
AP[®] Art History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Question 1: Long Essay Comparison

8 points

A. Select and completely identify another work of architecture that served as a center of political power.

1 point

<p>1 point One point for at least two accurate identifiers beyond the titles given in the question prompt.</p>		
<p>Comparison object: Palace of Versailles. Versailles</p> <p>Examples of acceptable identifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architects: Louis Le Vau and Jules Hardouin-Mansart • Culture: French • Date: any date within 50 years of 1669 c.e., second half of the 17th century, reign of Louis XIV, or Baroque • Material: Masonry, stone, wood, iron, glass (mirrors) and gold leaf (architecture); marble and bronze (sculpture); trees, flowers, hedges, and other plants (gardens) 	<p>Comparison object: The temple of Angkor Wat. Hindu, Angkor Dynasty</p> <p>Examples of acceptable identifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture: Cambodia, Hindu, Angkor Dynasty • Date: any date within 100 years from 800–1400 c.e., or 9th–15th century, or Khmer • Material: Stone masonry, sandstone 	<p>Comparison object: Templo Mayor</p> <p>Examples of acceptable identifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture: Mexica, Aztec • Materials: Stone (and stucco) • Date: 1375–1520 c.e., between second half of 14th and first half of early 15th century c.e., or any date within 50 years of creation; also acceptable: Aztec, if used as style (however, may only be counted as identifier of style OR culture, not both)

B. Describe visual characteristics of the plan or layout of both the Forbidden City and your selected work.

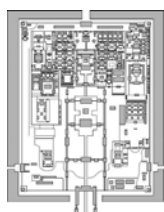
2 points

1 point

Response accurately describes visual characteristics of the plan or layout of the Forbidden City.

1 point

Response accurately describes visual characteristics of the plan or layout of ONE comparison object.



Object shown: Forbidden City

Examples of acceptable descriptions

- The Forbidden City comprises 178 acres.
- Designed to be restricted to outsiders and house the imperial court, the city is surrounded by walls that are 10 meters high and a 52-meter-wide moat.
- An artificial river (“river of the golden waters”) winds through the Forbidden City.
- The Moon Gate at the entrance had five portals; only the emperor could use the center portal.
- The Forbidden City is designed with a central North–South axis.
- The plan included symbols of heaven and good fortune.
- The complex has a roughly symmetrical plan.
- The site had an outer court at the front and inner court at the back with a series of gates, courtyards, and wood buildings with low curved rooflines and gates.
- The Great Hall (Hall of Supreme Harmony), part of the Inner Court, is the largest wooden building in China and contained the emperor’s throne.

Comparison object: Palace of Versailles. Versailles

Examples of acceptable descriptions

- Le Vau placed the town east of the palace using radiating avenues to connect the two areas.
- The park has a tree-lined center area.
- A large and verdant garden using trees and soil from the original woods and imported from surrounding areas was planted along an East–West axis.
- The garden was detailed and vivid with colorful “parterres.”
- Fountains/artificial water features are incorporated into the design and layout of the gardens at Versailles.
- The gardens were placed to make it seem that the sun rose and set in alignment with the palace and the waterway.
- Versailles has 700 rooms, 2,153 windows, and has 67,000 square meters of floor space to house the imperial court.

Comparison object: The temple of Angkor Wat. Hindu, Angkor Dynasty

Examples of acceptable descriptions

- The rectilinear site contained temples and buildings with ceremonial functions surrounded by canals and a moat.
- A mandala design orients the plan of the temple to the sun, moon, and cosmos.
- Angkor Wat has five towers, with the center being the tallest, surrounded by smaller towers, galleries and gates.
- Plan is relatively symmetrical.
- Complex is built along a central axis.
- Plan consists of layers of concentric squares.

