

Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2023 AP® Art History Free-Response Questions

Number of Students Scored	24,624			
 Number of Readers 	125			
 Score Distribution 	Exam Score	N	%At	
	5	3,402	13.82	
	4	5,858	23.79	
	3	6,641	26.97	
	2	5,867	23.83	
	1	2,856	11.60	
Global Mean	3.04			

The following comments on the 2023 free-response questions for AP[®] Art History were written by the Chief Reader, Dr. Joe Lucchesi, Professor of Art History, St. Mary's College of Maryland. 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.

Task: Long Essay—Comparison

Topic: Representations of Religious Figures or Deities

Max Score: 8 Mean Score: 2.32

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

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 another work of art that, like the Reliquary of Sainte-Foy, serves as a representation of a holy figure or deity from a different religion.
- Describe the subject matter of both works.
- Use specific visual evidence from each work to explain at least two similarities and/or differences in how the representation of the holy figure or deity expresses the beliefs of each religion.
- Make a claim regarding a similarity or difference in how the Reliquary of Sainte-Foy and the
 comparison object are used in the practices of the religions with which they are associated, and
 support that claim by using appropriate and specific contextual evidence.

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?

Overall, the responses addressed the course content in the following ways:

- Most responses were able to successfully select and identify another work of art that serves as a representation of a holy figure or deity from a different religion. Most responses provided the required identifiers of the work's title, culture, and materials, and responses more rarely included appropriate dates. Some of the most frequent off-list choices were the Great Buddha from Todai-ji and the Reliquary Guardian Figure (byeri). Less frequent but successful responses included works such as the Vairocana Buddha of Longmen Caves, the Lanzón Stele, the Power Figure (Nkisi Nkondi), Tutankhamun's Inner Coffin, and the Apollo of Veii.
- Most responses were able to describe the subject matter of the Reliquary of Sainte-Foy, most often
 connecting specific visual elements of the work to the narrative associated with the martyrdom of
 Sainte-Foy.
- Most works used specific contextual information regarding the practice of pilgrimage and the veneration of relics to explain religious practices associated with The Reliquary of Sainte-Foy.
- Those responses that selected one of the suggested comparison works were most often successful in
 discussing their chosen works with enough specificity about function, and historical and cultural
 contexts, to earn the task points. The most prevalent claim regarding both works of art indicated that
 the Reliquary of Sainte-Foy was a focus for prayer, and that in contrast, the deity Shiva inhabited
 the statue.
- Responses often discussed context in relation to the Coyolxauhqui Stone with a specific understanding
 of the deity's associated narrative, paired with the stone's location and function in Aztec ritual
 sacrifice.
- On a technical note, responses often included transitions to demonstrate comparative analysis and signal a similarity or difference between works. For example, responses used transitions such as "in

contrast," "similarly," "like the other work," "unlike the other work," "however," etc. These transitions served to indicate a clear comparison in successful responses and signal a comparison attempt in less successful responses.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

- Some responses lacked precision in identifying their chosen work, often referring to "The Buddha" or
 "the Venus" rather than to a particular version or image of that religious figure. Some responses
 attempted an identification of Sainte-Foy using only the provided prompt language of "Reliquary,"
 "Sainte-Foy," or "saint," omitting any specific information to distinguish Sainte-Foy from other
 medieval religious figures.
- Off-list responses sometimes struggled in selecting an appropriate work to serve as a representation of a holy figure or deity. The following proved problematic choices because they are not depictions of figures or deities: the Golden Stool, the Pyramids of Giza, the Maize Cobs, the Great Stupa of Sanchi, and the Kaaba.
- Misconceptions that the exterior of the Reliquary of Sainte-Foy represents "a King," "Jesus," "God," or a generic male saint, often led to incorrect evidence and faulty comparisons.
- Some responses relied entirely on visual descriptions to the exclusion of other interpretive tasks in the
 prompt. These responses provided a general visual comparison between the two works, rather than
 describing the subject matter or focusing on how the specific evidence explained the expression of
 religious beliefs or practices.
- Some responses lacked an explanation of how visual and/or contextual evidence they offered supported a valid comparison or the expression of religious beliefs.
- Responses sometimes failed to apply the comparison to the specific task of the prompt. These
 responses frequently attempted a comparison between the two objects and included visual evidence
 but often did not connect the evidence to the expression of religious beliefs.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding	
"the Reliquary of Sainte Foy shows a king on a throne with a crown"	"The Reliquary of Sainte-Foy shows a 12 year old girl who was martyred for her devotion to Christianity."	
"the Coyolxauhqui stone shows a peasant girl that was killed by the Mayan gods"	"The Coyolxayhqui Stone is a flat stone disk with a naked Aztec goddess. She has been decapitated with her legs and arms removed."	
"Shiva is from India and is Lord of the Dance."	"the god Shiva is shown with mudras (hand signals) that correlate with important symbols of Shiva's role in Hinduism"	

"The Religuary of the Saint is in the church at "The Religuary of Sainte Foy was meant for all times so people can see the gold and prayer since Christians believed that going on crosses on it." pilgrimages and praying to relics would rid them of sin ... at the church of Sainte Foy pilgrims would enter the church and walk around the ambulatory to pray to the reliquary." "Shiva was meant to be worshipped, it shows "the Christians prayed to Sainte Foy as a how the Hindu people had a different religion." martyr who could be an intercessor, and be asked for favors, because her remains were inside the statue. In contrast, worshippers thought that the statue of Shiva as Lord of the Dance contained the actual god and they were

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

- Utilize available resources in course planning and in the classroom:
 - The prepared resources offered by the College Board can aid in instruction because they are detailed, contain important art historical vocabulary, and are aligned with the objectives of the test. The AP Daily videos, the AP Review videos, and the yearly Chief Reader Report are especially instructive in course planning.

in direct contact with him."

