new, never-before-published practice questions and accompanying scoring guidelines are now
 available on AP Classroom to provide teachers with additional resources for preparing their students for success
 on this question.

Question #2 Task: Visual/Contextual Topic: Later Europe and

Analysis Americas

Max. Points: 6 Mean Score: 3.52

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question asked students to analyze a work from Later Europe and Americas (1750-1980 C.E.) in terms of how artists communicate a social or political statement through their depictions of the natural world. The question listed three options from the required course content from which students could choose, or they could select another relevant work from Later Europe and Americas. No image was provided with this question. The intent of the question was to have students demonstrate an ability to identify visual form or content and explain how the artist used form or content to reinforce a social or political statement made in the work. The students then were asked to provide specific visual and contextual evidence to support the explanation.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Many responses demonstrated familiarity with these works and their meaning and showed an awareness of the general statement the artists were making through their depictions of the natural world.
- Responses were generally able to identify the chosen work, allowing the response to earn the first task point.
- Many responses were able to describe at least one element of form or content from the chosen work.

- Many responses did not show a full understanding of what constitutes a depiction of the natural world. Some
 responses chose to discuss works that were not relevant, as the artist either manipulated, rather than depicted,
 the natural world (eg. Spiral Jetty). In other instances, responses chose works where the artist made a
 social/political statement through a work that did not center around the natural world (eg. Oath of the Horatii).
- Responses often used generalizations when discussing the works and did not show a full understanding of how
 the artist used form or content to communicate a social or political statement.
- Responses often made a general statement about the context of the work without using specific contextual
 information to explain why the artist depicted the natural world in this way to persuade the viewer of the social or
 political statement.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"In Slave Ship, Turner was making a statement about slavery."	"Turner is commenting on the atrocities of slavery in his work, <i>Slave Ship</i> . He depicts the natural world as turbulent and violent through rough brushwork and brilliant color, dominated by reds and purples. The typhoon threatens to capsize the slavers' ship in retribution for the terrible cruelty inflicted upon the dying slaves who have been thrown overboard, still shackled, to be attacked by sea creatures."

 "Thomas Cole was a member of the Hudson River School." • "Thomas Cole's The Oxbow can be viewed as a statement by the artist in support of the idea of Manifest Destiny or westward expansion in America. The wild, untamed wilderness on the left side of the composition representing the vast, untainted natural beauty of the west, beckoning settlers forth and the right side representing the peaceful, orderly, already domesticated lands of the east."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Teachers should try to provide exercises and assessments designed to improve visual recall so that students can accurately describe works of art that are not shown.
- Students should be instructed to read the prompt carefully and break it down to ensure that they address all required aspects.
- Teachers should try to provide students with exercises and assessments designed to provide students with
 opportunities to select works of art that are relevant to a given prompt.
- Teachers should provide students with opportunities to identify and clearly articulate artistic intention and to support their statements with both visual and contextual evidence.

- The long essay about visual and contextual analysis is a sophisticated question asking students to apply their knowledge in an evidence-based essay response. Teachers will find resources to support their instruction of these skills on AP Central, addressed in the classroom resources links.
- The Online Teacher Community for the AP Art History course offers instructional suggestions and resources to support teachers in developing their students' skills for using visual and contextual evidence to support a claim in response to a given prompt. This community of teachers has examples of real lessons and resources for the community.
- SmartHistory resources on Khan Academy also provide information about each of the 250 works in the AP Art History Image set that will allow teachers to explore the larger, thematic connections between various works with their students.
- FRQs from prior exam administrations are posted after the exam each year on AP Central and include helpful resources such as example student responses, scores for those responses, and detailed scoring guidelines that clarify how each point may be earned.
- A collection of new, never-before-published practice questions and accompanying scoring guidelines are now
 available on AP Classroom to provide teachers with additional resources for preparing their students for success
 on this question.
- A new resource available to teachers on AP Classroom is a question bank that includes a repository of exam questions from prior exam administrations, as well as brand-new questions created just for the current iteration of the exam. The question bank can be used as an instructional tool to continue to develop students' skills of visual and contextual analysis and their ability to craft an evidence-based argument in response to a prompt.

Question #3 Task: Formal Analysis Topic: Early Europe and Colonial

America

Max. Points: 5 Mean Score: 3.84

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question asked students to describe visual features of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, a work from Early Europe and Colonial Americas (200-1750 C.E.). Specifically, the question asked students to describe how depth was created, how the figures were represented, and how Christ was emphasized in the painting. Students then needed to explain how one visual characteristic in the painting is typical of the Renaissance era. The intent of the question was to give students the opportunity to make accurate observations using appropriate art historical language, justify observations with explanation and connect visual features to the broader context.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Students generally did well on the first four tasks, demonstrating a good understanding of visual concepts such
 as linear perspective, modeling, and the use of light and composition. These concepts are central to the skill of
 visual analysis, a fundamental skill for art history.
- Responses also demonstrated a clear familiarity with the work of Leonardo da Vinci and his interests as an artist reflected in the *Last Supper*, for example his interest in human psychology and study of the human form.