Comparison object: Templo Mayor

Examples of acceptable descriptions

- The temple complex was a walled enclosure at the center of four quadrants that defined the city of Tenochtitlan.
- The enclosure housed several temples and buildings.
- The Templo Major was 90 feet tall and rose as a steeply stepped pyramid with paired temples at the pinnacle.
- Two steep staircases lead to the top of each of the twin temples.
- The Coyaxauhqui (Bells-on-her-face) monolith rested below the Huiztilopochtli temple.
- Sculptures of serpent heads/serpent sculptures, and frog sculptures were positioned at the bottom of both temple staircases.
- A chacmool sculpture, a reclining figure with a bowl on his abdomen, was positioned in front of the Tlaloc temple.
- There was a large open court in front of the temple for public gatherings.
- The temples were aligned with the sun, which rose between them on the equinox.

C. Using specific visual evidence from both works, explain at least two similarities in how features of both works of architecture communicated ideals of political power.

2 points

<p>1 point Response accurately uses visual evidence to explain ONE similarity in how features of the Forbidden City and one comparison object communicated ideals of political power.</p> <p>1 point Response accurately uses visual evidence to explain ANOTHER similarity in how features of the Forbidden City and one comparison object communicated ideals of political power.</p>		
<p>Comparison object: Palace of Versailles. Versailles</p> <p>Examples of acceptable explanations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built on a monumental scale, both complexes displayed the respective rulers’ supreme dominion over the environment. • Both rulers used the landscape and positioning of buildings to imbue themselves with supernatural divine power, Louis to the power of the sun and Yongle to the power of heaven. • Both complexes have residences for the royal family and entourage, servants, the military, and government officials, functioning as well-appointed mini-cities that contained residents and were insulated from outside forces. • Both complexes use paths, gardens, and water to connect different areas in the vast space. • Both complexes use state-of-the-art technology to channel water to the space. • Both complexes have expensively decorated throne rooms. • Both complexes serve as exemplars of refinement, taste, artisanship, and luxury for their respective cultures. • Both were built over earlier structures to improve on past accomplishments and to address problems with the old capitals. • Both had spaces for private life, public events, and religious ritual. 	<p>Comparison object: The temple of Angkor Wat. Hindu, Angkor Dynasty</p> <p>Examples of acceptable explanations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both complexes have fortress-like walls or moats to protect the complex from the outside and control who is able to accession the interior. • Both complexes contain buildings and open spaces designed for ritual and ceremonial functions focused on the ruling power. • Both complexes are built along a central axis with roughly symmetrical plans to create an orderly space that reflects the power and control of the ruler. • Both complexes have paths, courtyards, gardens, and water features to connect different areas in the vast space. • Both complexes serve as exemplars of refinement, taste, craftsmanship, and luxury for their respective cultures. • The plan and layout of both compounds were visually based on tenets of religion with the layout reflecting a connection of the ruling power to the universe. • Both complexes have artwork that demonstrates the power of the ruler by symbolically linking the emperor to the gods. • The layout complexes reference the structure of the cosmos in their respective cultures. • The layout of both sites suggests a high level of social hierarchies. • Both sites contain spaces designed to host elaborate state rituals in which the ruler played a central role. 	<p>Comparison object: Templo Mayor</p> <p>Examples of acceptable explanations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both complexes serve as exemplars of refinement, taste, and craftsmanship for their respective cultures. • The plan and layout of both compounds was visually based on tenets of religion, with the layout of each one reflecting a connection to the universe and nature. • Both complexes have artwork that demonstrates the power of the state by symbolically linking the rulers to the gods. • The layout of both sites suggests a high level of social hierarchies existed in both cultures. • Both sites were the symbolic political and religious centers (axis mundi) of their empires. • Both sites had spaces for people to gather and hosted elaborate state rituals in which the ruler played a central role. • Both sites contain buildings associated with the ruling power that were elevated and accessible by levels of stairs in order to reflect social hierarchies. • Both sites used architectural color symbolism to associate supernatural power with the ruler: gold (yellow) for the Forbidden City and blue/red for the Twin Pyramids at the Templo Mayor.