- Many museums and cultural sites produce videos showing the ritual practice of religious beliefs that are available online. These can be helpful in illustrating religious practices as an authentic accompaniment to written resources.
- Emphasize prompt tasks and clarity:
 - Students will benefit from an emphasis on organization and clarity. It is helpful to instruct students on how to "unpack" the prompt and approach the response as a series of discrete tasks, rather than an undirected consideration of the artwork. Students might practice promptspecific essay planning by examining released College Board prompts.
 - Teachers could create writing prompts that have multiple components and award points for each portion to build and practice build this skill in classroom assessments.
- Focus on comparative analysis:
 - Teachers are clearly doing well teaching transitional phrases and should continue to emphasize the inclusion of transitional words and phrases that signal a comparison attempt.
 - Because FRQ1 emphasizes the discussion of similarities and differences, the skill of written comparison is particularly important. Specific instruction on blended or point-by-point comparisons, as opposed to comparisons that feature an isolated paragraph on each work, may improve response quality.
- Continue to provide practice in argumentation, interpretation, visual analysis, and contextual analysis.
 - O An effective way to help students argue a defensible claim is to brainstorm categories of visual similarities and ask students to write clearly articulated claims to account for these. This could be followed with individual practice connecting specific visual evidence to the claim from their earlier list of likenesses. This activity provides practice in multiple skills.

- To strengthen students' ability to understand historical and cultural context, use the same comparative exercise but, instead of asking for visual evidence to support a similarity claim, ask for contextual explanations for differences.
- Providing students with opportunities to apply visual and contextual evidence in comparing different works from disparate cultures throughout the school year would strengthen their skills in addressing FRQ1, no matter the specific topic.

- The APAH Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing Art Historical Thinking Skills" on pages 305–317. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- Sign in to AP Classroom to access AP Daily videos and questions on the topics and skills addressed
 in this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily videos as homework, warm-ups,
 lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to
 enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam
 questions.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:
 - AP Daily Video (1) for Topic 3.4 focuses on the Church of Sainte-Foy as a pilgrimage site during the European Middle Ages and the importance of relics through a discussion of the Reliquery of Sainte-Foy.
 - AP Daily Video (1 and 2) for Topic 5.3 explains how context shapes form, meaning, and audience response, using the example of the Templo Mayor which includes the Coyolxauhqui Stone.
- Some specific resources related to this prompt include:
 - AP Daily Video 3.1 (1 and 2) for Topic 3.1 focuses on how context is important for comparing religious art from different faith traditions.
 - AP Daily Video 8.4 discusses the skills needed to establish and support a defensible claim using visual and/or contextual evidence.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 AP Art History Exam that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Art History Course Page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-art-history/classroom-resources?course=ap-art-history
- The AP Art History Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes
 materials and resources posted not only by the College Board, but also by other teachers. The OTC
 Discussion Board is the place to ask questions, share resources, and exchange teaching ideas at:
 https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/aparthistory/

Task: Long Essay—Visual and Contextual Analysis

Topic: Honoring Through Representation

Max Score: 6 Mean Score: 2.39

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

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

- Select and identify an appropriate work that was created to represent and honor an important individual from Africa (1100–1980 CE).
- Establish an art historical claim related to <u>how</u> the work represents and honors an important individual.
- Provide visual and/or contextual evidence to support that claim.
- Explain how the evidence relates to the claim.
- Corroborate or qualify the claim with additional evidence or argumentation.

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?

Overall, the responses addressed the course content in the following ways:

- Many responses demonstrated familiarity with course content associated with the examples specified
 in the prompt. Responses were fairly evenly distributed across the three suggested works, with the
 Mblo mask the least common choice. Responses that focused on artworks beyond the given examples
 tended to describe other works from the African content area.
- Many responses had difficulty providing two accurate identifiers to satisfy the identification task. Specific location and culture/style/period identifiers seemed especially challenging.
- Some responses were able to articulate a clear claim regarding how important individuals were represented and honored. Quite often these claim statements appeared at the end of the response, after identifying and explaining the visual or contextual evidence presented.
- Most responses were successful in providing a range of visual and/or contextual evidence for the work and demonstrating an understanding of the honorific function of the artworks. Visual descriptions and evidence were most commonly cited in responses.
- Many responses were able to add complexity to their discussion, generally by making comparisons
 with other artworks that honored specific individuals (either from different African cultures or Western
 traditions) or by making reference to the effects of Western colonialism and museum collection
 practices on the cultures of Africa.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

The most common gaps in knowledge occurred in the following ways:

