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AP[®]

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AP[®] Art History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Question 4: Contextual Analysis**5 points**

(A) Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the Vietnam Memorial.

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

- The memorial consists of two elongated black granite walls.
- The walls are joined at an oblique angle to each other.
- The walls measure around 500 feet in total.
- Names of veterans killed or lost in the war are etched into the walls.
- Names are printed in horizontal rows of evenly spaced names in regular typeface.
- Compared to the human scale of visitors, the wall appears smaller in scale at the ends to emphasize the increased number of names at the height of the war.
- At its outer edges, the memorial is at ground level, however in the middle the walls are sunken into the ground.
- The granite is highly polished to create a reflective surface.
- A pathway that follows the base of the wall allows visitors to access the memorial.

(B) Accurately describes ONE aspect of the physical placement of the Vietnam Memorial.

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

- The memorial is on the National Mall (in Constitution Gardens).
 - The memorial is near many important national museums, monuments, and buildings in Washington, D.C.
 - The memorial is not visible from some approaches to the site because it is sunken into the ground.
 - The memorial is cut into the ground itself and includes a walkway for visitors to access and view the inscribed surfaces.
 - The Lincoln Memorial and reflecting pool are adjacent to the Vietnam Memorial, which is aligned to point to the Lincoln Memorial.
 - The other arm of the memorial is aligned to point to the Washington Monument, visible in the distance from the site.
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- (C)** Accurately uses ONE example of visual OR contextual evidence, to explain how Maya Lin’s design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses include the following:

Visual

- The memorial contains a chronological list in order of death of all soldiers killed in the course of the Vietnam War, to illustrate the length of the war as well as its massive death toll.
- For Lin, the names form the substance of the monument and function abstractly, as a reminder of the human cost of war, and literally, as a place for families to come to memorialize their lost members.
- The polished surface of the granite walls allows visitors to see themselves reflected with the names, implicating them in the war either through personal connections or as citizens of the United States.
- Lin created a pathway allowing the viewer to descend below the ground line and back to the surface level, which can be interpreted as a journey to a spiritual realm, or death and a reemergence or renewal.
- Lin rejected the use of allegory and the heroism of traditional war monuments and chose Minimalist abstract forms to create an intimate public space for families to remember their loved ones.

Contextual

- Maya Lin, the memorial’s architect, described the linear, sunken form of the memorial as a scar or wound of initial violence and pain that would eventually heal. “The wound heals but is not forgotten.”
- The alignment of the monument to other memorials on the National Mall was meant to link the experience of this war to the nation’s past.
- Lin entered the design contest as part of her final project for an undergraduate class on monuments and memorials at Yale. This course influenced her choice of a Minimalist aesthetic as she sought to create a place of quiet reflection for survivors on the proposed site.
- Her use of Minimalism was an attempt to create a monument using an apolitical approach that focused on the veterans.

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- (D)** Accurately uses ANOTHER example of visual OR contextual evidence to explain how Maya Lin’s design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses include the following:

- One from list in C.
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- (E)** Accurately uses specific contextual evidence to explain how the memorial was controversial at the time it was created.

1 point

Examples of acceptable responses include the following:

- The black granite was criticized for its associations with mourning and death, atypical of war memorials.
- The lack of heroic or patriotic imagery and other symbolic ornamentation was unusual for war memorials in the United States.
- A naturalistic bronze sculpture depicting three soldiers was later added to the site to address public opposition and appease critics of the memorial's abstract design.
- Detractors interpreted the memorial's position below ground level as a reference to shame or regret regarding the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.
- Maya Lin specifically intended the work to be apolitical and focused on veterans; however, the ambiguity of the abstract design was itself read as a political statement.
- Several early supporters of the commission withdrew their support once they saw the final design and tried to replace Lin's design with an alternative.
- The addition of a naturalistic depiction of three soldiers, facing Lin's wall, was a compromise reached during the ensuing controversy.
- Some people objected to the commission when Lin's identity as a female, Asian American, undergraduate architecture student became known.

Total for question 4 5 points

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.

Some visual characteristics of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial include the use of a dark granite stone for the engraving of thousands of names, and it is accompanied by a stone walkway for viewers. This memorial is situated ~~are~~ directly between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

Multiple elements of the design of the memorial helped Lin to relate her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. Firstly, the memorial is a "V" shaped, and it is cut into the earth. Lin wanted this to convey the idea of a scar, as if the Vietnam War has left a significant scar on the American people. Lin also chose for the surface of the monument to be reflective so that when Americans come to visit, they will ~~see the~~ see the names, but also see themselves, so they can reflect on how the war may have affected them or their loved ones.

This memorial was controversial at the time that it was created because Lin entered an anonymous competition to win the right to build her design, but once it was announced to the public, she experienced much backlash for being an Asian American while creating this monument.

Page 7

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0018508

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.

One visual characteristic of the Vietnam Memorial is how the black surface of the material reflects any visitors.

The Vietnam Memorial is located at the Mall in Washington D.C., and it is placed below ground level, carved into the ground itself.

~~Maya Lin's~~ One way Maya Lin's design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam war on the American people is how the memorial is placed below ground level. This gives off the ~~an~~ impression that the memorial looks like a scar in the ground, which reflects how the Vietnam War scarred the American people with its huge death count and how several Presidents kept the war a secret from the people, resulting in a loss of trust in the government.

