
AP[®] Art History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free-Response Question 2

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Question 2: Long Essay: Visual/Contextual Analysis**6 points****General Scoring Notes**

- Except where otherwise noted, each point of the rubric is earned independently. For instance, a student could earn one or two points for evidence (Row C) or earn the point for analysis and reasoning (Row D) without earning a point for claim or thesis (Row B).
- **Accuracy:** The components of this rubric each require that students demonstrate art historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, a response may contain errors that do not detract from its overall quality, provided the art historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.
- **Clarity:** Exam essays should be considered first drafts and thus may contain grammatical errors. Those errors will not be counted against a student unless they obscure the successful demonstration of art historical content knowledge and skills described in the rubric.

Contemporary artists often use installations to communicate political, cultural, or personal meaning.

Select and completely identify one work of art from the list below or other relevant work from the Global Contemporary (1980 CE to Present) in which the artist uses an installation to communicate political, cultural, or personal meaning.

Explain how the installation communicates political, cultural, or personal meaning.

In your response, you should do the following:

- Provide two accurate identifiers for the work of art you have selected.
- Respond to the prompt with an art historically defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Support your claim with at least two examples of relevant visual and/or contextual evidence.
- Explain how the evidence supports the claim.
- Corroborate or qualify your claim by explaining relevant connections, providing nuance, or considering diverse views.

When identifying the work you select, you should try to include all of the following identifiers: title or designation, artist, culture of origin, date of creation, and materials. You will earn credit for the identification if you provide at least two accurate identifiers, but you will not be penalized if any additional identifiers you provide are inaccurate. If you select a work from the list below, you must include at least two accurate identifiers beyond those that are given.

Object 1: *Shibboleth*

Object 2: *En la Barbería no se Lloro (No Crying Allowed in the Barbershop)*

Object 3: *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
A Identification (0–1 points)	0 points Provides one or no accurate identifiers.	1 point Provides <u>two</u> accurate identifiers for the selected work of art.	
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Object 1: <i>Shibboleth</i>	Object 2: <i>En la Barbería no se Lloro (No Crying Allowed in the Barbershop)</i>	Object 3: <i>Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)</i>
	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artist: Doris Salcedo• Date: 2007–2008 CE, or any date within 10 years of creation• Materials: Installation• Culture of origin: Colombia, South America, or Latin America	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artist: Pepón Osorio• Date: 1994, or any date within 10 years of creation• Materials: Mixed-media installation (e.g., barber chair, photographs, found objects, paint, videos)• Culture of origin: America, Puerto Rico, or Nuyorican	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artist: Ai Weiwei• Date: 2010–2011 CE, or any date within 10 years of creation• Materials: Sculpted and painted porcelain• Culture of origin: China