- Responses were often not able to articulate a specific claim that established a line of reasoning related to the prompt. Responses often made general statements that simply restated the language of the prompt itself.
- Responses that focused on the suggested works were generally more successful in stating a claim.
- Responses that focused on other artworks were less likely to develop a claim that adequately
 responded to the prompt, as the selection generally did not depict a specific honored individual.
- Responses often conflated two or more African artworks. These inaccuracies occurred most frequently
 in the responses that discussed masks.
- Responses often indicated an incorrect understanding of Africa as a country, rather than a continent
 with immense cultural diversity. The most common misunderstanding here was that the chosen work
 represented "the king of Africa."
- Many entries for this question were left completely blank. It seems likely that this indicates a general lack of familiarity with the content area for some students.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"These people would use the mblo as masks in ceremonial performances where women in the tribe would wear these feminine masks to perform as women to show respect for mothers and other women These masks represented idealized women forms with big eyes with slits."	"The Mblo mask would honor the elders and important figures of society and would be danced by their loved ones. For example, the Mblo mask was specifically designed for an elderly woman. The mask shared unique features that were key to the woman, and each portrait mask would be made different."
"Portrait mask, Africa this was to honor the head of the African culture, chief."	"The wall plaque from Oba's palace was made of bronze by the Edo peoples of the Benin Kingdom."
The Portrait Mask (Mblo) "is able to correctly and successfully honor a specific important member of the African society in which it was created."	"This work was made to honor the majesty, authority, and wealth of the Benin monarch (called the Oba) through its use of symbolic representation in content, strategic placement, and use of materials in construction."

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?

• Students would be well advised to write on the suggested examples. If they decide to write on another example, they should confirm that it can indeed be discussed in relation to the prompt before they begin writing. In this instance, the prompt focuses on works that "represent important members of

- society in order to <u>honor</u> them." Most of the required artworks in the African content area outside the given examples do not represent a particular individual and are, therefore, not particularly good choices for the question.
- Regardless of the choice, students should practice describing artworks based only on their titles, since
 images are not provided for this question, and visual evidence for the response is based on recall.
- Students should practice writing claims, finding evidence, and making connections between their evidence and the claim they present. Corroborating, qualifying, or modifying the claim by adding evidence will demonstrate the student's deeper understanding.
- An example of how claim and evidence can support each other in building an argument is presented below:
 - o CLAIM: The wall plaque from Oba's palace was created to honor the king by illustrating his achievements and recording him within a larger chronological history of Benin rulers.
 - EVIDENCE: The representation of the king—larger than the other figures, positioned centrally between attendants, wearing coral necklaces; the placement of the plaque—in the palace with many other plaques that depict the Oba and other Benin kings.
 - ANALYSIS: The scale and positioning of the king indicate his importance for the community. The use of hierarchical representation visibly marks him as the most significant figure, as does the fact that the flanking attendants fan him. His adornment with coral indicates his great wealth, as such beads were precious and acquired through trade.
 - The plaque's location in the palace, along with many similar plaques, places it within the chronological history of the Benin people. The elaborate decoration of the palace with these plaques further emphasizes the power and wealth of the king.
 - COMPLEXITY: The plaque uses art to record the history of the Benin people. While Western traditions might document such information in textual form, many African cultures use imagery. The Luba people used beads on their memory boards to record important events, while the ndop figures of the Kuba similarly represent a chronological lineage of kingship.

- The APAH Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing Art Historical Thinking Skills" on pages 305–317. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- Sign into AP Classroom to access AP Daily videos and questions on the topics and skills addressed
 in this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily videos as homework, warm-ups,
 lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to
 enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam
 questions.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:
 - A number of FRQs in the AP Classroom question bank focus on objects from Unit 6. Use the search filters to help find questions that you might assign or adapt for your students. In addition to gaining practice responding to FRQ prompts, these questions can help reinforce visual and contextual information about the required objects in this content area.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 AP Art History Exam that
 have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Art History Course Page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-art-history/classroom-resources?course=ap-art-history
- The AP Art History Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes materials and resources posted not only by the College Board, but also by other teachers. The OTC

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Task: Visual Analysis

Topic: Hokusai, *Ejiri in Suruga Province (Sunshū Ejiri)*

Max Score: 5 Mean Score: 4.22

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

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, *Ejiri in Suruga Province (Sunshū Ejiri)* by Hokusai.
- Use visual evidence to explain the way the artwork's visual elements convey a sense of movement.
- Explain the way the work is characteristic of other Japanese prints (*ukiyo-e* prints) from this period by using contextual evidence.

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

Overall, the responses addressed the course content in the following ways:

- Most responses were able to earn both score points for accurately describing visual characteristics of an unknown artwork.
- Most responses were able to earn at least <u>one</u> of the two visual evidence points by explaining how
 Hokusai creates a sense of movement in the work, particularly through the effects of the wind. Though
 less frequently cited, some responses explained the methods Hokusai used to move the eye of the
 viewer through the work with the use of diagonal and curving lines, spatial recession, and changes in
 tonal/color values.
- Responses often demonstrated understanding iby using specific contextual evidence to explain how
 the work is typical of other nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock prints, particularly in relation to
 thematic elements of nature or the specific Japanese landscape and use of known landmarks, or to the
 intended purpose or audience for creating the prints.
- Responses often demonstrated understanding of the techniques used for creating polychrome woodblock prints and could successfully apply that knowledge to this unknown work.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

- Some responses described visual characteristics of Hokusai's work in terms that lacked specificity, as in "The lines show it is windy."
- Some responses fell short of an explanation for how Hokusai creates movement, for example, tending
 to cite visual evidence of characteristics that suggest movement ("Movement is seen in the papers")
 without elaborating on how movement is communicated by the evidence ("The papers being blown out
 of the farmer's hands make their way diagonally across the page, creating a movement that the
 viewer's eye can follow.").