The memorial was controversial at the time of its creation because a lot of people, including veterans, wanted a memorial that showcased the bravery of the soldiers, not how many people ~~die~~ died. ~~and~~ A lot of people interpreted the "scar" plan and black color as being ashamed, or disappointed in the people who fought the war. Not to mention that Maya Lin herself was not only a young college student, but a woman and a Chinese-American. A lot of people were offended that someone who was young and "inexperienced" and a woman and someone who "wasn't truly American" was going to have her design installed.

Page 6

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.

A visual characteristic from the Vietnam Veterans memorial is the black stone containing the names of the people and it seems as if it is cutting into the earth. The physical placement was right in between the White House and the Abraham Lincoln memorial. The memorial shows the thoughts of Maya Lin on it. First, where she placed it in between the White House and Lincoln memorial had a significance since she wanted to show there is a connection between the past and the present, and that there is still conflict to this day. She also note it seem as if the Earth was cut by a knife making it seem like a wound from war. This was to show that not only many people in America were wounded, the whole world is currently wounded from all the conflicts and wars. Until those don't stop, the world will continue to be wounded and in pain. This was controversial at the beginning since it was the first war memorial that focused on displaying a political message about the whole world.

Page 7

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0003194



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.

instead of just the soldiers from America

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

Question 4

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 contextual analysis, applied to a work from the required course content. To be awarded all five score points, the response needed to successfully accomplish the following tasks:

- Describe a visual characteristic of Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- Describing the memorial’s siting in relation to nearby monuments or describing its physical placement as at and below ground level were appropriate options.
- Place the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in its historical and political context by explaining how Maya Lin’s design decisions were influenced by the effect of the war on U.S. society and culture.
- Explain how the memorial was controversial during the time in which it was created.

Sample: 4A

Score: 5

Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the Vietnam Memorial. (1 point)

The response earned this point for describing a “dark granite stone for the engraving of thousands of names.” The point could have also been earned by describing that the wall is “accompanied by a stone walkway for viewers.”

Task B: Accurately describes ONE aspect of the physical placement of the Vietnam Memorial. (1 point)

The response earned this point for locating the memorial “between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument on the National Mall.”

Task C: Accurately uses ONE example of visual OR contextual evidence, to explain how Maya Lin’s design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. (1 point)

The response earned this point for accurately connecting the V-shaped design and the cut into the earth to “convey the idea of a scar” that the war left on the American people.

Task D: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of visual OR contextual evidence to explain how Maya Lin’s design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. (1 point)

The response earned this point for accurately explaining that Lin wanted the surface to be reflective so that the viewers could “reflect on how the war may have affected them or their loved ones.”

Task E: Accurately uses specific contextual evidence to explain how the memorial was controversial at the time it was created. (1 point)

The response earned this point for accurately describing the backlash that Maya Lin experienced “for being an Asian-American while creating this monument.”

Question 4 (continued)

Sample: 4B

Score: 4

Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the Vietnam Memorial. (1 point)

The response earned this point for describing “the black surface of the material” which “reflects any visitors.”

Task B: Accurately describes ONE aspect of the physical placement of the Vietnam Memorial. (1 point)

The response earned this point for locating the memorial on the National Mall. The point could also have been earned for describing that the monument is “placed below ground level.”

Task C: Accurately uses ONE example of visual OR contextual evidence, to explain how Maya Lin’s design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. (1 point)

The response earned this point by explaining that the memorial looks like a “scar in the ground” and then connects this to the war’s death count, presidential secrets, and a loss of trust in the government.

Task D: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of visual OR contextual evidence to explain how Maya Lin’s design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. (0 points)

The response does not include an attempt to address this task.

Task E: Accurately uses specific contextual evidence to explain how the memorial was controversial at the time it was created. (1 point)

The response earned this point for the discussion on the lack of heroic or patriotic imagery. The response could also have earned the point for describing the public’s interpretation of “the ‘scar’ plan and black color” as being associated with shame and disappointment with the war. The point could also have been earned when the response describes the public outcry that erupted when a “young and ‘inexperienced’” Chinese-American college student “‘who wasn’t truly American’” won the design contest.

Sample: 4C

Score: 2

Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the Vietnam Memorial. (1 point)

The response earned this point for describing the “black stone containing the names of the people.”

Task B: Accurately describes ONE aspect of the physical placement of the Vietnam Memorial. (0 points)

Although the response attempts to place the monument, it does so incorrectly by placing the memorial “between the White House and the Abraham Lincoln memorial” and failed to earn the point.

Question 4 (continued)

Task C: Accurately uses ONE example of visual OR contextual evidence, to explain how Maya Lin’s design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. (1 point)

The response earned this point for connecting the memorial’s design to a cut in the earth like “a knife making it seem like a wound from war. This was to show that ... many people in America were wounded.”

Task D: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of visual OR contextual evidence to explain how Maya Lin’s design of the memorial relates to her ideas about the effect of the Vietnam War on the American people. (0 points)

Although the response includes an attempt to earn this point by connecting the memorial with the other monuments “creating a connection between the past and the present,” it is not sufficient to earn the point.

Task E: Accurately uses specific contextual evidence to explain how the memorial was controversial at the time it was created. (0 points)

Although the response includes an attempt to earn this point, it inaccurately attempts to describe the memorial as a political message about the whole world instead of just honoring the soldiers from America.