
AP[®] Art History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free-Response Question 4

- Scoring Guidelines**
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Question 4: Contextual Analysis**5 points**

(A) Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the Funeral Banner of Lady Dai. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses include the following:

- The work is a T-shaped banner.
- Its primary color is red.
- The work is made of silk.
- The surface has symbols and images.
- There is a portrait of the Marquise of Dai (Lady Dai) at the center of the banner.
- A bi disc is shown in the center.
- Dragons' bodies are intertwined with a circular disc.
- Different realms of human existence are depicted.
- The subject matter includes a funeral ritual/banquet.
- The design includes paired images (e.g., ideal beings, mythological creatures, etc.) that create a sense of visual balance.

(B) Accurately describes the original location of the work shown. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses include the following:

- The work is from China.
- The banner was found in a tomb.
- The banner was draped over a coffin.
- The work was found in an elite burial site.
- The work was found in the Hunan Province.
- The work was found close to the Silk Route/Silk Road.

(C) Accurately uses ONE example of specific visual or contextual evidence to explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han dynasty beliefs about the universe. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses include the following:

- The curving forms and linear pattern link the imagery together, which symbolizes Han Dynasty beliefs that humans are connected to both nature and spirit worlds.
- Horizontal registers distinguish the celestial realm, the earthly realm, and the underworld, which demonstrate Han Dynasty religious beliefs.
- There is a portrait of the Marquise of (Lady) Dai, which demonstrates she is preparing to go to Heaven or the celestial realm.
- Symbolic elements at the top of the banner (e.g., the sun, the raven, the moon, and the toad) were associated with heaven/the celestial realm during the Han dynasty.
- The imagery includes a scene of mourners performing a funerary ritual for the deceased, which demonstrates Han beliefs about the afterlife.
- Objects (offerings, jars of food/wine, and the body of the deceased) are depicted, which demonstrate the Han belief that these objects accompany the deceased into the afterlife.

- A bi disk is depicted, which is an object often found in tombs.
 - Figures of intertwined dragons are included, which are traditional symbols of the afterlife.
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(D) Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific visual or contextual evidence to explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han dynasty beliefs about the universe. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses include the following:

- One from the list in C.
-

(E) Accurately uses specific visual or contextual evidence to explain why this work of art has been interpreted as a symbol of elite social status. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses include the following:

- The use of expensive materials suggests the wealth and high standing of the patron.
 - The elaborate techniques and refined craftsmanship suggest the patron’s wealth and elevated social status.
 - The large size of the silk banner (6 feet) is an indication of her elite status.
 - The banner has a portrait of Lady Dai, which is one of the first portraits of an individual in Chinese art.
 - Only members of the elite class could afford to commission an artist to paint their funerary articles.
 - Lady Dai’s body was placed inside an elaborate tomb that indicated her status (e.g., it included four nested coffins, wrapped in 20 layers of silk, grave goods, etc.).
-

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.

The funeral banner of Lady Dai is a purple banner shaped like a T, with tassels on the corners. It shows many animals and figures such as dragons, birds, and humans. They are intertwined together throughout the banner. This work is from China during the Han dynasty and found in a burial site for a prominent Chinese woman, Lady Dai. The Han Dynasty believed that the universe had places for people to go after death. The banner shows registers depicting harmonious life at the top, with beautiful birds and dragons symbolizing power and harmony. The circles in the middle made by the dragons symbolize the unity from life to death as the dead go from this world to the next. The Han Dynasty placed a lot of value in animals and spirituality, as shown in the funeral banner. This work has been interpreted as a symbol of elite social status because only the elite members of Han society had one. They were specially made with expensive materials, and only given to important or wealthy individuals upon death.

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.

The Funeral Banner of Lady Dai ~~is~~ visually can be described as a robe mostly painted with red, blues and whites.

It was found covering the coffin/tomb deep underground of the original Lady Dai.

Showcasing their beliefs of the universe and death through its 3 ~~is~~ separate sections, the top are being the heavenly realm, the middle described as to represent the earthly realm and at the very bottom the depiction of the underworld.

It is also believed to ~~is~~ relate to elite social status with its dragons, which are highly important to the culture and viewed very highly and often relating to the higher class and emperor, as well as showcasing ~~part of~~ a sort of family crest at the right corner.

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 "Funeral Banner of Lady Dai" has interlocking designs on it with red warm colors and blue cool colors. The curvilinear lines interlock with one another and create a ring almost.

The original location of this piece is Han dynasty China which had powerful rulers and kept ~~the~~ peace in society.

The subject matter shows Han Dynasty's universe belief through the depiction of an animal used as symbolism in the top right of the funeral banner. The subject matter also shows Han dynasty's belief in the universe through the patterns on the banner representing the higher ups.