- While many responses demonstrated an understanding of the concept of linear perspective, some struggled with using accurate art historical terms. For example, many students did not use the terms "linear" (or "one point"), "perspective," "vanishing point," "horizon line," or "orthogonal."
- Many responses simply relisted the visual characteristics in the painting without offering any explanation of how these are typical of the Renaissance.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"All of these characteristics embody the Renaissance era as they depict religious figures through art."	"Linear perspective was a technique that was invented during the Italian Renaissance. Leonardo's use of this technique is characteristic of Renaissance art in its creation of a rational, believable 3 dimensional space."
"Leonardo was able to create a sense of depth by setting the table and the people in a dark room."	"Leonardo created a sense of depth through the use of one point perspective. The vanishing point appears at Christ's head. One point perspective creates the illusion of things being farther away through their size."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Make sure that students understand the essential differences between the ability to "describe" and "to
 explain." "Describe" requires careful observation. "Explain" requires providing support or justification for that
 observation. As a general rule, make sure that students justify all observations or claims with specific
 evidence.
- Visual analysis questions require a solid understanding of formal analysis. In this case, the formal elements of space and light were needed to complete the response. Additionally, accurate knowledge about the formal principles of balance, emphasis, proportion, and scale helped students complete the tasks. Teachers should be sure to teach formal analysis skills throughout the curriculum.
- Instruct students to answer the question tasks in the order that they are asked. That is the best way to ensure that each task point will be credited.

- The Online Teacher Community for the AP Art History course offers instructional suggestions, resources, and
 activities to support teachers in developing their students' ability to move from description to explanation and
 analysis.
- SmartHistory resources on Khan Academy also provide visual information and analysis about each of the works in the AP Art History image set.
- FRQs from prior exam administrations are posted after the exam each year on AP Central and include helpful
 resources such as example student responses, scores for those responses, and detailed scoring guidelines that
 clarify how each point may be earned.
- A collection of new, never-before-published practice questions and accompanying scoring guidelines are now
 available on AP Classroom to provide teachers with additional resources for preparing their students for success
 in visual analysis tasks. These resources provide a scaffolded approach to the skill of visual analysis.
- A new resource available to teachers on AP Classroom is a question bank that includes a repository of exam questions from prior exam administrations, as well as brand-new questions created just for the current iteration of the exam. The question bank can be used as an instructional tool to continue to develop students' skills of visual and contextual analysis and their ability to craft an evidence-based argument in response to a prompt.

Question #4 Task: Contextual Analysis Topic: South, East and Southeast Asia

Max. Points: 5 Mean Score: 2.05

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The question asked students to describe the original historical or religious context of the David Vases, a work from South, East and Southeast Asia (300 B.C.E. – 1980 C.E.) and then explain how context influenced both the materials and imagery. Students then needed to use contextual evidence to explain how the David Vases exemplified cross-cultural interaction. The intent of the question was to have students situate a work, its material, and imagery within its specific historical, religious, and cultural context.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Students were often able to discuss the material used to create the David Vases, with many responses correctly labeling the material as porcelain or identifying the blue as derived from cobalt.
- Students were often able to accurately describe one contextual element of the works, often mentioning the vases' creation during the Yuan dynasty, their dedication to a Daoist temple, or their specific placement on an altar.

- While many students accurately identified the material as porcelain, responses that only said "clay" or "ceramic" did not have sufficient specificity to earn the task point. Often responses would identify the material as jade, most likely from an earlier work from China in the required course content, the Jade Cong. Incorrect responses would often label the material of the work as "marble" or "glass."
- Many students showed a lack of familiarity with the cultural context of the David vases and thus provided incorrect information. Some responses, for example, stated that the David vases were made for a funereal purpose and/or to hold remains of an important deceased individual.
- The point about how the David vases demonstrated cross-cultural interaction was particularly challenging for students.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"The David Vases were as grave markers."	"The David vases were originally placed in a Daoist temple in China."
"The vases show Greco-Roman influence since the shape of the vases are that of a Grecian urn."	"These vases represent cross-cultural interaction because they could not have been created without the trade relationship between Iran and China. Iran was known for its high-quality cobalt, while China was known for its high-quality porcelain."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Teachers should reinforce the specific historical, religious, and cultural context of works of art as they are being taught, and encourage students to understand the specific, rather than just the general, context of these works. Students should practice applying contextual information as evidence.
- Teachers could offer students more opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of contextual evidence throughout the course, and stress how visual, material, and cross-cultural characteristics in a work of art can inform context.
- Teachers also have access online to previous exams, of which each includes a contextual question, which would help better prepare students for questions like these.

