

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2011 Assessment Report

Art History Level 1

- 91015 Demonstrate understanding of formal elements of art works,
using art terminology**
- 91020 Explain why selected objects may be considered as art**

COMMENTARY

Art History was assessed at level 1 for the first time in 2011. Successful candidates were well prepared for both external standards.

For Achievement Standard 91015, candidates performed creditably in this standard and showed a good grasp of art historical discussion.

There is scope to develop candidates' overall understanding of terminology. Some candidates were confused about the distinction between formal elements – for example, the discussion of form and composition was often rather ambiguous. Candidates found it difficult to distinguish between the arrangement of forms in pictorial space and the creation of a sense of three-dimensionality. Some candidates also found it problematic to discuss the treatment of colour beyond straightforward identification. Art historical terms such as complementary colour were often misunderstood and used erroneously.

Candidates would also benefit from writing more formally and ensuring that they support their ideas with careful explanatory examples from the art works. It would also be beneficial for candidates to become more familiar with the specific language that is used to discuss sculptural and architectural art works.

Achievement Standard 91020 proved problematic for some Level 1 candidates as it requires a fairly demanding set of skills that are largely philosophical in nature.

Candidates responded with two fundamentally different approaches.

The first approach saw candidates generally answer the second question. These answers tended to be less convincing as they were more generalised and not as knowledgeably written. Nonetheless, they were perhaps closer to the intention of the standard because the candidates made more reference to the objects themselves. It is pertinent to note that the second Explanatory Note for this standard determines that the reasons for an object to be considered as art should come from “evidence from the objects”.

The second approach saw candidates choose their own art works for Question One. These answers read as if they were rote-learned and were very similar in structure and argument. The candidates dealt with classifying theories of art (such as the Institutional and Idealist theories) and used these to determine whether an object was art.

These answers were largely well-written and knowledgeable, but candidates tended to spend more time on the explanation of the theories themselves at the expense of the discussion of the objects. The candidates sometimes lost sight of the intention of the standard, which is to consider the nature of the object through evidence drawn from the objects themselves.

It was decided for 2011 that both approaches should be judged on their own merits and that theoretical reference could be regarded as a reason for an object being identified as art.

It should be noted that the title of the standard, the criteria, and the Explanatory Notes make no reference to such a theoretical interpretation and that such an approach is not an expected requirement.

STANDARD REPORTS

91015 Demonstrate understanding of formal elements of art works, using art terminology

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- discussed two art works
- described two formal elements for each of their chosen art works
- showed a broad understanding of their chosen formal elements
- demonstrated an ability to organise ideas, so that each work was discussed evenly and repetition was avoided
- understood the distinction between each formal element
- used appropriate language to discuss the art works.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- discussed only one art work and/or one formal element
- offered a generalised description of the overall art works
- discussed subject matter or meanings instead of formal elements
- showed evidence of having misunderstood key terms and did not use appropriate terminology
- wrote at length about the first work and discussed the second work only briefly or repetitively
- answered both questions with insufficient detail.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- used greater explanatory detail
- understood terminology and used it convincingly
- expressed ideas in a formal manner
- interpreted the art works, rather than merely describing them.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- demonstrated an assured grasp of art interpretation
- supported their argument with detailed ideas
- wrote in a succinct and focused manner
- used the information about each art work provided in the question booklet to aid them in their discussion
- showed understanding of the distinction between the different formal elements and the ability to confidently differentiate between the two art works.

91020 Explain why selected objects may be considered as art

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- discussed two objects
- gave reasons to support their opinions about why the objects should be considered to be art
- demonstrated an ability to organise ideas, so that each object was discussed in a similar amount of detail and repetition was avoided
- used appropriate language to discuss the objects.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- discussed only one object
- described the object's appearance without reference to how it could be regarded as art
- answered on four objects in a brief manner
- repeated a single idea throughout the answer
- gave no evidence from the object or theoretical ideas to support their argument.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- articulated clear reasons drawn from the objects to support their argument
- used thorough explanatory detail to provide a rationale for their opinions
- interpreted the art works, rather than merely describing them
- used terminology in a convincing manner.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- wrote in a knowledgeable manner about the nature of the objects
- made detailed and extensive reference to evidence drawn from the objects
- used the information provided about the plates in the resource booklet to inform their ideas
- wrote in a succinct and focused manner.