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
B Claim/Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points Rephrases or restates the prompt. OR Makes a claim that is not defensible.		1 point Provides an art historically defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	The response must make an art historically defensible claim or thesis that responds to the prompt rather than merely restating or rephrasing the prompt. A claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place that can be anywhere in the response. A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.		
	Object 1: <i>Shibboleth</i>	Object 2: <i>En la Barbería no se Lloro (No Crying Allowed in the Barbershop)</i>	Object 3: <i>Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)</i>
	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The artist’s work explores issues of being an outsider.<i>Shibboleth</i> addresses the experience of (European) immigrants.Salcedo’s long crack in the floor offers a message about changing perspective.	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Osorio’s installation addresses his feelings about Puerto Rican culture.The artist’s work explores Puerto Rican identity.Osorio’s barbershop examines the relationship between art and popular culture.	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ai Weiwei’s artwork examines the role of individuality in China.The installation comments on the role of mass production in the modern world.Ai Weiwei’s art comments on economic inequality in China.The artist examines the history of Chinese porcelain.The work serves as contemporary political commentary.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
C Evidence (0–2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Provides <u>one</u> specific example of visual OR contextual evidence relevant to the selected work of art and the topic of the prompt.	2 points Provides <u>two</u> specific examples of visual and/or contextual evidence relevant to the selected work of art and the topic of the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	The evidence provided must be accurate, relevant, and art historically defensible.		
	Object 1: <i>Shibboleth</i>	Object 2: <i>En la Barbería no se Lloro (No Crying Allowed in the Barbershop)</i>	Object 3: <i>Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)</i>
	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: Visual Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work is a long crack in a concrete floor. The opening ran the distance of the installation space. The depth and width of the opening varies (i.e., it changes from a small opening to several inches wide and up to two feet deep). Inside the crack is a concrete cast of a Colombian rock face. A chain link fence was placed inside the opening. Wire mesh can be seen in both sides of the gash. The crack in the floor has been repaired, but a “scar” is still visible in the floor. Contextual Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viewers can walk around/look into the opening. 	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: Visual Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work is filled with colorful objects and videos. The installation includes objects found in a barber shop (barber’s chair, mirror, comb, scissors, etc.). There are photos of Latin American men. The artist includes the Puerto Rican flag. A pool table occupies the center. Hubcaps are placed around the walls. There are videos of young men crying. The space is decorated with baseballs/objects/trinkets (i.e., <i>chucherías</i>) associated with Puerto Rican (popular) culture. The wall mural depicts roses and bullets. Contextual Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The barbershop is a space traditionally associated with masculinity/where men congregate. 	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: Visual Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sunflower seeds are made of (painted) porcelain. There are more than 100 million seeds. The seeds are life size. Each seed is white with a black design. From a distance, the grouping of seeds has a uniform (gray) color. Contextual Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The seeds filled the installation space. There is a long history of porcelain ceramics in Chinese culture. Originally, visitors physically interacted with the seeds (e.g., they could walk on them, lie in them, and even take them). Sunflower imagery was used by the Chinese government during the Cultural Revolution. The seeds were made by artisans working by hand.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work uses the metaphor of a <i>shibboleth</i> (a belief or custom that differentiates one group from another and can be exclusionary). • The viewer can change their visual perspective of the work as they interact with the opening. • Photographs document the original crack in the floor (now that it has been sealed). • Salcedo uses materials that are traditionally used to create borders/fences. • The work was installed in the Tate Gallery's Turbine Hall (in London, England). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The installation was displayed in an actual storefront in a community with a large Puerto Rican population. • The work was installed in a Puerto Rican community (in Hartford, Connecticut). • Creating the work was a collaboration between the artist and the local community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The artisans worked in a region known for porcelain clay production. • The work was installed in the Tate Gallery's Turbine Hall (in London, England). • Sunflower seeds were a Chinese symbol of solidarity during hard times/famine. • Sunflower imagery is a symbol used for Chairman Mao.
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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
D Analysis and Reasoning (0–1 points)	0 points	1 point	
	Does not meet the criteria for one point.		
	Explains how the visual and/or contextual evidence provided <u>supports the argument</u> .		
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	The response must explain the relationship between the evidence provided and an argument about the prompt.		
Object 1: <i>Shibboleth</i>	Object 2: <i>En la Barbería no se Lloro (No Crying Allowed in the Barbershop)</i>	Object 3: <i>Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)</i>	
Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The visible line created by the installation symbolizes the different ways people/nations/cultures are divided.The wire mesh and other construction materials used in the installation represent mechanisms used to separate people.The mark on the floor that remains after the installation suggests a scar (emotional or physical) that is lasting evidence of past experience/trauma.The physical separation created by the installation reminds visitors that people may be excluded because they lack access to things they need (e.g., language/social customs/institutional systems).The modern concept of a shibboleth connects to the othering of different populations.	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The objects included in the installation are associated with Puerto Rican culture, demonstrating the connection between material objects and cultural identity.The imagery/materials used in the work challenge cultural ideas about the associations between masculinity/stoicism and emotion/weakness.The installation’s use of materials and community space challenges traditional ideas of art as distinct from everyday life.	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The porcelain used to create the installation encouraged viewers to consider the history of ceramics and trade in China.Ai Weiwei’s choice to have the seeds made by hand encourages commentary on China’s role as a global manufacturing power.The millions of seeds are considered a single work, referencing the challenge of being an individual in society.Ai Weiwei used sunflower seeds because they evoke specific meaning in Chinese history and culture.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
E Complexity (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates a complex understanding of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify a claim that addresses the prompt.	
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	The response may demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Explaining relevant and insightful connections between the evidence and the claimConfirming the validity of a claim by corroborating multiple perspectivesExplaining the nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variablesQualifying or modifying a claim by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence This complex understanding must be developed in the response and consist of more than a phrase or reference.		
	Object 1: <i>Shibboleth</i>	Object 2: <i>En la Barbería no se Lloro (No Crying Allowed in the Barbershop)</i>	Object 3: <i>Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)</i>
	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following if appropriate elaboration is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">As a Colombian artist working internationally, Salcedo feels empathy for those that are considered outsiders.The modern concept of a <i>shibboleth</i> is derived from the Biblical account where the term served to distinguish one cultural group from another.Salcedo’s installations often refer to the political/cultural violence that has occurred in Colombia, the country where she grew up.Her work often relates to the loss of her own family members.Salcedo’s work is a commentary on museum collection and display practices.	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following if appropriate elaboration is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The first haircut is seen as a rite of passage of growing up.The work’s original placement within a Puerto Rican community in Hartford, Connecticut, contributes to/reinforces its overall meaning.The artist was inspired to make artwork based on his experiences as a sociologist/social worker (in the Bronx).The barbershop is a space for multigenerational interaction for many Puerto Ricans.	Examples of acceptable responses may include the following if appropriate elaboration is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Although Ai Weiwei invited visitors to interact with the work, access was restricted (after the first week) because of dust/safety concerns.Ai Weiwei used clay and artisans from a region historically associated with porcelain production: Jingdezhen (sometimes called the Porcelain Capital).The artist has been arrested/detained/under surveillance by his government.Ai Weiwei addresses human rights in his works.The artist bases his work on conceptual art that he experienced when he was an art student in New York City.Ai Weiwei uses the internet and social media to criticize the government.

