



ART HISTORY

9799/03

Paper 3 Thematic Topics

May/June 2016

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2016 series for most Cambridge IGCSE[®], Cambridge International A and AS Level components and some Cambridge O Level components.

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Assessment Objectives

AO1	Make a close visual and/or other form of detailed analysis of a work of art, architecture or design, paying attention to composition, structure or lay-out, use of colour/tone, texture, the handling of space and the manipulation of light effects as appropriate.
AO2	Place works of art in their historical and cultural context; both in relation to other works and in relation to factors such as artistic theory, patronage, religion and technical limitations, showing understanding of ‘function’ and ‘purpose’ where possible.
AO3	Demonstrate the ability to distinguish between accepted historical fact, art historical theory and their own personal judgements.
AO4	Present a relevant, coherent and informed independent response, organising information, ideas, descriptions and arguments and using appropriate terminology.
AO5	Demonstrate evidence of sustained personal research.

All questions carry 20 marks each.

Marking should be done holistically taking into consideration the weighting of marks for each AO as they are reflected in the descriptor.

The question specific notes describe the area covered by the question and define its key elements. Candidates may answer the question from a wide variety of different angles using different emphases, and arguing different points of view. There is no one required answer and the notes are not exhaustive. However, candidates must answer the question set and not their own question and the question specific notes provide the parameters within which markers may expect the discussion to dwell.

Use the generic marking scheme Levels of Response to find the mark. First find the level which best describes the qualities of the essay, then at a point within the level using a mark out of 20. Add the 3 marks out of 20 together to give a total mark out of 60 for the script as a whole.

Examiners will look for the best fit, not a perfect fit when applying the levels. Where there are conflicting strengths then note should be taken of the relative weightings of the different assessment objectives to determine which band is best suitable. Examiners will provisionally award the middle mark in the band and then moderate up/down according to individual qualities within the answer.

Rubric infringement

If a candidate has answered four questions instead of three, mark all questions and add the marks for the three highest questions together to give the total marks. If the candidate has answered fewer questions than required or not finished an essay, mark what is there and write “rubric error” clearly on the front page of the script.

Levels of Response

18–20	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive, detailed development and complex visual analysis in response to specific examples or in certain circumstances a single example. Imaginative and sensitive understanding of materials and techniques. Extensive and questioning contextual evidence of historical sources and concepts other than visual or other forms of analysis. Excellent ability to distinguish between fact, theory and personal judgement. Excellent, sustained organisation and development of argument in response to the question with outstanding use of subject terminology.
15–17	Very good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed and extensively developed analysis in response to specific examples or in certain circumstances a single example. Thorough understanding of materials and techniques. Confident and detailed contextual evidence of historical sources and concepts other than visual or other forms of analysis. Assured ability to distinguish between fact, theory and personal judgement. A thoughtful and well-argued response to the question with very confident use of subject terminology.
12–14	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant analysis with some detail and development in response to specific examples or in certain circumstances a single example. Solid but descriptive rather than analytical understanding of materials and techniques. Well-understood, solid contextual evidence of historical sources and concepts other than visual or other forms of analysis. Good ability to distinguish between fact, theory and personal judgement. A well-argued but not as extensively developed response to the question. Competent use of subject terminology.
9–11	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly relevant analysis in response to specific examples or in certain circumstances a single example, but lacking detail and development. Limited understanding of materials and techniques. Some examples of contextual evidence of historical sources and concepts other than visual or other forms of analysis, but with some inaccuracies and limited range. Distinguishes between fact, theory and personal judgement. A mainly relevant response to the question and use of subject terminology but lacking in structure and development.
5–8	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis lacks detail and has limited development. Materials and techniques barely acknowledged. Limited and inaccurate examples of contextual evidence of historical sources and concepts other than the specific case study analysis, but with some inaccuracies and limited range. Barely distinguishes between fact, theory and personal judgement. An uneven, basic, largely narrative response to the question. Includes some relevant points but development is very limited <u>or</u> contains padding <u>and/or</u> has very obvious omissions. Little use of subject terminology.

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1–4	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little analysis of poorly chosen examples that lack relevance OR no examples singled out for analysis at all. No acknowledgement of materials and techniques. • Insubstantial contextual evidence of historical sources and concepts other than the specific case study analysis. • Little evidence of the ability to distinguish between fact, theory and personal judgement. • Poor knowledge and understanding of the material. Insubstantial, irrelevant with little attempt to answer the question. Almost no use of subject terminology.
0		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No rewardable content.