D. Explain one difference in how both works of architecture communicated ideals of political power within their respective cultures. Use specific contextual evidence from both the Forbidden City and your selected work in your explanation. **3 points**

<p>1 point Response accurately explains ONE difference in how the Forbidden City and one comparison object communicated ideals of political power within their respective cultures.</p>		
<p>Comparison object: Palace of Versailles. Versailles</p> <p>Examples of acceptable explanations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forbidden City, built in a dense urban area, had fortress-like walls for protection; Versailles did have a military presence but not a fortress and was created to be expansive and merge into the countryside. • Versailles, designed with the most current trends and artistry of the time, suggested Louis’s power and refined taste. The Forbidden City had a traditional Chinese design theme to suggest solidity and a link to the glorious past. • The layout of the Forbidden City, which includes cosmological references, underscores its role as the center of the empire (the Middle Kingdom), whereas the location of Versailles was not seen as a religious or cosmological center of the kingdom. 	<p>Comparison object: The temple of Angkor Wat. Hindu, Angkor Dynasty</p> <p>Examples of acceptable explanations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vast amounts of water were harnessed and redirected around the rectilinear areas of Angkor Wat, demonstrating the ruler’s ability to control nature, regulate water for agriculture, and use water as a design element. The Forbidden City did not rely on water on a grand scale but did use small areas of water to border gardens. • The buildings in the Forbidden City emphasized width rather than height and lacked the tall towers that dominate Angkor Wat. • Angkor Wat contains high towers that are intended to reference the peaks of Mount Meru (the world mountain), while the Forbidden City mainly communicates ideas of world order through the organization of its horizontal plan. • The Forbidden City contains a residential section for the emperor and his household, while there is no evidence of living quarters at Angkor Wat. • While the Forbidden City contains an audience hall where the emperor presented himself to his subjects and received visitors, Angkor Wat did not contain an audience hall. • Angkor Wat was created as monument to/residence for a specific god, Vishnu, who was closely associated with the Khmer king who commissioned the complex, while the Forbidden City was built as the residence and seat of the Chinese emperor/the seat of Chinese imperial power. 	<p>Comparison object: Templo Mayor</p> <p>Examples of acceptable explanations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The architectural and sculptural program emphasizes the connection between the Aztec gods and rulers in order to reinforce the ruler’s control over the empire; the Forbidden City communicated the power of the ruler through the emperor’s residence there, the symmetry and scale of the buildings and plan, and the restricted access. • The Templo Mayor had public gathering spaces for witnessing state rituals, while the spaces intended for religious rituals staged inside the Forbidden City were limited to the elite. • The emperor was personally present in the Forbidden City, which contained imperial residences, while the presence of the rulers at the Templo Mayor was symbolically implied. • While the Forbidden City contained an audience hall where the emperor would present himself to his subjects and receive visitors, the Templo Mayor did not contain an audience hall. • The ritual sacrifices at the Templo Mayor communicated military and political power of the rulers; the Forbidden City’s plan communicated power by emphasizing social hierarchies.