This artwork has been interpreted as a symbol of social status because of the person it belonged to as it was for Lady Dai who was a ruler in the Han Dynasty one of the only ladies to rule and she was highly ranked in social status.

Page 6

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 expected 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 at least one visual characteristic of the *Funeral Banner of Lady Dai*.
- Describe the original location of work.
- Explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han Dynasty beliefs about the universe.
- Explain why this work of art has been interpreted as a symbol of elite social status.

Sample: 4A

Score: 5

Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the Funeral Banner of Lady Dai. (1 point)

The response describes the banner as “shaped like a T,” and earned the point for description. The response also states that many figures like dragons “are intertwined together throughout the banner,” evidence that also earned the point. The response further describes “tassels on the corners,” evidence that would also have earned this point.

Task B: Accurately describes the original location of the work shown. (1 point)

The response accurately describes the original location of the work with, “This work is from China.” The response would also be awarded this point for the description “found in a burial site for a prominent Chinese woman.” The response mentions that the work is from the Han dynasty, but this information presented in the body of the question describes chronology rather than an original physical location.

Task C: Accurately uses ONE example of specific visual or contextual evidence to explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han dynasty beliefs about the universe. (1 point)

The response explains that Hans believed in an afterlife divided into multiple realms, and notes as specific visual evidence the “registers depicting harmonious life at the top.” This accurate information earned the point.

Task D: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific visual or contextual evidence to explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han dynasty beliefs about the universe. (1 point)

The response earned this point by explaining that the “circles in the middle made by the dragons” symbolically demonstrate Han dynasty beliefs regarding human connection with nature and spirit worlds just as “the dead go from this world to the next.”

Question 4 (continued)

Task E: Accurately uses specific visual or contextual evidence to explain why this work of art has been interpreted as a symbol of elite social status. (1 point)

The response explains that the funeral banner of Lady Dai was “specially made with expensive materials,” evidence of the wealth and high standing of the patron, which earned the point. The response continues by explaining the fact that funerary banners are “only given to important or wealthy individuals upon death,” evidence that would also have earned this point as only the elite could afford funerary items like this one.

Sample: 4B

Score: 3

Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the Funeral Banner of Lady Dai. (1 point)

The response describes the banner as “mostly painted with Red, blues and whites” as evidence of the predominant color of red in its design, and so earned the point. The response also describes the funeral banner as a robe, but this is inaccurate.

Task B: Accurately describes the original location of the work shown. (1 point)

The response describes the banner as “found covering the coffin/tomb deep underground,” evidence that earned this point.

Task C: Accurately uses ONE example of specific visual or contextual evidence to explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han dynasty beliefs about the universe. (1 point)

The response earned the point by explaining the Han dynasty belief that the afterlife is composed of various realms distinct from one another” “through its 3 separate sections, the top one being the heavenly realm, the middle described as to represent the Earthly realm and as the very bottom the depiction of the underworld.”

Task D: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific visual or contextual evidence to explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han dynasty beliefs about the universe. (0 points)

The response did not earn this point. There is no additional attempt to explain Han dynasty beliefs about the universe.

Task E: Accurately uses specific visual or contextual evidence to explain why this work of art has been interpreted as a symbol of elite social status. (0 points)

The response did not earn this point. It mentions the inclusion of dragons “which are highly important to the culture,” and “often relating to the higher class and emperor,” but this lacks detail explaining the banner as a symbol of Lady Dai’s elite social status. The response also makes a reference to a “family crest at the right corner” but this is inaccurate.

Question 4 (continued)

Sample: 4C

Score: 2

Task A: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the Funeral Banner of Lady Dai. (1 point)

The response earned the point by accurately describing the banner’s “interlocking designs on it with red warm colors and blue cool colors.”

Task B: Accurately describes the original location of the work shown. (1 point)

The response describes the original geographic location of the banner as “China,” accurate evidence that earned the point.

Task C: Accurately uses ONE example of specific visual or contextual evidence to explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han dynasty beliefs about the universe. (0 points)

The response did not earn this point. The response states that “The subject matter shows Han Dynasty’s universe belief through the depiction of an animal used as symbolism in the top right of the funeral banner,” but this lacks sufficient explanation of the connection between the animal imagery and Han beliefs.

Task D: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific visual or contextual evidence to explain how the subject matter of the work demonstrates Han dynasty beliefs about the universe. (0 points)

The response did not earn this point. It attempts to explain that Han dynasty belief is demonstrated “through the patterns on the banner representing the higher ups,” but this statement is too general.

Task E: Accurately uses specific visual or contextual evidence to explain why this work of art has been interpreted as a symbol of elite social status. (0 points)

The response did not earn this point. It attempts to explain why the work is considered as a symbol of elite social status because it belonged to Lady Dai, “who was a ruler in the Han Dynasty. . . and highly ranked in social status” but does not offer evidence beyond the information provided in the prompt connecting Lady Dai’s social status to the banner.