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Topic 1: Art and Architecture in the City

1 Architects frequently travel to a city to study and learn from existing buildings. What would they learn from a study of your city?

Candidates should choose a variety of buildings to showcase their point. Buildings chosen should be analysed in order to ascertain why they might be worth studying and what could be learnt from them. A variety of styles might enhance this answer.

Why these buildings are particularly influential might be considered. Possible ideas include: chains of influence; use of materials; structural form; decorative systems; stylistic interpretation or fitness to function. It goes without saying that the notion of Architects does not have to be specific.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

2 How have painters responded to the city of your choice?

Candidates should choose a variety (or at least two painters) who have lived and worked in the city for a period of time. Foreign artists, who can of course be included can be interpreted as non-local. Specific works which reflect areas of the city or buildings and patrons may be considered. An idea of whether the images are documentary or imaginary might be interesting. Do the candidates' chosen artists differ in their interpretations?

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

3 How can public sculpture be an expression of either religion or politics or both?

Candidates may choose a variety of sculptures which can be seen by the public whether in galleries or in the public arena. The chosen pieces may reflect people or stories from history where the themes are specifically religious or/and political.

Some narrative may be explored. Visual analysis of these works will be necessary.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

4 How can art galleries and museums be providers of culture for a modern audience? Discuss with reference to at least two institutions in your city.

Candidates may choose two museums or galleries to compare and contrast. 'Providers of culture' must be addressed in responses. This is an opportunity to address how contemporary artists are showcased and how the art of the past can be made interesting and relevant to a contemporary audience. In what various ways do these institutions aim at and achieve some didactic ideas of teaching or expressing culture? Wall plaques, books, films etc. may be considered. The layout of the building may be a consideration. Specific works may be considered that display didactic messages.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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5 Compare and contrast two public areas of your city which help us to understand its history.

Public areas could include piazzas or parks and the urban planning contained within them to include buildings and public sculptures.

A comparison of the setting, layout, commission/function and design of two public spaces should be touched upon, as well as issues of patronage governing the characteristics of the two different areas.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

6 What role can patrons play in shaping the appearance of the city?

One or more patrons may be chosen. Some discussion of their commissions and their relationships with the artists or architects may be relevant. To discuss the appearance of the city it will be necessary to pick specific areas/buildings/galleries etc. and consider how the shape of the city is defined by these areas.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

7 In what ways has your city been represented in either film or photography?

The candidate can choose to analyse the work of various photographers or film makers who have used the city either as the subject or backdrop of their work. Specific photographs and films may represent the city in a variety of ways. Some comparison between works may be useful here.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

8 How does your city pay homage to its heroes? Discuss with reference to a number of works.

Some consideration and analysis of the idea of the hero of a city may be undertaken. Is the hero someone who has saved the city or financially helped the city? Specific works/buildings may be considered in the light of the above. To answer the question how: evidence may be visible in terms of sculpture, for example, or the 'hero' is written about in travelogues of the city.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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Topic 2: Landscape

9 How do landscapes in non-Western art explore the relationship between man and the land?

Examples may be taken from any non-Western culture. Answers must engage with the specified topic of the relationship between man and the land. For example, an essay on Chinese landscapes may note the expression of the need felt to escape the everyday world and courtly intrigue and withdraw into the permanence of landscape to achieve self-cultivation (e.g. artists of the Tang Dynasty) and later (in the Song Dynasty) the symbolism of nature representing the well-ordered state, with emotional relationships evoked by subtle atmospheric effects.

Candidates should discuss specific works by individual painters where these can be named (E.g. Northern Song: Fan Kuan, Guo Xi or Dong Yuan. E.g. Song Dynasty: Zhang Zeduan; Yuan Dynasty, Huang Gongwang or Wu Zen etc.). Through careful analysis of such works, candidates should suggest the values and yearnings expressed, the emotional effects achieved by the treatment of subject matter, and explain the cultural and political backgrounds which help the viewer to decode the scene.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

10 What different approaches can we find in Dutch landscape art?

Answers should focus on variety of style and treatment in a selection of works: placid rural scenes (e.g. Salomon van Ruysdael); works depicting the power of nature (e.g. Jacob van Ruisdael); bright and prosperous landscapes (e.g. Albert Cuyp); dense woodlands (e.g. Meindert Hobbema) etc.

Variety can also be discussed in terms of the degree of Italian influence observable, scale of works and approaches to composition. Essays should work carefully through selected examples, and employ some cross-reference to bring out the differences between them.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

11 Compare and contrast the treatment of landscape in a selection of religious paintings. Your examples may be taken from any period or periods.

