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91180



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 2 Art History 2025

### 91180 Examine the effects of formal elements of art works

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine the effects of formal elements of art works.	Examine in depth the effects of formal elements of art works.	Examine perceptively the effects of formal elements of art works.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should attempt ONE of the questions in this booklet.**

Make sure that you have Resource Booklet L2-ARTR.

If you need more room for your answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–11 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (//////). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

**Excellence**

**TOTAL 07**

## SELECTED QUESTION

Copy and paste the question you have chosen into the space below.

Question One, two artworks from the resource booklet featuring different styles, and two formal elements

(a) describe the formal elements and the effects they create

(b) the importance of these effects in creating different styles in this period.

Select your first plate: 3: Géricault, Raft of the Medusa

Select your second plate: 6: Seurat, A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte

Select your first formal element: Composition

Select your second formal element: Form

## PLANNING

### RAFT OF MEDUSA

composition, use of orthogonals, creating depth, diagonals counter diagonals, vanishing point,

foreground, mid ground, background, pyramid like shape, chaos,

form, idealisation both musculature and sunken bellies to the purpose of emotional response, tonal

modelling, defined outline, strong, detailed, firm, angular, posed, movement

King Louis XVIII,

### A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

composition, verticals, horizontals, off centre, shadows through diagonals, diagonals of trees

umbrellas impermeable, movement, cropped, photographic, purpose of artists scientific approach to

composition, vanishing point vastness

form, pointillism, stylised, simplified, curved, soft, ambiguous, circular, outlined not consistently

Hausmann redesign 52-70

## ANSWER SPACE

Type your answer in the space below. You should aim to write a concise response of no more than 750-800 words. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your answer. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.)

B I U     

Géricault's composition of 'The Raft of Medusa' reflects the romantic sensibilities of his art style. The Raft of Medusa is often revered as the pioneer for romanticism and that is most apparent in the composition of the painting. The artist's use of orthogonals to give the canvas depth and dimension. A diagonal from the right of the painting leads up to the top of the man waving the cloth, its counter diagonal following the bodies of the dead and dying on the left connect at the same apex. The downward emphasis of this diagonal leading towards the choppy water creates layers of dimension as it goes. Working as lines leading the viewer across the painting's scene. The composition of these diagonals is to the effect of creating a sense of impermanence, the danger of movement in such a precarious situation. It creates the illusion that the raft is quickly moving further and further

away from the possibility of saviour. Which is another compositional technique creating depth. The structure created by the raft and the clambering survivors forms a pyramid like shape; triangular composition had previously been used by the neoclassicists to create balance and harmony; here however it works to the effect of chaos a significant topic of interest for the romantic art style. Much of the paintings exists inside the foreground of the canvas. Which effectively up-scales the raft in the eyes of the viewer, it becomes the largest most significant thing in a vast and dangerous ocean, portraying the idea of the sublime. Conversely Seurat's composition of 'A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte', is a prominently different art style with a composition that works to convey the artistic values of that period. Seurat a post-impressionist had a very scientific approach to composition his painting technique pointelism, pushed him to be very meticulous with the configuration of each component of the painting. It is composed by leading lines through horizontals and verticals. The trees and the individual figures serve to create the effect of balance within the scene, whereas the horizontals created by the shadows on the grass from these figures give the painting the effect of integration, the effect of unifying figure and environment. The post-impressionist idea of primitivism. The shadows act as a compositional diagonals, the idea of fleeting time, impermanence in an otherwise static photograph like image. The artist's composed framing is another indication of a different art style, everything is not contained within the confines of the canvas there's cropping which works to suggest space beyond the canvas. The horizontals of the grass island, the white wall beyond water in the horizon paired with the verticals of the trees and figures creates a grid like structure sectioning the painting into different spaces within one image. the high and distant horizon line is also influenced by the popularisation of Japanese wood block prints. The figures are composed to guide the viewer into the distant vanishing point created by the trees which gives the painting depth.

The Configuration of form by Géricault in the raft of Medusa reflects the romantic sensibilities of his art style and time period. Géricault had no official academy training and learned through observation of the classical masters. And this reflects in his treatment of form. Each figure is created with great attention to anatomical accuracy, which has the effect of idealisation. Idealisation of not only the musculature of the survivors still upright and climbing each other for saviour but also the idealisation of the forms with sunken bellies who lay discarded and hopeless. For the neoclassical artist's the effect of idealisation was to create harmony however the romantic artist's main endeavour was to evoke emotional response. Therefore by being anatomically correct for both the strong and the weak they further the consequent passionate response to the image the artist is depicting. Form is also idealised through tonal modelling, using contrasting dark and light values to create the realistic three dimensional human body. By being as close to the real thing as possible the artist effectively evokes empathetic and strong emotional response from viewers. The forms are also consistently and definitively lined. Despite the figures themselves overlapping each of them stand out. They don't not blend into each-other despite being compacted in space. There's detail in both the expression and position of form, angular, solid and human despite the precarious and changing environment around them. Comparatively the handling of form by Seurat in his painting is a lot more simplistic and conveys the different art style of post-impressionism. The forms are painted through the compacted configuration of small dabs of different colour. They aren't consistent or anatomical rather stylised and soft. They're geometrical in a different way, Seurat creates form through circles and straight lines. His depiction of form is almost naive and primitive. They aren't outlined consistently but rather through short and inconsistent points of colour which effectively makes them in-seperable from the scene they are depicted in. Unlike in the raft of medusa where form was separate from the backdrop, here form is a part of the environment, they're unified and work together. Despite depicting an active moment in time, the forms are static and still. A symptom of his art style where paint was not blended beforehand but rather optically mixed on the canvas itself as the viewer gazed at the painting. The effect of movement however is brought on despite the still standing forms. Their chaotic yet deliberate placement and curved yet upright configuration conveys the nuances of leisure which can appear both energetically active and still and lounge-like.

The Romantic time periods art style was still heavily influenced by the Academy's hierarchies and standards and this is reflected in The Raft of Medusa's both composition and form. However, under the new constitutional monarch King Louis XVIII, it allowed romantic artist to endeavour to new subjects, to use formal elements to a different effect. The Raft of medusa is a study in the idea of the sublime, how vast nature is and how humanity compares in the face of that dangerous and unknowable vastness. The glaring difference between the two art works is a display of the influence of historical context over art styles. Seurat existed as an artist in a time period where the role of the artist was transforming under newfound modernity. This is reflected in his treatment of form and composition. With the introduction of photography art no longer needed to capture the world exactly as it was rather artist could now explore their own interpretations of the world. La Belle Epoque a time of peace and the rise of the middle class's third spaces of leisure through the third Napoleon's commissioned redesign of Paris in 1852-70 by Haussman. Artists were influenced by other cultures they were allowed to imagine the world on canvas how they wanted to. The two art works show how art styles change through time and progress through continuity.

## Excellence

**Subject:** Art History

**Standard:** 91180

**Total score:** 07

Grade score	Marker commentary
E7	<p>Both responses to art works record in-depth analysis of formal elements, with several specific effects explained with support from contextual influences related to the different styles. However, in Gericault's work, there is a more perceptive understanding of the Neoclassical contexts that underpin the art work. While there is in-depth explanation of composition in Seurat's work, evidence of his return to classical formality and frieze-like frontality could have offered more perceptive understanding. The explanation of form, while described, has more generalised effects.</p> <p>The response is written with a fluent and convincing use of artistic vocabulary fitting for each style of art work.</p>