

Assessment Report

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Part A: Commentary

Candidates had access to a wide range of art works in the examination plates. Candidates who produced a strong response when comparing art works of different time periods were able to discuss significant social, technological, religious or other contextual factors that accounted for the differences, using evidence from the selected art works.

Candidates need to be aware that when selecting art works from different time periods that this, in itself, is not a reason for the differences between the works, as this does not show the analytical art historical skills required at Level 8 of the New Zealand Curriculum. Candidates at lower levels of achievement often benefited from using the plate images for their response.

Candidates who answered digitally performed well, perhaps benefitting from the opportunity to go back and easily craft their response. Some candidates who wrote digitally seemed to finish their response abruptly when they neared the word-limit. The digital responses were generally of a good quality with Merit and



Excellence level responses typically around 900–950 words. It was good to see that there was a trend towards more concise responses with less repetition. There also appeared to be fewer examples of candidates using prepared answers about common themes and struggling to link their information to the question.

Part B: Report on standards

91482: Demonstrate understanding of style in art works

Examinations

The examination was one question from which candidates were required to select two plates (art works) for their response. Candidates needed to select TWO stylistic characteristics from a list provided in the question paper and needed to demonstrate their understanding of style through the analysis of their two selected art works.

The plates covered art works from the artists within the six areas of study in the assessment specifications, which were:

1. Early Renaissance (c.1300–1470s)
2. Late Renaissance (c.1470–1540s)
3. Early Modernism (1900–1940)
4. Modernist Design and Architecture (1900–1960)
5. Modernism to Postmodernism (1940s–c.2000)
6. Contemporary Diversity (after 2000).

To demonstrate perceptive understanding, candidates were required to write an insightful explanation of the reasons for similarities and/or differences in style, using supporting evidence from their selected art works as well as art periods and movements from which these art works were produced.

Observations

Candidates performing well in this standard analysed specific stylistic elements of art works and explained them accordingly, with reference to the art works.

Candidates need to ensure they select features that are best fit for the selected art works. There were times when candidates selected a feature like 'colour' then discussed a black and white image and analysed the lack of 'colour' in the art work. Some candidates tended to default to discussing what the work means rather than why the absence of colour or selection of a monochromatic colour scheme was appropriate – for example, that Kollwitz's use of black and white was due to the single-colour woodblock process that was inspired by early German wood-block printing methods from Gothic and Renaissance periods.

Candidates achieving strong results commonly compared and contrasted the art works and stylistic features throughout their response and discussed both elements fully rather than discussing one in more detail than the other.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- showed a clear understanding of the artists and selected art works, and were able to analyse the selected features in a direct manner
- selected art works from the resource booklet that are related by time period or artistic movement, rather than spread across wider time periods, e.g. two from the Early Renaissance rather than one from the Early Renaissance and one from Contemporary Diversity
- responded to parts A and B separately and were systematic in their approach to the question
- identified a selected technique and discussed it with an example from the art works selected
- concluded responses with a paragraph that identified similarities and/or differences.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- selected and described the art works' stylistic features without making comparisons and/or using supporting evidence
- incorrectly classified stylistic characteristics of the art works, e.g. stated that space is the same as composition
- responded to only one art work or chose art works not included in the resource booklet

- showed insufficient knowledge of the artists/art works being discussed, so there was insufficient evidence of understanding
- showed insufficient qualitative evidence to meet Level 8 of the New Zealand Curriculum.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- used specific and convincing supporting evidence with multiple examples from the selected art works for each stylistic feature
- gave qualitative reasoning for the comparisons in style, that showed an ability to justify an argument
- related some general contextual evidence about the artist, time period or art movement to the selected art works.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- integrated comparing and contrasting the techniques and aspects of style throughout the body of their response
- showed a comprehensive knowledge of the art works, artists, and the time period in which the works were created
- gave relevant and specific contextual evidence to support the reasons for the stylistic characteristics
- demonstrated insight, usually by making evaluative judgements about the impact of the art movements and artists
- showed an understanding of stylistic features related to the purpose or function of the art work.

91483: Examine how meanings are communicated through art works

Examinations

The examination was one question from which candidates were required to select two art works for their response and discuss two features in each art work.

Candidates needed to provide an explanation of the meaning in each art work and how these meanings are conveyed through features in the art works.