'Religious' and 'spiritual' are terms open to interpretation, and it is up to candidates to argue that a painting is religious / spiritual in terms of its mood, allusive imagery and symbolism.

Early case studies could include visionary landscapes (e.g. van Eyck The Ghent Altarpiece (1432); Bosch The Garden of Earthly Delights (1480–90)); depictions of saints in the wilderness (e.g. Patinir Landscape with St Jerome (c.1515)) and the treatment of landscape in narrative scenes (e.g. Bellini and Mantegna's versions of The Agony in the Garden or Adam Elsheimer The Flight into Egypt (1609)). Baroque examples could include Claude Lorrain, Landscape with Hagar and the Angel (1646).

Later possible artists include William Blake, Samuel Palmer, the Pre-Raphaelites (e.g. William Dyce The Woman of Samaria (1860)). Examples of modern works which would suit this question (e.g. Stanley Spencer The Resurrection of the Soldiers (Sandham Memorial Chapel, 1927–32)) or Graham Sutherland Sun Setting between Hills (1937) with imagery suggesting symbols of the Crucifixion). All of these examples presuppose Christian subject matter, but of course non-Western religions are equally valid.

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The focus of answers must be on ‘the treatment of landscape,’ and discussion should consider the relation of setting to subject matter and the ways in which landscape affects our emotional and intellectual response to a scene. ‘Paintings’ are specified in the question, so examples should not be in another medium. Relevant context may include texts of the time such as poetry or artist’s own writings (Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*).

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

12 How have artists used landscape to convey ideas about the past?

The subject is open to wide interpretation, and the following suggestions are indicative only:

Nostalgia for a golden age (e.g. Titian/Giorgione, *Concert Champêtre* c.1511); evocations of the classical past (e.g. Claude, Poussin); fantasies of a rural idyll (e.g. Fragonard, *A Shepherd Playing the Flute while a Peasant Girl Sings* (1732–1806)); Romantic images of mysterious primal landscapes (e.g. Caspar David Friedrich); the bucolic images of Constable and other painters of the English landscape tradition, and the nostalgic effect of photographs which may point us to vanished worlds (e.g. Walker Evans, Fay Godwin). Essays may consider memory in terms of individual recollections, or the memory of a community or wider group (e.g. Aboriginal art as a shared memory of *The Dreaming*). Candidates should offer close readings of selected works, argue convincingly for their relation to memory and consider their effects on the viewer.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

13 ‘The whole of nature is an endless demonstration of shape and form’ (Henry Moore). Discuss, with reference to any landscape art you have studied.

Candidates may select from the whole corpus of landscape art, but the focus of answers must be on the stipulated terms of ‘shape and form.’ Hence the treatment of such matters as composition, volume and contours should be central to the discussion. Contrasts may usefully be drawn e.g. between the diffusion of form into light in some of the work of the Impressionists, contrasted with Cézanne’s explorations of form in his paintings of Mont Ste-Victoire.

Succeeding Cubist investigations of form (e.g. Braque); the abstraction of natural forms (e.g. Kandinsky, Ben Nicholson); arrangement of landscape forms in panoramic images (e.g. Thomas Cole, Ansel Adams); the imitation of the properties of natural elements (e.g. Hepworth, Moore), or, the actual incorporation of natural objects within works (e.g. Long, Goldsworthy) suggest themselves as possible avenues of investigation, among many others.

Candidates should be able to deploy relevant terms accurately, and discuss the strategies behind artists’ approach to form, and the expressive results they achieve.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

14 Compare and contrast different representations of the landscape of any one country.

Candidates may choose countries which figure heavily in histories of landscape art, for example, Italy, the Netherlands, France or England. Or they may take others (e.g. images of Spain by Sunyer or Miró; Germany in paintings by Albrecht Altdorfer or Caspar David Friedrich etc.) or choose a smaller region: a discussion of views of Wales by, for example, Turner, Edward Burra and Graham Sutherland would suit the terms of the question perfectly. Examples may also be from non-Western countries.

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Answers should follow the instruction to ‘compare and contrast’, cross-referring between their examples to draw out their differences in technique, treatment and effect.

Some contextual material may be helpful in elucidating the particular importance of the place in the work of a particular school or tradition (e.g. a comparison of First World War landscapes, for example, would need to say a little about that conflict and the circumstances in which the works were produced).

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

15 Assess the work of any one landscape artist working since 1900.

The question asks for a monographic account of a single artist working in the twentieth and/or twenty-first centuries.