- Responses often misapplied art historical terminology, using the term "linear perspective" as a blanket term for spatial recession and the range of techniques depicting the illusion of depth, causing their explanations to lack accuracy and specificity.
- Many responses revealed a misunderstanding of what constitutes contextual evidence and cited only
 visual evidence without any contextual discussion. Difficulty in distinguishing between visual and
 contextual evidence was common. Because students were asked to provide visual evidence for the first
 four task points, doing so for the final task for some may have been the result of not reading the
 prompt task carefully.
- Some responses indicated a lack of knowledge regarding the purpose of producing the prints in large numbers. Some said they were mass-produced but provided no specific explanations about why.
 Others claimed that the prints were intended for propagandistic use.
- Responses sometimes confused the relative chronology of Hokusai's creation of this series of prints
 (circa 1830–32 CE) and the end of Japan's isolation and the emergence of foreign tourism (after
 1853 CE). Common misconceptions here were that Hokusai and other printmakers were taking
 advantage of the boom in tourists coming from outside the country, rather than marketing them to
 middle class Japanese tourists, or that the prints were being mass-produced for exportation because of
 the demand for Japanese goods in the West.
- Some responses demonstrated a misunderstanding of influences from the West in and prior to the early nineteenth century. These often stated inaccurately that the Japanese interest in depicting the landscape derived from their exposure to European Romantic landscape paintings.
- Some responses inaccurately explained the function of the Japanese script visible on the print. Most made no mention of this text, while others identified the text as poetry.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"We see the use of linear perspective, where there are darker colors in the foreground that fade to paler ones in the distance."	"The artist is skilled in showing depth. He uses atmospheric perspective by moving from bolder colors near us to more neutral ones the farther back it is. He also uses diminution, where the farmers close to us are bigger and get smaller the farther back they are on the path."
"Contextual evidence that the work is like others at that time is the limited color palette and areas of flat color."	"The depiction of the daily life and working of average people is common in this genre, as are depictions of the overwhelming power of nature, seen here with the wind and the massive Mount Fuji in the background."
"This work is characteristic of other Japanese prints in the way it is made using a woodblock technique which allows the image to be mass produced." [Does not extend the discussion to function.]	"The medium of woodblock printing for ukiyo-e prints aided the purpose—to sell and make money. Woodblock printing allowed dozens of copies to be made and sold, especially to tourists."

"Like other ukiyo-e prints of the time, this was meant to be replicated and used as propaganda." "Since Japan's borders had been opened "Lots of the middle class people in Japan were before the artist made this series, tourists were becoming tourists, and lots were going on pilgrimages to Mt. Fuji. They bought these flooding in from around the world. The prints were sold to them to take back home as a prints as souvenirs." memory of their trip." "Japonisme was a huge fad in Europe when this was made, with everyone wanting to buy stuff from Japan. Hokusai made these prints to make money off that." "The artist was influenced by Romanticism and "Hokusai was influenced by Dutch art coming the Romantic paintings coming into Japan so into that one port the Dutch could enter, and he shows Mt Fuji and people out in nature." that's why he shows depth and a lower horizon line." "It's like other prints from the time because of "The text in the upper left of the print gives the the box with Japanese writing in the top left." title and the artist's name, serving as a signature of sorts, which is typical of prints "It's like other Japanese prints because of the from this period in Japan." poem in the box at the top of the picture."

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

- In the rush to finish teaching the 250 works in the CED, it is easy for teachers to lose sight of the importance of incorporating unknown works on which students can perform their art historical thinking skills. An ongoing routine of bringing in works outside the 250 for exercising visual analysis and attribution is not only a critical element in the course, it is also an engaging activity that students remember and enjoy. This also gives them the skills and confidence to engage meaningfully with the myriad of unknown works they will be seeing for the rest of their lives.
- Since students sometimes fall into the trap of thinking they know what they are being asked to do in a task rather than actually reading the prompt, giving them a 5-minute practice "prepping the prompt" every week or so can work wonders. Hand out hard copies of a prompt, ask students to circle the verbs in the tasks, put boxes around the words "visual evidence" and "contextual evidence," and put at least one possible appropriate example of each kind of evidence in the margin. You might give students a bonus point for doing this on unit exam free-response prompts to reinforce the practice. During reviews near the exam, reinforce the rewards of reading and prepping the prompt thoughtfully and carefully.
- As an exercise to enhance students' skills of visual description, early in the year pair them frequently with another student. Show only one member of each pair an unknown work, then ask them to sit on their hands (important!) while they describe the work to the other student, who sketches exactly what they are told. Once the actual work is revealed to those who sketched, it is productive to ask them to