<p>(D continued)</p> <p>1 point One point for accurately using specific contextual evidence from the Forbidden City in the explanation.</p> <p>1 point One point for accurately using specific contextual evidence from one comparison object in the explanation.</p>		
<p>Object shown: Forbidden City</p> <p>Examples of acceptable specific contextual evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forbidden City was built in its current form by Emperor Yongle of the Ming Dynasty and finished in 1420. • The Ming dynasty was a time of growth and rejuvenation. • The plan and layout of the compound were based on tenets of Confucianism and reflected traditional Chinese social hierarchies and associated design practices. • By moving the capital to Beijing, Yongle distanced himself from political rivals. • The layout of the Forbidden City, which emphasizes the North–South axis, draws a symbolic connection between the City as the Pole Star and emphasizes its role as center of the world (axis mundi). • The site was designed to restrict access for common people and to enclose royalty, courtiers, and their staff. • The plan intentionally connected Emperor Yongle and the Ming Dynasty with symbols of heaven and good fortune, which emphasized the emperor’s role as Son of Heaven. 		
<p>Comparison object: Palace of Versailles. Versailles</p> <p>Examples of acceptable specific contextual evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louis Le Vau, architect; André Le Nôtre, landscape designer; and Charles Le Brun, interior design, were responsible for the fashionable Baroque artistry of Versailles. • Formerly a hunting lodge, the massive natural grounds were reshaped and reorganized by Louis to establish a lavish palace community. • By moving to Versailles and away from the Paris, Louis reorganized his government and had total control over his palace in the countryside. • Twenty thousand people—Louis XIV, his friends, family, courtiers, servants and soldiers—lived at Versailles. 	<p>Comparison object: The temple of Angkor Wat. Hindu, Angkor Dynasty</p> <p>Examples of acceptable specific contextual evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 400 acres, Angkor Wat is possibly the largest religious monument in the world. • “Angkor Wat” means “temple city” in Khmer. • Emperor Suryavarman II employed up to 300,000 workers to build Angkor Wat. • Expresses Hindu religious concepts and refers to Hindu epic stories. • Originally made for the Hindu god Vishnu, Angkor Wat became a Buddhist temple during the 15th century. • May have served as a funerary monument to the emperor. • Contains 1200 meters of carved bas reliefs that depict the emperor with gods, suggesting the godlike status of the emperor (devaraja). • Most of the Khmer kings built Temple Mountains to assert their legitimacy. 	<p>Comparison object: Templo Mayor</p> <p>Examples of acceptable specific contextual evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Templo Mayor was part of the sacred precinct of Tenochtitlan; the central religious site of the Aztec empire and considered to be the center of the world (axis mundi). • One of the twin temples honors Huiztilpochtli (god of war and the sun) and the other Tlaloc (god of rain and agriculture). • The location of Coyolxauhqui (Bells-on-her-face) monolith/stone at the base of the Huiztilpochtli temple associated the pyramid with a Mexica creation myth and a sacred mountain; the sacrifices happening at the temple functioned as reenactments of this myth. • The iconography and location of the Coyolxauhqui stone drew a symbolic connection between the Aztec rulers, and the Aztec patron god Huiztilpochtli, who defeated the goddess Coyolxauhqui; the enemies defeated by the Aztecs (and whose warriors were sacrificed as war captives) were symbolically aligned with Coyolxauhqui.

- The chacmool sculpture in front of the Tlaloc temple was used as part of a ritual sacrifice related to rainfall, while the frogs were heralds of the rain associated with the god Tlaloc.
- The steep staircases that emphasize the form of the stepped pyramid were used for sacrifices. Victims climbed the stairs and were sacrificed, after which their bodies were rolled back down the stairs and were dismembered.
- Most sacrificial victims were war captives.
- The dead bodies landed on the Coyolxauhqui stone, which shows the defeat of the goddess and symbolizes the feet of the Aztecs' enemies. This symbolically represented the power of the Aztec rulers.
- The stepped pyramid represents the sacred mountain that is associated with an important aspect of the Aztec foundation myth.

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4

Q5

Q6



Sample 1A.1

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The Parthenon constructed by the Ancient Greeks around 400 BCE out of marble was a work of architecture that served as a center of political power. The Parthenon (and the Acropolis surrounding it) had the layout of an open space surrounding multiple buildings of political and religious importance. The Parthenon itself was built on top of a hill overlooking the city of Athens. The Forbidden City contains many tall structures and is completely surrounded by walls. Both works communicated power visually through architectural height disparities. The buildings of the Forbidden City tower over buildings in the surrounding area, while the Parthenon is also built on a higher elevation than the rest of Athens. One aspect of the layout that represents a similarity and difference between the works is how the works manipulate space for ease of access. Both works do this but they do it in opposite ways for the opposite goal. The Acropolis's open layout* increases access to get inside the building, while the walled layout of the Forbidden City restricts access. The layouts of both buildings exemplify power by controlling space to manipulate ease of access.