An assessment is required, and this should include consideration of the chosen artist’s significance within a tradition, the characteristics of his or her pictorial language and the nature of their achievement.

Some reference to history and influences would be a useful context, and the reader should get a sense of why the chosen artist is important and how they fit into a wider art historical narrative.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

16 How have artists sought to express the inner world of human feeling through their depiction of the external world of landscape?

Candidates may draw from any period and medium, and from both Western and non-Western examples. Discussions of the sublime and awe-inspiring emotions evoked in Romantic art (e.g. Friedrich, Turner); the spontaneous and transient passage of feeling traced in Impressionist work, for example; the inner intensity transposed into the landscapes of van Gogh and Gauguin, or, the subconscious preoccupations alluded to in the dreamscapes of de Chirico, Dalí and Ernst all answer the terms of the question.

Expressionist works by Munch, and Kandinsky’s paintings, discussed with reference to his writings on the spiritual in art, would make good choices. The majestic landscapes of American tradition and their sublimation in the work of the Abstract Expressionists, or feelings about and towards human intervention in the environment in the work of the Land Art movement could also be discussed here. Candidates need to find adequate vocabulary for the emotions that they discuss and argue persuasively for its evocation in the work discussed.

Relevant contextual material should be referred to when it helps us to appreciate what feelings are likely to be in operation in the works discussed. Despite the many examples suggested here, a good answer may stick to three or four cases studies, as candidates are advised to do.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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Topic 3: Portraiture

17 Compare and contrast three portraits from the ancient world.

Candidates may choose from the whole range of Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Hellenist portrait art. To achieve interesting contrasts, realist (e.g. Fayum portraits) and idealist (e.g. sculptures of Alexander the Great) portraits may be compared. Examples may be in any medium: coins, mosaics, public statues. Functions, ranging from commemorative to propagandistic, should be discussed, with reference to the scale and original location of works.

Relevant context, such as details of the historical individual, and the symbolism in imperial portrait, should be clearly explained.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

18 To what extent did portraiture undergo a ‘Renaissance’ in the 15th and 16th centuries?

Candidates should show an understanding of the concept of Renaissance, implying a rebirth of antique forms and values in the visual arts.

Examples should be given: the revival of ancient forms such as medals and busts (e.g. the Alberti medal (c.1446–50) or Donatello’s Bust of Niccolò da Uzzano (c.1432)); the use of classical profile (affirmation of worldly accomplishment rather than Christian humility) visible in tomb sculptures such as Rossellino’s Tomb of Leonardo Bruni in Santa Croce (1444–47); the celebration of classical values such as scholarship (e.g. Quentin Metsys Desiderius Erasmus (1517) and the use of classical architectural space (Agnolo Bronzino Ugolino Martelli (1535–38) may all be investigated here.

At the same time, candidates may wish to stress the continuity of traditional Christian values and treatments in the period, visible for example in donor and other devotional portraits (e.g. Jan van Eyck Madonna of Chancellor Rolin (c.1435)), and point out important developments not obviously related to antiquity, such as the effects achieved through oil paint in the Netherlands.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

19 How have portrait artists depicted the different stages of human life?

Candidates should choose images which follow, broadly, the Ages of Man. Illustrative examples: William Hogarth The Graham Children (1742); Domenico Ghirlandaio Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni (c.1487); Nicholas Hilliard Young Man Among Roses (c.1587), or, El Greco Giulio Clovio (c.1570).

Discussion may take any direction, following candidates’ interest, but should include some consideration of how artists have depicted the age of their subjects – through expression, tones, dress, posture, action etc. – and what we might understand images to be saying about childhood, youth, old age etc. Relevant contextual knowledge, such as information about the circumstances of the subject and the work, should be used where relevant. Works may be from any period and in any medium.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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20 Compare and contrast portraits in different artistic styles.

Candidates should show a familiarity with the meaning of certain stylistic labels: classical, Realist, Baroque, Expressionist, Cubist etc.

Examples should be chosen which allow for a discussion of the sense of those terms: a discussion of portraits by Joshua Reynolds would include a critical discussion of his classical influences while working during a period often referred to as the 'Rococo' and the aspiration to the timeless truths of History painting through the use of poses derived from ancient sculpture and the employment of allegory. Candidates may discuss the difficulties and shortcomings of stylistic labels in doing justice to the individual qualities of works and artists. The key requirements are serious engagement with the concept of style, and close description of individual works.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

21 How have portrait artists made their subjects look heroic?

Heroic art could include depictions of kings and emperors (e.g. the equestrian portrait tradition and/or David's portraits of Napoleon); military figures or heroes in the creative arts (e.g. Delacroix's Portrait of Chopin (1838) and/or Manet's Portrait of Zola (1868)), or, subjects involved in a struggle (e.g. Frida Kahlo Broken Column (1944)). Answers should take into account symbols, posture, setting, scale, narrative and any other aspect of a work which contributes to the idea of heroism.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

22 Compare and contrast any three portraits made in a medium other than painting. Your chosen examples do not all have to be in the same medium.