In the Global Contemporary period, art further took on greater meaning as artists increasingly began to use their platform to communicate political, cultural, or personal meanings. One such example of this is The Vietnam War Memorial, designed by Maya Ziegler in 1980, carved out of polished blackened granite and located in Washington, DC, because the memorial communicated political meaning through the honoring of American lives who died while serving their country in a foreign conflict.

The Vietnam war was one of the most controversial and deadliest American conflicts in recent history. Fought after the conclusion of the second world war, American troops were deployed to Vietnam to stop the spread of communism. The conflict, never declared by congress as an act of war, lasted roughly 3 decades and took the lives of countless young American men abroad.

The artist in charge of the completion of the memorial, Maya Ziegler, decided to make the memorial almost interactive for the viewer. Ziegler utilized a reflective material, and carved the names of every soldier dead or missing because of the conflict. So, when the viewer views the memorial, they are forced to look introspectively and consider the harsh realities that was war.

Furthermore, by including every name of every soldier who was killed or missing in the conflict, the memorial emphasizes the pure amount of lives lost in the foreign affair. Because Ziegler included every single name of every single American soldier who died, she makes a political statement by valuing the common 18-year-old dead American soldier with the 55-year-old 5 star American general.

Both the reflective/interactive aspect of the memorial, and the conscious choice to include every name of every dead soldier supports the idea that the memorial communicates political meaning through the honoring of American lives who died while serving their country in a foreign conflict, because both pieces of evidence are surrounded around the American soldier: the exact "figure" Ziegler meant to honor.

There was a consensus at the time of creation that Ziegler's choice of material: polished blackened limestone underemphasized the importance of the memorial and what the memorial aimed to honor. There was a group of critics who believed such a simple material was disrespectful in representing such an important and large number of Americans who died for their country. Yet Ziegler took an opposing view, believing the simplicity of the cut limestone highlighted the beauty and importance of the memorial: the names of the dead soldiers. To Ziegler, that was the focal point of the

piece and the reason it was commissioned by the U.S. Government. The names, not the material, was important in communicating the political meaning of the piece.

To conclude, the Vietnam War Memorial communicated political meaning because it aimed to honor American lives who died while serving their country in a foreign conflict through a reflective and interactive display and the ability to honor and remember every soldier who died in the Vietnam War.

Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds), is a global contemporary instalation made by Ai Weiwei, it is made up of a million porcilin sunflower seeds, and is located in China. This work sends a cultural message, through the history of porcilin in china.

It is about how the people of China have a long rich history of working with porcilin even as merchants. It is one of the things that the country is know for and that is why it is sometimes given the name "china". One of the leaders of the country would call the people his sunflowers, and that is why the artist chose to make sunflower seeds.

This work also shows how migration can be interpreted in history because of the movement of the seeds. Since the seeds are not attached to the ground in anyway, they are lose and can be moved around just by walking on the installation.

A work that often use intalliations to communicate political, cultural or personal meaning is Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds). Kui Hua Zi was made in China. The materials used for these sunflower seeds were clay and paint. This was made around the 1980 CE. The Artist for the Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower seeds) was Ie Wei Wei. These sunflowers seeds went through many processes to be made. First they were put into a mold then later on put in the oven to harden the clay and may women later on after it was harden would paint each sunflower seed individually. The Kui Hua Zi (sunflower Seeds) shows cultural or personal meaning in their work. These sunflower seeds were made in a small town in china. Everyone in that town helped make these sunflower seeds, thousands of people were there to help make these. Turning into a cultural, personal meaning in that town. The sunflower seeds were symbolized for good luck.

Question 2

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

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses on AP Central*.

Sample: 2A

Task A – Identification Score: 1

Task B – Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Task C – Evidence Score: 2

Task D – Analysis and Reasoning Score: 1

Task E – Complexity Score: 1

Score: 6

Task A: Provides two accurate identifiers for the work of art selected. (1 point)

The response earned the point by accurately identifying the title of the “Vietnam War Memorial” and the material as “granite” for a comparison work that was not provided by the prompt. It could have also earned the point for identifying the date of creation as “1980” and the work’s location, “Washington, DC.” Although the response incorrectly identifies the artist as “Maya Ziegler,” the inaccurate information does not negate the point because other correct identifiers are provided.