* (combined with the open space created between the columns of the Parthenon)

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4

Q5

Q6



Sample 1A.2

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The difference in communicating the ideals of power comes in how the difference in ease of access exemplifies the regime of each culture. The democratic culture of Athens encourages participation of all citizens, necessitating an open environment/layout. The rigid power structure of a more authoritarian regime in China made ^{more} restriction better to communicate ideals of power.

Q 1



Q 2



Q 3



Q 4



Q 5



Q 6

 Sample 1B

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The Palace of Versailles was made in the 1800s in France. It contains gold, glass, and mirrors. The palace of Versailles has a room of just mirrors along one wall, so the garden is still visible if your back is to it. The King's room is directly in the center of the building, so he can see everyone who comes and goes, and his city as well. The Forbidden City is closed with walls, and while the ruler's living space is still centered, it's farther away from the entrance. Both works have their people, or workers, surrounding them, this not only gives them protection, but also allows them to keep an eye on what they are doing. By being centered it gives the ruler a sense of superiority. While both are centered the Forbidden ~~palace~~ ^{City} is closed off while The Palace of Versailles has a more open concept. This open concept, literally, made the king the center of everything. The walls around the Forbidden City allow for his privacy, while still being at the center and being open for the workers inside.

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4

Q5

Q6

 Sample 1C.1

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The work shown above is the Forbidden City along with the ~~plan~~ ^{plan} and an overview. This building served as a center of political power in China. In the building the ruler would make every important decision for the country. The architecture connects to the ideal of political power by having a big building with many rooms and hallway and even ~~secret~~ secret paths and tunnels ~~was~~ just to make decisions.

Another work that serves as a center of political power is the temple of Angkor Wat. ~~Angkor Wat~~ The building was made for kings when they are ~~reigning~~ ruling. Because they were king and had power they had whatever they want made.

Both buildings are great examples of political power. They were both made for one person but is huge and has many different rooms and paths. Big enough to fit thousands of people. ~~One~~ One difference that they have is the Forbidden City plan is more complex and confusing than ~~the~~ the temple of Angkor Wat was made earlier than the Forbidden City so they had the tools and materials to move it

Q 1

Q 2

Q 3

Q 4

Q 5

Q 6



Sample 1C.2

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

more complex.

Question 1

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

Responses were supposed to demonstrate a number of skills related to art historical thinking, including visual analysis, contextual analysis, comparative analysis, interpretation, and argumentation. To be awarded all eight score points, the response needed to successfully accomplish the following tasks:

- Select and identify a work of architecture whose political context was similar to the Forbidden City.
- Describe visual characteristics of both works.
- Explain and interpret how two separate visual similarities communicated a political context for both sites.
- Explain and argue one way that contextual differences between the sites or the people who made them related to the communication of differing aspects of political power.

Sample: 1A

Score: 7

Task A: Selects and completely identifies another work of architecture that served as a center of political power. (1 point)

The Parthenon is correctly identified in the response as having been built “by the Ancient Greeks around 400 BCE out of marble.” Note that the response includes three accurate identifiers, although any two of the three would have been sufficient to earn the point.

Task B: Describes visual characteristics of the plan or layout of the Forbidden City and the selected work. (2 points)

The response earned the first point by accurately describing a visual characteristic of the Forbidden City, stating that it “contains many tall structures and is completely surrounded by walls.”

The response earned the second point for the accurate description of a visual characteristic of the Parthenon: “The Parthenon (and the Acropolis surrounding it) had the layout of an open space surrounding multiple buildings of political and religious importance.”

Task C: Using specific visual evidence from both works, explains at least two similarities in how features of both works of architecture communicated ideals of political power. (1 point)

The response accurately uses visual evidence to describe one similarity in the way the sites communicated power: “Both works communicated power visually through architectural height disparities.” It explains further how both works used height through construction or elevation to achieve this.

The response does not attempt to describe another similarity in the way the sites communicated power and therefore did not earn the second point for this task.