- tell their describer—partner what they might have said that would have made it easier. Once one work has been done, switch roles with another work and repeat the process. This is a superb way for students to experience firsthand the importance of precise description and gives them an unconventional new direction for incorporating and practicing this skill.
- A simple exercise/game may help students understand the distinction between visual and contextual evidence. After discussing all aspects of a work, throw out phrases relating to the work, say "wait," then after a moment of mental processing time, say "OK!" and have students call out "VISUAL" or "CONTEXTUAL." Then follow up by asking individual students how they knew the correct category of evidence. This is a fun way to engender an intuitive understanding of the difference, as well as to reinforce contextual elements especially of the work. It is a great way to spend the last minute before the bell and helps set in their minds some of the content from that day's discussion.

- The APAH Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing Art Historical Thinking Skills" on pages 305–317. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- Sign into AP Classroom to access AP Daily videos and questions on the topics and skills addressed
 in this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily videos as homework, warm-ups,
 lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to
 enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam
 questions.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:
 - AP Daily Video 3 for Topic (8.1) focuses on building students' attribution skills, using an example of a woodblock print by Hokusai that is not included in the required image set.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 AP Art History Exams that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Art History Course Page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-art-history/classroom-resources?course=ap-art-history
- The AP Art History Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes materials and resources posted not only by the College Board, but also by other teachers. The OTC Discussion Board is the place to ask questions, share resources, and exchange teaching ideas at: https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/aparthistory/

Task: Contextual Analysis

Topic: The Pyramid Complex at Giza and its Religious Purpose

Max Score: 5 Mean Score: 3.21

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

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 the layout of the Great Pyramids (Menkaura, Kahfre, Khufu) and Great Sphinx of Giza, Egypt.
- Describe the original function of the architectural complex.
- Explain how the religious practices of Old Kingdom Egypt influenced elements of the design of the architectural complex and/or its monuments.
- Explain why the Great Pyramids and Great Sphinx of Giza are understood as an expression of power and authority in Old Kingdom Egypt.

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?

Overall, the responses addressed the course content in the following ways:

- Many responses demonstrated a specific visual understanding of the layout, structure, materials, or location of the complex, with a number of responses recognizing the variety of scale in the structures and the placement of the Sphinx in front of the middle pyramid.
- Responses overwhelmingly demonstrated specific understanding of the function of the complex as a
 burial site for pharaohs and other people of importance in Old Kingdom Egypt. Many responses also
 accurately discussed the function of the pyramids or monuments to demonstrate the power and
 authority of the pharaoh.
- Many responses successfully connected the placement and scale of the Great Sphinx to its role as a
 protector of the pharaoh's remains and "ka." Many also related the use of false doors, traps, or secret
 rooms to prevent grave robbing and keep the pharaoh's remains, "ka," as well as other material goods
 that could utilized in the afterlife, safe.
- Some responses were able to connect the burying of objects, statues, or other material goods to the belief in an afterlife and requiring material goods to ensure a successful afterlife and link this to some aspect of the design or architecture of the space itself.
- Most responses demonstrated knowledge that the Great Pyramids and Great Sphinx are understood as
 expressions of power and authority in Old Kingdom Egypt due to their great size and the resources
 needed (both in material and labor) to construct them.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

- Some responses described visual characteristics of the complex in terms that lacked specificity or were overly general, or they did not address this task at all.
- Some responses described visual elements of the Great Sphinx or the Great Pyramids, however, the responses did not specifically address the layout as required in the prompt.
- Some responses inaccurately referred to the alignment of the Great Pyramids with particular
 constellations, specifically Orion's Belt. While many understood there was a connection of the
 structures to the sky and an ascension to the stars, they conflated astronomy and astrology.
- Some responses could accurately describe a function of the complex related to beliefs but did not
 always connect those statements to the design and architecture of the space specifically, which was
 needed to earn the task point.
- While many responses were able to connect religious practices of Old Kingdom Egypt to the
 architecture or its monuments, they very often presented only <u>one</u> way this connection appeared,
 rather than providing <u>two</u> distinct pieces of evidence to earn both score points.
- Some responses confused the timeline of Old Kingdom and New Kingdom Egypt and identified the Great Pyramids as the tomb of King Tutankhamun. Although this did not necessarily prevent the response from earning a task point, it was a very frequently cited source of confusion.
- Many responses inaccurately referred to the laborers used to build the complex as slaves, frequently referencing them as slave labor.
- Some responses demonstrated confusion between the Great Sphinx being a human and animal hybrid
 or simply a large cat. These responses often went on to conflate the Egyptian reverence for cats and
 cats being inherently divine.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"The layout of the Great Pyramids are very rectangular."	"The Great Pyramids of Giza are in a diagonal layout, with entrances that start at the ports of the Nile and end at the pyramids."
 "[T]he human hybrid of the Great Sphinx, with the head of a human and body of a lion." (visual description with no connection to layout) 	"The Great Sphinx is placed in front of the Great Pyramids."
"They would be buried with things of meaning & mummified."	"One example of religious influence is the size of the pyramids. Egyptians believed they could take all of their belongings with them when died so they designed their pyramids to be large enough for all of their belongings."

