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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.**

Merit

TOTAL 06

## SELECTED QUESTION

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

Select and name TWO art works from Plates 1–6 in the resource booklet that feature different styles, and TWO formal elements from the list provided.

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

Select your second plate: 5: Degas, The Dance Class

Select your first formal element: Colour

Select your second formal element: Technique

## PLANNING

## 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     

Stylistic elements are dependant on a particular time period that an artwork belongs. Each period demonstrates different features of style. In artworks Raft of Medusa by Theodore Gericault and The Dance Class by Edgar Degas, the stylistic elements of colour and technique demonstrate juxtaposing styles of art. The artist's choice of colour and technique relied on many of the influences that were significant at the time.

In the artwork Raft of Medusa by Theodore Gericault 1818, the use of colour is typical of the Romanticism art period. There is a combination of primarily naturalistic and slightly non-naturalistic colour use in the work. For the skin tones of the suffering bodies which are scattered around the raft, there is a use of natural tones of pale beige, with a slight tint of grey. This creates the effect of lifelessness, as the grey tint signifies illness. The incorporation of naturalistic colour is inspired by the academic stylistic notions, which originated from the Neoclassical period between the period of 1780s and 1790s. This was particularly inspired by the ideas of Enlightenment of rationality, consistency, and focus on naturalism, which is vividly seen in the style of this Romantic work. In terms of colour, the artist has utilised a dark tint of green, which creates a green filter over the artwork that is especially seen in the ocean, sky, as well as the lifeless bodies. The effect of this contributes to the sickly atmosphere that Gerecault is aiming to establish, as he is portraying a group of starving and ill individuals abandoned on a raft. This is significant because Romantic artists used colour to portraying emotion and a dramatic effect, which was done so in this work through this use of naturalistic colour with very subtly

details of non-naturalistic colour. The tint of green also hints to us to the idea of the sublime, which is the strong power of nature and its ability to destroy humans. This was a crucial idea in the early 1800s, at the time of the Romantic period and was portrayed in most typical Romantic artworks, particularly demonstrated by a use of green hues, as seen in Gericault's Raft of Medusa. The overall dark pallet of this work develops an eerie and ominous atmosphere, which contributes to the narrative of the suffering of this work. Even with the use of black and more darker colours there is a sense of intensity in the piece. Generally, the use of dark colours in this work contribute to establishing emotion and sorrow, as the individuals are painted to appear unwell and lifeless.

Another stylistic element which is used in this work is technique, which is also typical of the Romanticism art period. The artwork primarily incorporates seamless and slick brushwork which is seen in the suffering bodies. This creates the effect of clarity, as the artist's purpose was to create an emphasis on the suffering individuals. This continued to be influenced by the ideals of the Neoclassicism period that focused on the idealised portrayal of a being, which inspired to Romantics between the years of 1800s and 1850s. However, aside from the naturalistic, smooth brushwork, there is also a subtle use of rough brushwork, where the artist's hand is more visible on canvas. This can particularly be seen in the background, like the clouds and the ocean. The effect of the visible brushwork contributes to the emotional atmosphere that the author was aiming to portray. The technique of the sky and the clouds develops the same sorrowful tone and reflects back to the typical purpose of the Romantic style, which establishes a sense of drama and suffering in this case. The roughness of the sea, where we see more rough brushstroke in the waves, contribute to the idea of the sublime. This makes them appear more threatening and powerful, which links back to the narrative of the innocent people being abandoned in a raft in the middle of the ocean. The technique in this piece demonstrates the overall suffering and tragedy that Gericault is aiming to convey. The combination of the technique is significant as it creates a heavy emphasis on the suffering bodies, while still portraying a sense of emotion and doom.

An art work which has an entirely contrasting use of style is The Dance Class by Edgar Degas 1873 which uses a typical treatment of colour of an Impressionist work. While there is still an element of the naturalistic colours, there is a primary emphasis on a more bright and vivid colour pallet, particularly seen in the walls of the room and the bows of the ballerinas. The effect of this contributes to a sense of modernity and elegance, linking to the modernity of France and Haussmanisation during the 1851 and 1881 time period. This use of brighter colours also links to the establishment of paint tubes in 1849, which unlocked a brand new colour pallet for the Impressionists like Degas, allowing them to contribute more vivid hues into their works. The bright use of colour was also inspired by the Japanese woodcuts, which became a significant influence to French artists in 1860. The application of colour works in a way where complementary colours are placed next to each other with no blending, creating optical mixing, which means the colours appear blended from further away. This was a technique known as pointillism which artists like Degas used in their works to create light. In an Impressionist artwork like this, the optical blending of lighter colours like white, as seen in the window and the tutus of the ballerinas, is used to add brightness and highlights into the work, making the light to appear more bright and vivid. In the foreground, there is a use of darker colours, which create shadowing as well as a sense of depth. This demonstrates how colour was a significant formal element to artists like Degas, as it shaped the way an artwork looked, establishing a more saturated and bright appearance.

Another stylistic element which is used in this work is technique, which is typical of the Impressionist time period. In the artwork, Degas has used rough, visible strokes, which develop an unfinished look. The effect of this contributes to creating the fleeting moment of life of an ordinary scene of a ballet class. This can particularly be seen in the tutus of the ballerinas, as well as the doorway, where the brushstrokes are intentionally placed to look unblended and visible to the viewer. Degas purpose of this was to create an emphasis in the idea of passing time in a ballet class. The technique helped to contribute to an everyday scene at the time of modernisation in France in 1870s, highlighting the newly established form of work and leisure for the Parisians at the time of industrialisation. This rough technique also contributes to developing a sense of depth, as the objects which are placed closer to the viewer, such as the two ballerinas in the forefront, appear to have a lot less hazy and rough brushwork, in comparison to the objects further away from us, like the window and the group of ballerinas at the back, where the brushstrokes are a lot more visible on canvas. This technique creates the effect of distance and space. Overall, the technique of Degas Dance Class, is significant for creating the effect of the fleeting moment of an everyday activity at the time of modernity of France. It establishes the effect of simplicity of ordinary people and the passing time of their lives.

Ultimately, the stylistic elements of the two juxtaposing periods of art like Romanticism and Impressionism show the different ways artists painted and their influences. This is demonstrated by Raft of Medusa by Theodore Gericault and The Dance Class by Edgar Degas, which use different approaches to the formal elements like colour and technique.

## Merit

**Subject:** Art History

**Standard:** 91180

**Total score:** 06

Grade score	Marker commentary
M6	<p>The response represents many at this level that wrote longer than necessary descriptions of formal elements and effects. There are detailed passages for each work with detailed stylistic explanations of colour and techniques. However, the justification for techniques and colour was not supported perceptively by understanding both Gericault and Seurat's contextual influences. For example, in 'Raft of the Medusa' there was no evidence of live studies of the ocean, the deceased, and adding bitumen to show Gericault's individual approach in creating effects with techniques.</p>