- The short essay question on contextual analysis asks students to apply their knowledge of the work itself and its
 context in order to be successful, which is a challenging task. Teachers will find resources to support their
 instruction of contextual analysis on AP Central addressed in the classroom resources links.
- The Online Teacher Community for the AP Art History course offers instructional suggestions and resources to support teachers in developing their students' skills of contextual analysis as a way of better understanding a work of art. Teachers have provided examples of their own lessons, activity suggestions and resources to the community to help with success on how to effectively teach students to understand and apply contextual analysis.
- SmartHistory resources on Khan Academy also provide information about each of the 250 works in the AP Art
 History Image set that will allow teachers to explore the larger, thematic connections between various works with
 their students.
- FRQs from prior exam administrations are posted after the exam each year on AP Central and include helpful
 resources such as example student responses, scores for those responses, and detailed scoring guidelines that
 clarify how each point may be earned.
- A collection of new, never-before-published practice questions and accompanying scoring guidelines are now
 available on AP Classroom to provide teachers with additional resources for preparing their students for success
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- A new resource available to teachers on AP Classroom is a question bank that includes a repository of exam
 questions from prior exam administrations, as well as brand-new questions created just for the current iteration
 of the exam. The question bank can be used as an instructional tool to continue to develop students' skills of
 visual and contextual analysis and their ability to craft an evidence-based argument in response to a prompt.

Question #5 Task: Attribution Topic: Global Contemporary

Max. Points: 5 Mean Score: 2.68

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question asked students to attribute a presumably unknown painting (*Hollywood Africans*, 1983) to the artist who created it (Jean-Michel Basquiat) by comparing relevant visual similarities between the work shown and other work by the same artist. Students were then asked to give at least two examples of specific evidence to explain the commentary that the artist was making on the cultural context in which the artist was working. This is a work from Global Contemporary (1980 C.E. to Present). The intent of the question was to have students apply their knowledge of the form and context of a work that they had studied to a presumably unknown, but similar, work by the same artist.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Most responses were able to provide visual evidence to justify their attribution.
- Many responses showed a good level of knowledge about Basquiat's interest in African American history and
 culture and were able to correctly discuss relevant contextual evidence, such as references to profit crops such
 as "sugar cane" and "tobacco" as references to slavery.
- Many responses showed a good level of knowledge of the issue of stereotyping in film, television, and other media as evidenced by the word "gangsterism" in the painting shown on the exam.

- Many responses misattributed the work. The most common misattributions were to Jacob Laurence, Wilfredo Lam, and Jeff Koons.
- Some responses focused almost wholly on the *Horn Players*, a work by Basquiat from the required course content, despite only being asked to discuss relevant similarities between the work shown and other work by the same artist. Context related to the *Horn Players* specifically (such as specific discussions of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker) tended to cause the students to lose focus on the artwork in front of them and did not necessarily help them discuss the commentary the artist was making on the cultural context in which he was working.
- Few responses discussed the cultural context in which the artist was working in terms of art and the art world in the 1980s. While this was not required to earn this point, it did suggest that students were unfamiliar with developments in the 1980s, such as the rise of graffiti and other art forms traditionally considered "low" in this period.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"This is clearly the work of Jacob Lawrence because it includes the date 1940 and makes reference to the Harlem Renaissance."	"This is clearly the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat."
"The artist was making a commentary on money and value."	"The artist was making a commentary on money and value in the contemporary art world by referencing "Tax Free" and "200

	Yen," as art is a commodity that traverses nations and is commercialized and sold."
"This is similar to the other work because they both have words and colors."	"This is similar to the other work because both contain crossed out words and abstract faces drawn in outline."

Based on your experience at the AP^{\otimes} Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Attribution is a key art historical skill and should be practiced in classrooms. Students should work on attributing
works to particular artists and should be able to articulate the reasons for their selection clearly and through
making specific references to the illustrated work.