"In Old Kingdom Egypt, it was believed that "The three pyramids sit on an axis—this axes aligns with a constellation and brings a sense the pharaohs were divinely ordained by the of form and order to the layout." Egyptian gods. This reflects in their architectural complex of the Great Pyramids, as the tombs are pointing upwards, indicating that they are divinely leading up to the sky, or the gods." "Religious practices of Old Kingdom Egypt "The original function of the pyramids was infulenced this design because King Tut was that they were used as tombs for the kings. figure the community thoguht was very The relationship of Menkaura, Khafre, and powerful and thought of as a God." Kufu is that they all were related in terms of grandfather, father, grandson, so basically 3 generations of the family." "A piece of contextual evidence that shows its "It also required great labor to construct. The power of Old Kingdom Egypt is the use of slave ability for the pharaoh to fund and organize the creation of each structure demonstrates is great labor. Many thoughsands of slaves were used to create these pyramids and it takes great authority and reverence." authority and power to obtain and keep thse slaves which the Old Kingdom of Egypt did." "Cats were seen as having a power and "The Great Sphinx also reflects religions ideas authority in ancient Egypt whigh is suppose to of Old Kingdom Egypt, because they depicted

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?

be reflected by the Great Sphinx of Giza who is

suppose to protect the tombs of the pharohs."

- While it is evident that most students were familiar with the Great Pyramids and Great Sphinx of Giza from their studies, some areas emerged where reinforcement in the classroom would benefit the students when writing their responses:
 - o For any work of art in the CED with multiple views, be sure students cover each image and understand the relationship between those images. Most students were clearly familiar with the pyramids and the sphinx; however, many did not know how to accurately address visual characteristics of the plan itself.

their gods as being part animal and part

spiritual nature."

human. The sphinx has the head of a woman and the body of a lion, which demonstrates its

- Teachers may want to increase discussion of how the plan of a site relates to the content and function of that space, in addition to the structure itself.
- One way to reinforce student understanding of how to read the plan could be having students label the plan and the intended function of the structures. A simple in-class exercise might also be to have students draw and label a plan of their classroom itself.
- Teachers may want to emphasize to students that, when responding to a prompt, check their response to be sure that it fully covers all elements of the prompt, as there were a number of responses that did not fully complete the task(s) presented. Having students practice marking

up their prompt and planning their response to ensure it addresses all elements required may help students be more thorough in their writing.

- The APAH Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing Art Historical Thinking Skills" on pages 305–317. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- Sign into AP Classroom to access AP Daily videos and questions on the topics and skills addressed in
 this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily videos as homework, warm-ups,
 lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to
 enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam
 questions.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:
 - AP Daily Video 1 for Topic 2.3 focuses on the function and purpose of art from the Ancient Mediterranean content area. The video looks closely at some works of Egyptian art and provides useful tips on developing strong essay responses.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 AP Art History Exam that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Art History Course Page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-art-history/classroom-resources?course=ap-art-history
- The AP Art History Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes
 materials and resources posted not only by the College Board, but also by other teachers. The OTC
 Discussion Board is the place to ask questions, share resources, and exchange teaching ideas at:
 https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/aparthistory/

Task: Attribution **Topic:** Julie Mehretu

Max Score: 5 Mean Score: 2.21

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Responses were supposed to demonstrate primarily the art historical thinking skill of attribution of an unknown artwork, as well as argumentation, comparative analysis, and visual and contextual analysis. To be awarded all five score points, the response needed to successfully accomplish the following tasks:

- Attribute the painting to the artist that produced it.
- Provide two examples of visual evidence that supported the attribution by identifying similar characteristics in other works of art by the same artist.
- Use visual evidence to explain how the artist created a sense of dynamic movement in the work.
- Use contextual or visual evidence to explain how the artist referenced architectural space in the work.

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?

Overall, the responses addressed the course content in the following ways:

- Some responses were able to correctly identify the artist as Julie Mehretu, or simply "Mehretu."
- Most responses were able to provide visual evidence to support an attribution, even if that attribution
 was incomplete. Responses most commonly provided visual descriptions that referred to the artist's
 particular use of line and colored shapes.
- Many responses were able to explain how the artist creates movement. This was often done by
 qualifying the artist's use of line to direct the viewer's eye around the work, and many responses
 recognized the swirling motion central to the work's composition.
- Some responses were able to explain how architectural space was created in the work. Responses
 primarily noted the impression of an architectural frame being created either by the artist's use of line
 or by shapes placed in particular vertical and horizontal orientations.
- Some responses were able to accurately describe suggestions of architectural drawings, or blueprints, in the work.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

- Many responses could not identify the artist's name; however, many were able to demonstrate a recognition of Mehretu's work, by referencing the required work in the CED *Stadia II* in some way.
- Many responses believed the work to be from the early twentieth century rather than a contemporary work from the early twenty-first century. Because the work shown is abstract, there was a tendency to connect it to early abstraction, most frequently to Kandinsky.
- Some responses lacked specificity in describing the work when attempting to justify the attribution.

