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AP<sup>®</sup>

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# AP<sup>®</sup> Art History

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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#### **Free-Response Question 3**

- Scoring Guidelines**
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**Question 3: Visual Analysis****5 points**

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**(A)** Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of *The Conversion of Saint Paul*. **1 point**

**Examples of acceptable responses include the following:**

- The painting contains three figures, two men and a horse.
- A young man lies on the ground with his arms outstretched.
- The young man is depicted in extreme foreshortening and almost seems to project into the viewer's space.
- The composition is dominated by strong diagonal lines, such as the diagonal line of the young man's body.
- The horse fills most of the picture frame and lifts its leg in reaction to the man on the ground.
- An older man, mostly obscured by the horse, leans forward holding its reins.
- The figures completely fill the painting and create a shallow, enclosed space beyond which nothing is visible.
- Strong light illuminates the scene from the right side of painting, creating a strong contrast between light and shadow (tenebrism) and sharply focusing attention on the horse's flanks and the gesture of the man on the ground.
- The palette is mainly neutral earth tones, except for the deep red cloak of the man on the ground and bright white zigzag created by the horse's markings and raised hoof.
- The artist paints the scene in a realistic style, carefully rendering visual details such as the figure's clothing, the skin and mane of the horse, and wrinkles and veins of the older figure.

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**(B)** Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of *The Conversion of Saint Paul*. **1 point**

**Examples of acceptable responses include the following:**

- One from list in A.

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**(C)** Accurately uses specific visual evidence to explain ONE way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting. **1 point**

**Examples of acceptable responses include the following:**

- Strong, directional light highlights the figures and their actions while the rest of the scene appears in deep shadows.
  - The position of the fallen figure breaks the picture plane into the viewer's space.
  - The placement of the fallen figure in the foreground forces the viewer's attention to his actions and gestures.
  - The diagonal lines in the composition create a sense of motion and emphasize the tension of the moment.
  - The figure on the ground raises his arms diagonally in a dramatic gesture.
  - The sweeping, dramatic gestures of the man on the ground contrast with the relative calm of the horse and the older, standing man.
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**(D)** Accurately uses specific visual evidence to explain ANOTHER way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting. **1 point**

**Examples of acceptable responses include the following:**

- One from list in C.

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**(E)** Accurately uses visual evidence to explain how *The Conversion of Saint Paul* demonstrates change from artistic traditions of the Renaissance. **1 point**

**Examples of acceptable responses include the following:**

- Instead of the even distribution of light typical of Renaissance painting, the Baroque work shown uses a broader range of light and darkness, or tenebrism, as seen in the dramatic contrast between the blinding light and the deep black shadows of the scene.
- Baroque/Counter-Reformation artists often chose subjects depicting specific moments of spiritual enlightenment as a means of promoting the Catholic faith, while religious art of the Renaissance was less explicitly focused on subjects of conversion and spiritual awakening.
- The intense illumination of subject matter or areas of the composition in Baroque art often communicated spiritual enlightenment or a divine presence in the scene, whereas Renaissance artists typically used light more naturalistically and less for symbolic meaning.
- Renaissance artists generally created calm, stable compositions through balanced arrangements of objects in space, whereas the work shown uses strong diagonal compositional lines and extreme foreshortening to project figures into the viewer's space and increase the dynamism of a scene.
- Renaissance figures typically display calm, reserved demeanors associated with the Greek Classical tradition while a common feature in Baroque/Counter-Reformation art is the emotional intensity of the scene, exemplified here by the fallen figure's bodily movements and gestures, in order to inspire faith in its viewers.
- The figures are presented in an unidealized way, representative of some Baroque artists' movement away from the idealized portrayal of religious scenes and figures common during the Renaissance.
- The directness of the portrayal of figures and events was typical of the artist's attempts to connect with viewers of the work and demonstrated a change from the often detached/distanced demeanors of Renaissance subjects.

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**Total for question 3** **5 points**

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Q1



Q2



Q3



Q4



Q5



Q6



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

The conversion of Saint Paul depicts lots of movement through the ~~outstretched~~ outstretched arms of the man on the ground as well as the horse's lifted foot. It also depicts very idealized forms. The painting shows the man on ground with a very idealized body. It also shows the horse to be very idealized with a fit and robust form. The image doesn't contain any elements in the ~~background~~ background or any linear perspective.

Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting through the facial expressions of the men. The man besides the horse has his eyebrows furrowed and visible wrinkles on his forehead which show his concern for the man on the ground. The man on the ground lays with his knees bent and his arms ~~outstretched~~ outstretched with an evenly calm expression on his face. The facial expressions of both men invokes a sense of mystery, causing the viewer to want to learn more, invoking a sense of drama in the painting. Another way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting is through chiaroscuro. Caravaggio creates a strong juxtaposition between light and

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Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

**Important:** Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4

Q5

Q6



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

shadow within his painting. Light seems to be shining through from the top/mid right side of the image illuminating the face of both men and part of the horse, while the rest of the painting is much darker with the use of shadow. This extreme contrast between the light and shadow bring focus to certain figures in the painting ~~are~~ thus creating a sense of drama.

The conversion of Saint Paul demonstrates change from the artistic traditions of the Renaissance because it depicts more Christian imagery as opposed to the Greek and Roman <sup>and classical</sup> imagery depicted in the Renaissance. The conversion of Saint Paul also invokes a stronger sense of drama as opposed to the more stable, balanced, and orderly art from the Renaissance. Renaissance art featured more balance, stability, and symmetry which contrasts with the baroque themes of drama and movement that is seen the bend in the limbs and extreme light and shadow of the conversion of Saint Paul.

The conversion of Saint Paul also features a very warm color palette with reds and brown shades.

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**Important:** Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Q1



Q2



Q3



Q4



Q5



Q6



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

The Conversion of Saint Paul is a very realistic looking painting, with the forehead wrinkles on the old man, veins protruding, and texture of the fabric. Along with this great detail, the figures are also anatomically correct. The muscles in the two ~~men~~ men and the horse are well pronounced, and the figures are all proportioned realistically. This serious painting appears dark, with mostly ~~neutral~~ neutral colors. ~~The~~ Caravaggio establishes this sense of drama through the use of tenebroso and chiaroscuro. The majority of the background of the painting is extremely dark, almost entirely black, adding to the serious tone conveyed in the painting. The contrast between the darkness of the background and lightness in the foreground creates a sense of drama, with the intense light and rays illuminating these men in the dark. This also contributes to that religious idea of an ethereal, holy being casting its light on the people.

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Q 1

Q 2

Q 3

Q 4

Q 5

Q 6



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

The conversion of saint paul, uses oil on canvas. ~~by~~ by caravaggio

The painting shows saint matthew being converted into a saint. The work has a sense of drama created by the use of dark colors.

The background is nearly pitch black so the eye is drawn to the bright white horse and bright orange armor. The positions of the figures in the work also add to this drama, the figure on the ground with his hands up while the horse steps over creates a dramatic effect.

This work demonstrates change from artistic traditions of the renaissance by its portrayal of matthew. he looks much weaker than people portrayed in earlier renaissance works.

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Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

### Question 3

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

#### Overview

Responses were supposed to demonstrate primarily the art historical thinking skill of visual analysis, applied to an unknown work of art. To be awarded all five score points, the response needed to successfully accomplish the following tasks:

- Describe visual characteristics of the selected artwork, Caravaggio’s *Conversion of St. Paul*.
- Use visual evidence to explain the way the artwork’s visual elements convey a sense of drama.
- Explain the way *The Conversion of St. Paul* differs from the artistic traditions of the Renaissance, the artistic style that preceded it.

#### Sample: 3A

Score: 5

#### **Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of *The Conversion of St. Paul*. (1 point)**

The response earned this point by describing how the work “depicts lots of movement through the outstretched arms of the man on the ground as well as the horse’s lifted foot.”

#### **Task B: Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of the work. (1 point)**

The response earned this point by mentioning the “very idealized forms” and describing how the work “shows the man on ground with a very idealized body. It also shows the horse to be very idealized with a fit and robust form.”

The response would also have earned the point for describing how the work “doesn’t contain any elements in the background or any linear perspective.”