Sculpture, photography, video and Performance Art may all be discussed here. Candidates should demonstrate a good knowledge of the medium chosen and an awareness of its possibilities. Sculptures suggest themselves from all periods (provided material from Q17 is not repeated). Modern works could include Jo Spence's Narratives of (Dis)Ease (1989), Tracey Emin's self-portraiture through installations and mixed media or the use of photography and video by Rineke Dijkstra among many others. The question requires candidates to concentrate on medium and material, and the focus of the essay should thus be on the technical challenges posed, and effects made possible, by the medium under scrutiny.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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23 Assess the portraits of any one artist at work since 1900 whose work you think rewards close attention.

Candidates have free choice of artist, and should discuss a selection of works which makes clear the nature of that artist's achievement. The aims of the work should be considered – e.g. Picasso's explorations of visual language; Chuck Close's quasi-photographic images, or, Jenny Saville's concern with the realities of unidealised bodies etc.

Essays should provide accurate information on their chosen works, describe them in some detail, offer a general assessment of the artist's achievement, and provide any relevant contextual material which helps us to appreciate the work.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

24 Discuss some of the ways in which portrait artists have depicted the poor and the marginalised.

Examples may include Velázquez's portraits of court dwarfs and Dutch genre scenes (e.g. Jan Steen). Photography is a rich source: Diane Arbus, Walker Evans, E J Bellocq, James Agee among others. Self-portraiture might be seen as a record of artists rendered marginal by circumstances (e.g. van Gogh).

Candidates may wish to argue that women as a group have been traditionally marginalized in art, or depicted in conformist typologies, and discuss some of the ways in which artists have explored gender and identity through portraiture; and the same argument may be made with reference to race and ethnicity.

Candidates need to engage with the issue of *how* artists have treated their subjects, and the discussion must be based on accurate and detailed descriptions of selected images.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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Topic 4: The Nude

25 Discuss the depiction of the female nude in ancient classical art.

Candidates may note that the female nude appears later than the male.

Examples should illustrate the ancient ideal of feminine beauty, and its subsequent development and variation in the classical world. E.g. Praxiteles Aphrodite of Knidos (c.360–340 BC) first life-size female nude sculpture, contrapposto stance, hand covering genitals (the ‘Venus Pudica’), figure in action preparing for ritual bath. Later Venus tradition: E.g. Capitoline Venus, Venus de Medici (1st C BC) based on Praxiteles; Alexandros of Antioch Venus de Milo (c.130–100 BC), or, various images of the Crouching Venus e.g. Louvre copy c.250 BC showing sensual Hellenistic approach. Other treatments of Aphrodite e.g. the ‘Doria-Pamphili’ type. Comparisons with the male nude may draw attention to actions, postures and the system of proportions adopted.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

26 Compare and contrast approaches to the nude in Western and non-Western art.

Candidates should engage with the term ‘nude’ and its implications: the body as an object of attention in its own right, conforming or departing from a classical set of conventions of proportion and beauty, formally fascinating and a site for the depiction of moral and other personal qualities. This arguably locates ‘the nude’ as an artistic category in a Western tradition, originating in the Mediterranean (as argued by Kenneth Clark).

Non-Western art often involves the unclothed body, but operating outside Western ideas of nudity, often in religious use (e.g. Indian temple sculpture or African art), or, as a part of everyday life (e.g. Japanese ukiyo-e images).

Answers should offer examples of non-Western unclothed figures, and discuss how their form and function approaches, or differs from, the idea of the nude as it has developed in the West.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

27 Compare and contrast depictions of Christ, nude or semi-nude.

Candidates should discuss the formal and expressive qualities of their chosen work, giving details of the narrative being depicted and the effects on the viewer. A contrast could be made between Italian and northern depictions, and between Christ as heroic or suffering and dead.

Candidates should show an awareness of key episodes in the Christian narrative:

Nativity or childhood of Christ/Madonna and child.

Baptism (e.g. Piero della Francesca (1440–45) or Andrea del Verrochio (c.1470)).

Crucifixion (e.g. Masaccio The Trinity (1426–28) or Antonello da Messina (c.1470)).