- Some responses did not attempt the attribution tasks and focused solely on explaining movement and architectural space within the work.
- Some responses simply stated that movement was visible and provided a description of the work that lacked enough specificity to explain how movement was achieved.
- Many responses recognized that architectural elements/space existed in the work; however, many were not able to successfully explain how that space was defined.
- Some responses merely attempted to explain architectural space through a description of a sense of depth in the work, but without specifically explaining specifically how that space was architectural.
- Many responses overlooked the fact that architectural plans feature often in Mehretu's body of work.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"The work shown is attributed to the female artist who made Stadia II."	"This work was done by Mehretu."
"The piece shown here is by Kandinsky. The piece is a part of his Improvisation series."	"This piece is Julie Mehretu's because of its similarities to her piece Stadia II."
"There are abnormal shapes."	"In both works, geometric, single-colored shapes fill the space of the frame."
"The movement can be seen with the strokes of the artwork."	"The artist creates a sense of movement by the previously mentioned erratic and curved lines. These are curved and quantified in such a manner that is suggests that these lines are flowing."
"The lines create a shape that looks like a building."	"The part of the work that references architectural space is the positioning of the shapes. Some shapes are flat on the ground giving a sense that there is a floor. The exterior lines around the edges give as sense of walls or an exterior structure."
"The artist references architectural space in this work by overlapping geometrical lines that are different colors and sizes in order to create shapes that create depth and therefore space."	"The artist references architectural space through the visible floorplans/blueprints in the background which are typically used in her works."

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

- Attribution is a unique skill within the course that students may need additional time to experience.
 Developing the attribution skill might be paired with helping students practice visually analyzing an unknown work of art because both require students to apply these skills to a work with which they are unfamiliar.
- Teachers may want to emphasize the difference between visual description and using visual evidence
 to support an attribution. This skill is inherently comparative and requires the student to be both
 specific in their comparative observations and detailed in their writing.
- Where possible within your teaching of course content, teachers should show students more than one
 example of an artist's work as a means of further developing their comparative observation skills and
 improving their understanding and recognition of typical stylistic features.
- Teachers may want to work with students on visual analysis, specifically focusing on explaining
 how certain artistic decisions create a particular visual effect or reflect the artist's intentions (e.g.,
 movement, drama, power, etc.).

- The APAH Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing Art Historical Thinking Skills" on pages 305–317. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- Sign into AP Classroom to access AP Daily videos and questions on the topics and skills addressed in
 this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily videos as homework, warm-ups,
 lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to
 enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam
 questions.
- AP Daily Video 2 for Topic 4.3 does not focus on Mehretu but offers useful guidance for developing a strong response to an attribution FRQ by looking at the work of Helen Frankenthaler, another artist from the course who also creates abstract paintings.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 AP Art History Exam that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Art History Course Page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-art-history/classroom-resources?course=ap-art-history
- The AP Art History Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes
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Task: Continuity and Change

Topic: Varvara Stepanova, *The Results of the First Five-Year Plan*

Max Score: 5 Mean Score: 2.22

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Responses were supposed to demonstrate primarily the art historical thinking skill of identifying and analyzing artistic traditions, as well as visual and contextual analysis. To be awarded all five score points, the response needed to successfully accomplish the following tasks:

- Describe two visual or contextual characteristics of Varvara Stepanova's *The Results of the First Five-Year Plan*.
- Explain how the work is characteristic of art of the first half of the twentieth century CE
- Explain how the work deviates from established traditions of Western visual art.
- Explain how the artist's choices about style or content in the work represent the ideas and values of Russian society at the time it was made.

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

Overall, the responses addressed the course content in the following ways:

- Most responses were able to describe several visual and/or contextual elements within the work, with many responses successfully describing more than the two elements required to earn the task points. The most common visual evidence cited for this task included the use of the dominant color red, the presence of a large-scale portrait of a man (Vladimir Lenin), the presence of the text CCCP (Russian for USSR), and images of crowds of people surrounded by images of speakers, wires, and an electrical transmission tower. The most common contextual evidence cited included the idea that the work was created after the Russian Revolution of 1918, or that Lenin represented a Communist Revolutionary Leader.
- Many responses were able to use contextual evidence to explain how Stepanova's choices about style
 or content represented the ideas and values of contemporary Russian society. The most common
 responses included the knowledge that the artist's goal was to promote the success of the USSR after
 the Russian Revolution by highlighting modern technology and the popular support of communism.
- Some responses were able to explain how the work deviates from established traditions of Western
 visual art. The most common responses included Stepanova's combination of multiple photos and
 photographic fragments of various size into a single image contrasting the traditional use of
 photography from the 19th and early 20th centuries, or how the artist rejected older Western traditions,
 particularly the traditional use of a single medium.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

The most common gaps in knowledge occurred in the following ways:

 Many responses had difficulty explaining visual continuity between Stepanova's work and the art of the early half of the twentieth century. The most common misunderstanding here was noting the