- The Online Teacher Community for the AP Art History course offers instructional suggestions, activities, and resources to support teachers in creative ways to practice attribution in their classrooms.
- SmartHistory resources on Khan Academy also provide information about each of the 250 works in the AP Art
 History Image set that will allow teachers to explore the larger, thematic connections between various works with
 their students.
- FRQs from prior exam administrations are posted after the exam each year on AP Central and include helpful
 resources such as example student responses, scores for those responses, and detailed scoring guidelines that
 clarify how each point may be earned.
- A collection of new, never-before-published practice questions and accompanying scoring guidelines are now
 available on AP Classroom to provide teachers with additional resources for preparing their students for success
 on this question.
- A new resource available to teachers on AP Classroom is a question bank that includes a repository of exam
 questions from prior exam administrations, as well as brand-new questions created just for the current iteration
 of the exam. The question bank can be used as an instructional tool to continue to develop students' skills of
 visual and contextual analysis and their ability to craft an evidence-based argument in response to a prompt.

Question #6 Task: Tradition/Change Topic: Africa

Max. Points: 5 Mean Score: 2.58

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question asked students to analyze the Great Mosque of Djenné by accurately describing two materials and/or techniques used in the construction of the mosque and then use specific evidence to explain how the mosque aligns with the global conventions of mosque architecture. Students were then asked to explain how and why the Great Mosque of Djenné deviates from those same global conventions. This is a work from Africa (1100-1980 C.E.). The intent of the question was to give students the opportunity to use visual and contextual analysis skills to explain how a work demonstrates both continuity and change within an artistic tradition.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Most responses were able to describe at least one material or technique that was used in the construction of the mosque.
- Many responses were able to use specific evidence to explain how architectural features of the mosque demonstrate continuity and change with global mosque architecture. This demonstrated a good overall understanding of common features of mosque architecture.

- In many responses students did not address *why* the architectural features of the Great Mosque of Djenné demonstrated change from global conventions of mosque architecture, perhaps thinking they had addressed this question when discussing *how* the features demonstrated change. The question clearly indicated that students needed to address both how and why.
- Responses demonstrated misunderstanding of why architectural features of the Great Mosque of Djenné
 demonstrate changes from the global conventions of mosque architecture and did not use specific contextual
 evidence to explain the architectural specificities of the mosque. Some students also exhibited a biased
 understanding by stating that the materials used in the construction of the Great Mosque of Djenné were due to a
 lack of "better" materials.
- Responses demonstrated misunderstanding of the presence of minaret towers at the Great Mosque of Djenné,
 offering the lack of minarets at Djenné as an example of how it differs from global conventions of mosque
 architecture, when in fact the structure does incorporate minarets into the façade. Some students seem to think
 that minarets have to be detached structures.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"The mosque does not feature tilework seen on many mosques because tile was not used in Africa."	"Adobe, or mudbrick, is a distinctly African material for mosque architecture. It is used here to insulate the interior of the mosque against the high temperatures of the region and to mirror the domestic architecture that is common to this region."

- "The architectural features of the Great Mosque demonstrate changes from global conventions of mosque architecture as they do not have the expected minarets found in most mosques throughout the world."
- "The raised towers located in the qibla wall of the Great Mosque of Djenne are also visible in other mosques and are similar to the minarets that are characteristic of mosque architecture."

Based on your experience at the AP^{\otimes} Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

 For each work of art and architecture, and particularly those that come from outside the European tradition, teachers should make sure that the works are being taught within the practices and traditions of their specific cultural context and also in light of the broader artistic/architectural traditions to which they are linked.

- The skill of analyzing art historical tradition and change over time is an important one to the discipline of art
 history. Teachers will find resources to support their instruction of these skills on AP Central, addressed in the
 classroom resources links and included as a topic in the "AP Art History Teacher's Guide" among other provided
 resources.
- The Online Teacher Community for the AP Art History course contains an extensive collection of instructional suggestions, activities, and resources to support teachers in developing their students' ability to recognize the significance of tradition and change in analyzing works of art. Teachers have provided examples of their own lessons and resources to the community to help with success on the most challenging aspects of this skill.
- SmartHistory resources on Khan Academy also provide information about each of the 250 works in the AP Art
 History Image set that will allow teachers to explore the larger, thematic connections between various works with
 their students.
- FRQs from prior exam administrations are posted following the exam each year on AP Central and include helpful resources such as example student responses, scores for those responses, and detailed scoring guidelines that clarify how each point may be earned.
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 available on AP Classroom to provide teachers with additional resources for preparing their students for success
 on this question.
- A new resource available to teachers on AP Classroom is a question bank that includes a repository of exam
 questions from prior exam administrations, as well as brand-new questions created just for the current iteration
 of the exam. The question bank can be used as an instructional tool to continue to develop students'
 understanding of the relevance of tradition and change in art historical analysis through strategic use of
 formative assessment resources related to this skill.