Task B: Responds to the prompt with an art historically defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning. (1 point)

The response earned the point by claiming “the memorial communicated policial meaning through the honoring of American lives who died while serving their country in a foreign conflict.”

Task C: Supports the claim with at least two examples of relevant visual and/or contextual evidence. (2 points)

The response earned the first point by including “[t]he Vietnam war was one of the most controvesial and deadliest American conflicts in recent history” as one example of contextual evidence that supports the claim. The response could have also earned the point for including “American troops were deployed to Vietnam to stop the spread of communism,” or the conflict was “never declared by congress as an act of war,” as additional examples of contextual evidence that support the claim.

The response earned the second point by including “[t]he artist ... utilized a reflective material” as an example of visual evidence that supports the claim. The response could have also earned the point for stating that the artist “carved the names of ever soilder” into the stone material as another example of visual evidence that supports the claim.

Task D: Explains how the evidence supports the claim. (1 point)

The response earned the point for explaining that “by including every name of every soilder who was killed or missing in the conflict, the memorial emphaisizes the pure amount of lives lost.” The response could have also earned the point for explaining that because the artist “included every single name of every single American soilder who died, she makes a political statement by valuling the common 18-year-old dead American soilder with the 55-year-old 5 star American general.”

Question 2 (continued)

Task E: Corroborates or qualifies the claim by explaining relevant connections, providing nuance, or considering diverse views. (1 point)

The response earned the point by considering diverse views. The response explains, “There was a group of critics who believed such a simple material was disrespectful in representing such an important and large number of Americans who died for their country. Yet Ziegler took an opposing view, believing the simplicity of the cut limestone highlighted the beauty and importance of the memorial: the names of the dead soldiers.”

Sample: 2B

Task A – Identification Score: 1

Task B – Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Task C – Evidence Score: 2

Task D – Analysis and Reasoning Score: 0

Task E – Complexity Score: 0

Score: 4

Task A: Provides two accurate identifiers for the work of art selected. (1 point)

The response earned the point for correctly identifying the artist, “Ai Weiwei,” and the material as “porcelain.” The response also identifies the work’s culture of origin, “China.”

Task B: Responds to the prompt with an art historically defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning. (1 point)

The response earned the point by claiming that the “work sends a cultural message, through the history of porcelain in China.” The response also attempts to make an additional claim by stating “[t]his work also shows how migration can be interpreted in history because of the movement of the seeds.” However, this statement could not have earned the point because it is inaccurate.

Task C: Supports the claim with at least two examples of relevant visual and/or contextual evidence. (2 points)

The response earned the first point by including “[i]t is about how the people of China have a long rich history of working with porcelain even as merchants” as one example of contextual evidence that supports the claim.

The response earned the second point by including “[o]ne of the leaders of the country would call the people his sunflowers, and that is why the artist chose to make sunflower seeds” as another example of contextual evidence that supports the claim.

The response could have also earned the point for including “[s]ince the seeds are not attached to the ground in anyway, they are loose and can be moved around just by walking on the installation” as another example of contextual evidence that supports the claim.

Task D: Explains how the evidence supports the claim. (0 points)

The response did not earn the point because it does not attempt to link the evidence to an art historically defensible claim.

Question 2 (continued)

Task E: Corroborates or qualifies the claim by explaining relevant connections, providing nuance, or considering diverse views. (0 points)

The response did not earn the point because it does not attempt to corroborate or qualify the claim.

Sample: 2C

Task A – Identification Score: 1

Task B – Claim/Thesis Score: 0

Task C – Evidence Score: 1

Task D – Analysis and Reasoning Score: 0

Task E – Complexity Score: 0

Score: 2

Task A: Provides two accurate identifiers for the work of art selected. (1 point)

The response earned the point for accurately identifying the country of origin, “China,” and the artist as “Wei Wei.” The response also accurately identifies the materials “clay and paint.”

Task B: Responds to the prompt with an art historically defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning. (0 points)

The response did not earn the point. The response attempts to make a claim by stating “[t]he Kui Hua Zi (sunflower Seeds) shows cultural or personal meaning in their work.” However, this did not earn the point because it is a restatement of the prompt.

Task C: Supports the claim with at least two examples of relevant visual and/or contextual evidence. (1 point)

The response earned the first point by including “[f]irst they were put into a mold then later on put in the oven to harden the clay and may women later on after it was harden would paint each sunflower seed individually” as accurate contextual evidence to support the claim.

The response did not earn the second point because it does not attempt to provide a second example of relevant visual or contextual evidence.

Task D: Explains how the evidence supports the claim. (0 points)

The response did not earn the point because it does not attempt to link the evidence to an art historically defensible claim.

Task E: Corroborates or qualifies the claim by explaining relevant connections, providing nuance, or considering diverse views. (0 points)

The response did not earn the point because it does not attempt to corroborate or qualify the claim to demonstrate deeper understanding of the topic.