- artist's use of photography as characteristic of early twentieth-century art but overlooking the distinct visual style or use of the medium in the composition.
- Many responses had difficulty explaining visual deviation from established traditions of Western art.
 The most common misunderstanding of this type included noting that the work was a collage but without providing any further details or explanations of that fact.
- Many responses misinterpreted the work as critical of the Soviet regime, rather than as a promotion of
 Soviet successes in the wake of the Russian Revolution. This interpretation is inaccurate given
 Stepanova's choice of pro-Soviet subject matter that she suggests is supported widely by the populace,
 and her willingness to engage modernist forms and techniques to reinforce the progress the regime
 wanted international audiences to see, particularly those in Western Europe.
- Many responses had difficulty using visual evidence to demonstrate continuity with, or a change from, tradition and instead provided contextual evidence to support an explanation. The most common misunderstanding of this type included explanation of the work as propaganda that referenced only the historical context of the early twentieth century and included no discussion of visual characteristics common between this work and other art from its time. Responses often used the idea of propaganda as evidence for departure from established traditions in Western art with no specific discussion of visual styles considered innovative in Stepanova's work.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
"The work is a great example of 20th century art because collage was popular at that time."	"It deviates from established traditions of Western art through its use of collage because it is using part of pictures and solid colors and overlapping them. This is a change from Western traditions of painting realistically whole images of a scene."
"The work is characteristic of art in the first half of the twentieth century as it uses photographs. Photographs were becoming more widespread in art during this era as technology in producing photographs became more advanced and more accessible."	"Stepanova chooses to use a collection of photomontaged images to create this work. A sense of depth is largely ignored, and a vanishing point is altogether nonexistent as she chooses to ignore western tradition in favor of stacking a collection of photos behind each other."
"The artist's choices of color and imagery and the large amount of people protesting under him show a ruthless dictator's power in a communist society. These together reflect propaganda and its effects thus showing propaganda is common and prominent in a repressive society."	"The gathering below Lenin attempts to portray USSR citizens as a united nationalist body. The electrical transformer with its wires in the background attempt to portray the Soviet Union as 'modernized' and as a global superpower with the best technology, just as leaders like Lenin had hoped."

- "This piece is characteristic of art in the first half of the 20th century as it is simply propaganda. A lot of art during this time was propaganda in opposition or support of all the things going on in the world during that time, like WWI and WWII."
- "Stepanova was a proponent of this ideology, and she included references to it as propaganda for the Soviet State. For example, the powerlines draw eyes to Lenin, signifying that the economic and infrastructure progress were direct achievements of the Soviet leadership, which in turn, prioritized the people."

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

Given the gaps and misconceptions demonstrated with continuity and change on this particular question, a few strategies might offer some assistance in addressing student performance in the future:

- Although the scope of the art history course spans many content areas and cultures, resist the urge to teach artworks in complete seclusion without comparing them side-by-side to other works for visual analysis and comparison in class regularly.
 - **TIP:** Show students Stepanova's work alongside works by Picasso, Matisse, Mondrian, and Kandinsky rapidly in chronological order, and have students quickly verbalize to each other the visual elements common to the works in comparison, in order to build familiarity with distinctive characteristics from the first half of the twentieth century CE.
 - Students can describe issues related to color, contrast, the level of figurative abstraction, choice
 of subject matter along with compositional elements like scale, angularity, balance, the use of
 diagonals, and the flatness of the pictorial space.
 - Students should write down what they observe to practice shaping their verbal observations into stronger written descriptions.
- Be sure to explore related visual styles and traditions that are foundational for setting a selected piece
 within its appropriate aesthetic and historical context, even if you utilize works not tested on the exam.
 Students can more clearly understand how and why a specific work is distinctive for the artist at a
 specific time.
 - **TIP:** When building the world around Stepanova's work in your students' minds, be sure to share images of works from her diverse early career, making note of how photomontage matures from the simple use of photographs to more complex, dynamic compositions like the work shown.
 - Students can be shown Stepanova's painted compositions in oil on canvas that demonstrate her early artistic training, her designs for clothing and textiles, along with her theater set designs in a Constructivist style, emphasizing that the photomontage demonstrates many of the same visual characteristics.
 - Students would also benefit from a brief introduction to images of collage and photomontage designed by other artists and movements from the same period (i.e., Cubists, Dadaists, Surrealists, etc.), emphasizing that there are distinctive differences in Stepanova's work by comparison.
 - Students can create their own photomontages from magazine cutouts or printed images without the aid of design software to develop an appreciation for the complexity of Stepanova's designs. Emphasize that Stepanova's designs were made in an era without computers and digital media, reviewing the image of the work before and after.

- Utilize resources on AP Classroom including the samples of free-response questions in the Question
 Bank and published questions on AP Central that demonstrate similar combinations of skills, stressing
 the difference between visual and contextual evidence.
 - **TIP:** Print a copy of a sample question for students to mark up as a bellringer activity. Emphasize action verbs like "describe" or "explain" along with the specific kind of evidence required to earn each task whether visual or contextual.
 - By "dissecting" free-response questions in this way, students can begin to anticipate more successfully the changes in thinking that will be needed to accomplish task points successfully and build more confidence for exam day.

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 this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily videos as homework, warm-ups,
 lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to
 enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam
 questions.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:
 - o AP Daily Video 1 for Topic 4.2 focuses on Stepanova's *Results of the First Five-Year Plan* to discuss how the purpose of a work of art can shape its creation and/or meaning.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 AP Art History Exam that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Art History Course Page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-art-history/classroom-resources?course=ap-art-history
- The AP Art History Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes
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