Task D: Explain one difference in how both works of architecture communicated ideals of political power within their respective cultures. Use specific contextual evidence from both the Forbidden City and your selected work in your explanation. (3 points)

The response accurately explains that one difference in how the structures communicated ideals of political

Question 1 (continued)

power is how they were “controlling space to manipulate ease of access,” making it harder or easier for people to enter each work.

The response accurately uses specific contextual evidence to explain that the Forbidden City communicated ideals of power by limiting access to the Forbidden City, stating that “the rigid power structure of a more authoritarian regime in China made more restriction better to communicate ideals of power.”

The response accurately uses specific contextual evidence to explain that the Parthenon, and the Acropolis as a whole, communicated ideals of power that suited the Athenians’ more open culture, stating, “the democratic culture of Athens encourages participation of all citizens, necessitating an open environment/layout.”

Sample: 1B

Score: 4

Task A: Selects and completely identifies another work of architecture that served as a center of political power. (1 point)

The response earned this point by identifying Versailles correctly with the location as France and materials “gold, glass, and mirrors.” Because two accurate identifiers are provided, the incorrect date (“the 1800’s”) was not penalized.

Task B: Describes visual characteristics of the plan or layout of the Forbidden City and the selected work. (2 points)

The response accurately describes a visual characteristic of the Forbidden City as “closed with walls.”

The response accurately describes a visual characteristic of Versailles as having “a room of just mirrors along one wall, so the garden is still visible if your back is to it,” thus it earned the second point.

Task C: Using specific visual evidence from both works, explains at least two similarities in how features of both works of architecture communicated ideals of political power. (1 point)

The response accurately uses visual evidence to describe one similarity in how the works communicated ideals of political power by noting the ruler’s central position in each location, which “not only gives them protection, but also allows them to keep an eye on” what their people or workers are doing.

The response does not include an attempt to describe another similarity in how the works communicated ideals of political power.

Task D: Explains one difference in how both works of architecture communicated ideals of political power within their respective cultures. Uses specific contextual evidence from both the Forbidden City and the selected work in the explanation. (0 points)

Although the response attempts to explain a difference in how the structures communicated ideals of political power, the explanation (“While both are centered the Forbidden City is closed off while The Palace of Versailles has a more open” concept”) lacks specificity and is too general to have earned this point.

Question 1 (continued)

The response does not use specific contextual evidence to explain how the Forbidden City communicated ideals of power.

The response does not use specific contextual evidence to explain how Versailles communicated ideals of power.

Sample: 1C

Score: 1

Task A: Selects and completely identifies another work of architecture that served as a center of political power. (0 points)

The response attempts to identify Angkor Wat as a comparable site of political power but does not provide accurate identifiers, simply describing it as a temple that was “made for kings.”

Task B: Describes visual characteristics of the plan or layout of the Forbidden City and the selected work. (1 point)

The response earned this point by accurately describing a visual characteristic of the Forbidden City, stating that it contained “a big building with many room and hallway.”

The response does not attempt to describe a visual characteristic of Angkor Wat.

Task C: Using specific visual evidence from both works, explains at least two similarities in how features of both works of architecture communicated ideals of political power. (0 points)

The response attempts to use visual evidence to describe one similarity in how the works communicated ideals of political power. However, the attempt restates the size of the complexes: “They were both made for one person but is huge and has many different room and paths.”

The response does not include an attempt to use visual evidence to describe a second similarity in how the works communicated ideals of political power.

Task D: Explain one difference in how both works of architecture communicated ideals of political power within their respective cultures. Use specific contextual evidence from both the Forbidden City and your selected work in your explanation. (0 points)

The response includes an attempt to explain that one difference in how the structures communicated ideals of political power is that “the Forbidden City plan is more complex and confusing then the temple of Angkor Wat.” This is inaccurate, and the point was not earned.

The response includes an attempt to use specific contextual evidence to explain how the Forbidden City communicated ideals of power. However, the response, which references tools and materials, is inaccurate.

The response does not attempt to use specific contextual evidence to explain how Angkor Wat communicated ideals of power.