Deposition (e.g. Rogier van der Weyden (1436)). Pietà (e.g. Rogier van der Weyden, Petrus Christus or Giovanni Bellini).

Entombment (e.g. Fra Angelico, 1448–53).

Resurrection (e.g. Piero della Francesca (1463–65)).

Examples may also be taken from later periods e.g. Salvador Dalí Crucifixion (1953–54).

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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28 Discuss approaches to the female nude in Western art after the ancient classical period.

Works may be in any medium, and from any period.

Works chosen may be varied in terms of their adherence to the classical ideal of beauty, their apparent veneration or denigration of woman as subject, woman as goddess (e.g. images of Venus), reclining and passive or active, submissive or defiant (e.g. Manet, Olympia (1863) or Picasso, Les Femmes d'Alger (1911)); idealised or everyday (e.g. Degas). Candidates may argue that there is wide variety in the treatment of women, or conversely that the art tradition generally adheres to norms (women as passive, the object of the male gaze).

Modern art and feminist ideas e.g. in the work of Frieda Kahlo, and performance artists would lend themselves to discussion here.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

29 Explore the treatment of the nude in the work of any one photographer.

Candidates should offer a monographic assessment of one photographer whose work they consider significant. Discussion should include a detailed description of chosen works, their formal qualities, expressive effects, relation to tradition and the ways in which they may be interpreted. Thorough analysis will involve reference to relevant context and terminology. Photographers suggested in the syllabus: Kertész, Brassai, Brandt, Western, Jo Spence, Arbus, Newton, Sherman, Chadwick.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

30 To what extent have artists after 1900 turned against traditional depictions of the nude?

Candidates should show an awareness of the tradition, and how modern artists have reacted to it. Discussion may include the 'primitivism' of Picasso; use of exaggeration (e.g. Modigliani); the rejection of idealisation (e.g. Lucian Freud) and expressive distortion (e.g. Bacon or Saville).

Other media are valid: photography may make allusions to classical and Christian iconography (e.g. Robert Mapplethorpe); Performance Art continues explorations of gender and identity sited on the body (e.g. Yoko Ono Cut Piece (1964)). Candidates should recognise that the engagement with tradition is complex, and what may seem a revolt can often incorporate elements of traditional pose and techniques.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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31 Discuss how artists reveal and conceal the nude body.

The question invites wide discussion, with many possible examples: nude and semi-nude Aphrodites from the classical period; the ‘Venus pudica’ gesture from Praxiteles, Aphrodite of Knidos to Masaccio’s Eve (The Expulsion, Brancacci Chapel), Manet’s Olympia (1863) and beyond; issues of decency and titillation in e.g. Goya La Maja Desnuda (c.1797–1800) and La Maja Vestida (1800–5); the body in various states of dress and undress in many artists e.g. Egon Schiele; the erotic possibilities of drapery (e.g. Renoir The Bathers (1887)).

The topic suggests issues including classical notions of the body representing ideals, and the male body of the heroic warrior and athlete; Christian notions of shame, located in the nude; the female nude as answering the male gaze, with a tradition of disrobing for a male viewer (e.g. various depictions of Susannah and the Elders); and topics of subject matter and composition, such as the use of various which conceal part of the body from the viewer.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

32 Does the nude still have a power to shock?

Candidates may consider historical occasions when a work of art depicting a nude figure has caused shock – most famously Manet’s Olympia (1863); other possible examples are Goya La Maja Desnuda (c.1797–1800), Manet’s Déjeuner sur l’herbe (1863), Picasso Les Femmes d’Alger (1911) or Robert Mapplethorpe’s photographs of nude males.

Candidates should consider what it is that made images shocking, and whether conditions exist today for scandal to be caused by a work of art. Arguably, explicit and deliberately shocking imagery is so common, and values so much more diverse, that art cannot have the shock value of the past.

Other artists who may lend themselves to discussion for their confrontational, provocative aesthetic: e.g. Tom Wesselman (Great American Nude series (begun 1961)); Jenny Saville and Lucian Freud; Performance Art (e.g. Yoko Ono or Marina Abramović). Candidates should show a good knowledge of certain works and be able to discuss articulately relevant ideas of art, exploitation and reception.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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Topic 5: Still life

33 Discuss examples of the ‘vanitas’ theme in Dutch still life, c. 1560–1650

Candidates should show an understanding of this central theme in the still life tradition, and discuss it with detailed reference to particular works. Answers should suggest ways in which objects may be interpreted with reference to their symbolic significance, and place this in a wider social and cultural context – for example, the close relation between the contemplation of death and contemporary Christian thinking and practice.