#### **Task C: The response accurately uses specific visual evidence to explain ONE way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting. (1 point)**

The response earned the point by explaining how “Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting through the facial expressions of the men.” The response provides visual evidence by giving details of the expressions and explaining how they convey concern and drama. The response describes the “eyebrows furrowed and visible wrinkles on his forehead which show his concern” and the “eerily calm expression” of the man on the ground, explaining that “the facial expressions of both men invokes a sense of mystery, causing the viewer to want to learn more, invoking a sense of drama.”

#### **Task D: The response accurately uses specific visual evidence to explain ANOTHER way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting. (1 point)**

The response earned the point by explaining that “another way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting is through chiaroscuro.” The response provides visual evidence of the use of light and dark and explains that “this extreme contrast between the light and shadow bring focus to certain figures in the painting thus creating a sense of drama.”



### Question 3 (continued)

**Task E: The response accurately uses visual evidence to explain how *The Conversion of Saint Paul* demonstrates change from artistic traditions of the Renaissance. (1 point)**

The response earned the point by explaining how the work “invokes a stronger sense of drama as opposed to the more stable, balanced, and orderly art from the Renaissance,” stating further that “Renaissance art featured more balance, stability, and symmetry which contrasted with the baroque themes of drama and movement.”

The response also attempts to draw a contrast between Christian imagery in the Baroque as opposed to classical imagery in the Renaissance. As written, this is not accurate, as Renaissance art often featured Christian imagery and Baroque art also used classical imagery. This statement alone would not have earned the point.

**Sample: 3B**

**Score: 3**

**Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of *The Conversion of St. Paul*. (1 point)**

The response earned the point by stating that this “is a very realistic looking painting” and describing the “forehead wrinkles on the old man, veins protruding and texture of the fabric.”

**Task B: Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of *The Conversion of St. Paul*. (1 point)**

The response earned the point by stating that “the figures are anatomically correct” and describing the muscles in the men and the horse as “well pronounced, and the figures are all proportioned realistically.”

The response would also have earned the point for describing how the “painting appears dark, with mostly neutral colors.”

**Task C: The response accurately uses specific visual evidence to explain ONE way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting. (1 point)**

The response earned the point by explaining how “Caravaggio establishes this sense of drama through the use of tenebroso and chiraiscuro” and provides visual evidence by describing how the “contrast between the darkness of the background and lightness in the foreground creates a sense of drama with the intense light and rays illuminating these men in the dark.”

**Task D: The response accurately uses specific visual evidence to explain ANOTHER way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting. (0 points)**

The response does not attempt to use visual evidence to explain another way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama so did not earn this point.

**Task E: The response accurately uses visual evidence to explain how *The Conversion of Saint Paul* demonstrates change from artistic traditions of the Renaissance. (0 points)**

The response does not attempt to use visual evidence to explain how *The Conversion of Saint Paul* demonstrates change from artistic traditions of the Renaissance so did not earn this point.

### Question 3 (continued)

**Sample: 3C**

**Score: 2**

**Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of *The Conversion of St. Paul*. (0 points)**

The response did not earn this point as it does not accurately describe a visual characteristic of the work. The response states, “The painting shows St. Matthew being converted into a saint,” but this statement repeats information from the work’s title and is not a description of a visual characteristic.

**Task B: Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of *The Conversion of St. Paul*. (0 points)**

The response did not earn this point as it does not include an attempt at this point.

**Task C: The response accurately uses specific visual evidence to explain ONE way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting. (1 point)**

The response earned the point by explaining that the “work has a sense of drama created by the use of dark colors” and describing how the “background is nearly pitch black so the eye is drawn to the bright white horse and bright orange armor.”

**Task D: The response accurately uses specific visual evidence to explain ANOTHER way in which Caravaggio creates a sense of drama in the painting. (1 point)**

The response earned the point for explaining how the “positions of the figures in the work also add to this drama.” Visual evidence is provided by the description of the posture of the figure on the ground and the horse as “the figure on the ground with his hands up while the horse steps over creates a dramatic effect.”

**Task E: The response accurately uses visual evidence to explain how *The Conversion of Saint Paul* demonstrates change from artistic traditions of the Renaissance. (0 points)**

The response did not earn the point. The response attempts this point by commenting that “Matthew ... looks much weaker than people portrayed in earlier renaissance works,” but this is insufficient to earn the point because the description of the figure is inaccurate in its characterization of the body as “weaker,” and the larger point is not a valid contrast with Renaissance art.