Many still lifes refer to the idea of ‘vanitas’, which is a lament on the transience of all things. The theme is frequently symbolised by objects such as skulls or clocks. See Pieter Claesz Vanitas Still Life (1630) where there are also objects such as an overturned glass or an extinguished candle. In this example the idea of the value of knowledge is also symbolised by an old book showing its futility in the face of eternity.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

34 Compare and contrast at least three examples of still life in Spanish art, c.1600–1850.

Candidates should select works which bring out the variety of approaches to the subject of still life in Spanish art. As with any compare and contrast question, the command terms need to be taken seriously. Essays which attempt serious cross-comparison should be rewarded. The discussion should include reference to contextual issues which help the viewer to understand and appreciate the works.

Possible examples:

Francisco de Zurbarán Still Life with Pottery Jars (1636). An example of a *bodegón*, depicting pantry items, here vessels arranged on a wooden shelf. Typical of the Spanish still life in its austerity, with a few plain items against a dark background, objects, alternating tones and shadows creating a steady sombre rhythm. Not a celebration of material abundance, but suggestive of a contemplation of stillness and silence, related to the ‘vanitas’ tradition and religious mystical practice.

Francisco de Goya Still Life with Golden Bream (1808–12). A rare still life by Goya. Painting captures the beauty and texture of the fish, apparently piled on a beach. Comparable to Zurbarán above with the dark background and single shaft of light, and perhaps hinting at a connection with the *bodegón* tradition. But at the same time, there is more empathy and pathos in this work, corresponding to the artist’s other work and the wider context of Romanticism.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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35 ‘To relegate the still life to a purely academic exercise is to limit its possible meanings.’ Discuss in relation to French art, c.1720–1900.

Candidates need to engage with the idea of ‘academic’ in this context, referring to the official academies and their hierarchies of genre; and also to the technical approach to painting favoured by these institutions. Essays need to show an awareness of this institutional approach and how their selected paintings either conform to it or break away.

In the seventeenth century the Parisian Academy of Art was set up by Charles Lebrun, who established statutes and doctrines fixing a hierarchical canon of the genres of painting and how they should be taught. Still lifes were seen as lowly recordings of daily life and relegated to the bottom of the scale of importance. Historical scenes were seen as more worthy and dignified, as they were animated by scenes which had a didactic message or narrated important events.

Chardin is the most famous of the artists working in the French Academic tradition. Rational approach to colour and paint, related to Enlightenment thinkers; minimalist style, placing a strong emphasis on harmony and balance, and attempting to capture the essence of an object rather than duplicate every detail. Example: *The Ray* (1728).

Academic approach was challenged by later artists, who explored unconventional composition and use of colour. Examples by Delacroix, Manet and van Gogh are given in the syllabus.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

36 How was the still life genre redefined in the period c.1900–1950? Discuss with reference to at least two works.

An unusual key word in the question is ‘redefined’. This asks candidates to look at modern still life in the light of the preoccupations of earlier artists. What needs to be rewarded is a sense of the way in which the past informs present artistic practice, and how the present can be read as interpreting the past.

E.g. Braque *Still Life with Fruit Dish and Glass* (1912). This work, made almost entirely of *papiers collés*, evokes a world beyond the visual, using a variety of other materials such as *faux bois* and *faux marbre*. The atmosphere of a Parisian bar is conjured through hints and allusions. Very traditional subject matter is presented in a form which is modern and experimental. Picasso also used a number of still life works to suggest discussions about the political situation just before the start of the First World War.

E.g. Duchamp *Large Glass* (1915–22). Duchamp uses glass and steel, among other materials, to create a narrative structure to consider human relations. The theme is traditional, here given a new definition through the use of modern materials which are not part of traditional art-making.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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37 Compare and contrast the use of materials in at least two still life objects made since 1950.

Candidates should focus their answers on the ‘use of materials’, and suggest why the artists may have chosen these, how they have been exploited and what the effect is on the viewer. These points may be usefully developed through comparison with other works and reference to the wider social and cultural context.

E.g. Claes Oldenburg Clothes Pin (1976). The huge clothes pin is made from weathering steel, also known as corten-steel, which was developed to avoid the need for painting outside sculptures. Its rust-like appearance had developed over the years. ‘My studio is full of clothes pins,’ wrote Oldenburg, and explained that it is intended to relate to the skyscrapers around it. He used clothes pins to hang cloth for making other sculptural objects. It was not originally intended to have a base, but one was made for it and protects the object from vandalism. A comparison could be made with one of Oldenburg’s soft-structures, for example.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

38 How have women artists treated the theme of still life?

Candidates should develop their points through detailed reference to specific works. Interpretation could be usefully informed by reference to the context of different artistic periods and ideas about art.

Women artists, as a minority in the art world, treated the theme of still life as an academic exercise, even though they were not readily accepted for formal training (e.g. Josefa de Ayala Still Life (1679) and Louise Moillon The Fruit Seller (1631)).

Giovanni Garzonu dedicated herself to flower painting and botanical studies, as did Rachel Ruysch e.g. Basket of Flowers (1711). Such examples enable us to see how people lived.

The artists’ lack of exposure to academic practices and academies in most European countries meant that little work in the genre was produced by women artists until the nineteenth century. Women artists of that time mostly depicted the world around them. Mary Cassatt preferred landscapes and portraits but there are examples, such as Lilacs in a Window (1880–83).

The twentieth century offers many more plausible examples, such as Tracey Emin My Bed (1998), which includes objects such as a pregnancy test, nylons and a sanitary towel. The work of Louise Bourgeois and Sarah Lucas could also be examined.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

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39 Consider the representation of fruit and vegetables in any still lifes you have studied.

Candidates may move freely between periods, discussing the ways in which artists have depicted this subject matter. Answers should include some attention to matters of materials and technique, and to the formal elements of composition, colour, space, form, line and texture. Examples can be found from Roman *xenia* paintings, through to the still life genre and up to the present day. Examples could include:

Caravaggio Fruit Basket (c.1596) – is marked by *trompe l'oeil* effects and spatial complexities. He is reported to have said that it is as difficult to paint fruit as the human figure. Fruits are arranged like flowers. Some fruits and vegetables have been gnawed at by insects or are rotting. This is to show the passing of time and the imperfections of the world.

Sanchez Cotán Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber (1602); Zurbarán Lemons, Oranges and a Rose (1633). In paintings such as these, the scarcity of food is reflected in simple arrangements and austere settings. In both Dutch and Spanish still life, there is also complex symbolism, for example fruit referring to the blood of Christ.

Jan van Huysum, Fruit Still Life (c.1700). The growth of agriculture from the sixteenth century promoted botanical sciences, which had an impact on fruit and vegetable farming. Depictions of markets, kitchens and pantries show fruit and vegetables piled up in baskets or bulging over the edge of a plate. Fruit became one of the last courses in a meal, particularly amongst the landed gentry and the merchant classes, who valued refined fruits as opposed to wild fruits from the woods.

Cézanne Still Life with Plate of Cherries (1887). Comment on the painter's use of still life to explore ideas about the nature of painting, with bold experiments in composition, perspective, colour etc.

Balthus Still Life with a Figure (1940). The place of the still life in the overall composition, and the atmosphere the painting creates, could usefully be discussed.

Tacita Dean Still Life (2008). This is a video showing details and imperfections of a piece of fruit grown inside a bottle for schnapps. Modern techniques are used, yet the piece is also in the tradition of 'vanitas' and naturalism.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.

40 How can a still life painting help us to understand a civilisation? Discuss with reference to at least two works.

This question requires candidates to draw links between a work of art and the society from which it comes. How can a work in this genre be read against the wider culture, society, economics and history of a civilization? This might be commented on explicitly in a work through a programme of symbolism; and there can be implicit links, as we trace the preoccupations of the patron in the subject matter. Still life can teach us something about changing attitudes and morals; and it can bear witness to changes in mentalities. Illustrative examples:

Dutch seventeenth-century still lifes not only depict the times but also tell us something about the target market. For example, fish still lifes were usually painted at The Hague whereas the affluent citizens of Haarlem preferred more refined breakfast still lifes, such as Peter Claesz Still Life (1633).

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Meléndez Still Life with Lemons and Nuts (c.1765) is a reflection of Spain's increased but short-lived prosperity. Many Spanish still lifes give us an insight into Spain's relationship with its colonies, and the goods which were brought back, such as vases, sweets, spices etc.

Courbet, The Trout (1871) has its background in the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71) and Courbet's own imprisonment.

Roy Lichtenstein, Still Life with Goldfish (1974). This work draws on Matisse's emblematic motif of the goldfish bowl. It is depicted in the 'Pop' style with acrylic paint and large flat areas of colour. Could be read as an instance of the modern world's complex relationship to the tradition it appropriates, and the popular commercial visual forms which Lichtenstein alludes to in his painting style.

All other valid points will be taken into consideration.