The plates in the resource booklet covered art works from the artists within the six areas of study in the assessment specifications, which were:

1. Early Renaissance (c.1300–1470s)
2. Late Renaissance (c.1470–1540s)
3. Early Modernism (1900–1940)
4. Modernist Design and Architecture (1900–1960)
5. Modernism to Postmodernism (1940s–c.2000)
6. Contemporary Diversity (after 2000).

Question 7 was an open question, where candidates could select any art works in their response to the question.

Both art works may have been selected from the resource booklet, or they may have been art works of the candidate's own choice, or a combination of the two.

To demonstrate an in-depth understanding, candidates needed to provide a coherent, considered explanation of how the meanings are conveyed through the features of art works and link this to contextual information that was relevant at that time.

Observations

This year there was an increase in candidates presenting answers that focused in the main part on describing the context and styles of the art works rather than meaning. The trend to provide responses about common themes in their area of study, for example, "Humanism" or "the impact of Art Deco" also continued. In some responses, this was not relevant to the art works that were being discussed.

Candidates need to make sure that they focus on the explanation of relevant meanings within art works rather than the context(s) for this standard. It is also important that sufficient features are discussed from the art works to explain how these meanings are conveyed. Often responses were too general and appeared rote-learned rather than discussing specific features (two in each art work), which is the criteria for Achievement.

Candidates continued to discuss the overall meanings of art works. Those who related an art work's features and how they contributed to the art work's meaning scored more highly than those who did not. Some candidates who responded to Question 4 or Question 7 (the open question) and provided answers that

demonstrated an understanding of what constitutes “domestic life” or “materials and techniques” scored highly when they analysed more than just the general aspects of the art works. Question 7 (open) was again a popular choice, but many candidates referred to stylistic techniques rather than answering the question, which was concerned with identifying actual art techniques and processes used in their selected art works.

Many candidates are still writing responses that are too general and do not sufficiently discuss at least two features and their meaning in each of their two art works.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- chose appropriate art works and answered the question directly
- tended to discuss motifs/features in limited detail
- explained relevant meanings of two named art works that were appropriate to the question, e.g. art works depicting Jesus or Mary
- made clear links between the features of the art works and their meanings
- provided basic or generalised explanations of the meanings of the features of the selected art works
- provided information about the meanings of the art works that was mostly accurate
- used appropriate art historical terminology with some understanding
- used some examples of motifs, symbols, subject matter, techniques, or stylistic devices to back up discussion about meanings and how they are conveyed
- mainly described the meanings conveyed by particular motifs and subject matter in the art work.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- presented an answer about general themes
- provided mostly inaccurate or speculative information about the art works and their meanings
- selected art works not appropriate to respond to the selected question

- demonstrated a lack of understanding of the key idea of the question, e.g. misunderstanding what is “technique” or “domestic life”
- described the subject matter or style of art works without sufficiently explaining the meanings of any features of the art works
- interpreted the meanings of art works from a personal perspective rather than explaining how meanings are constructed in an informed way.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the question
- could relate their explanation about the meanings in each art work to the specific subject of the question
- wrote informed responses and understood the art works in relation to the relevant art movements and artists
- explained how meanings are constructed in each art work in some depth and detail, and included useful descriptive examples to back up their explanations
- sometimes included relevant contextual information but did not clearly explain how this information was linked to how meanings are constructed in the specific art works
- explained in detail some features of each art work and linked these to the overall intention of the artist
- provided an uneven response, where one art work was perceptively examined but the second was not.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- demonstrated an understanding of how art works relate to specific art movements
- demonstrated a clear and perceptive understanding of the question in relation to art history
- selected art works that were appropriate and gave good scope for providing a detailed response
- evaluated why the construction of meanings is significant in relation to the wider perspective of art history and contexts

- explained how meanings are constructed in relation to contexts in an efficient and informed way. Included contextual information in their discussion to show how meanings are constructed in differing ways in art works
 - provided a fluent response to their selected question
 - demonstrated perceptive understanding of how and why the features were used to communicate specific meanings to the intended audience(s)
 - demonstrated insightful understanding of the intentions of the artist or patron in selecting features to convey messages
 - produced an equally strong response to each of their two selected art works.
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91484: Examine the relationship(s) between art and context

Examinations

The examination was one question from which candidates were required to select two art works for their response. With reference to these two art works, candidates needed to explain the relationship(s) between art and context.

The plates covered art works from artists within the six areas of study in the assessment specifications, which were:

1. Early Renaissance (c.1300–1470s)
2. Late Renaissance (c.1470–1540s)
3. Early Modernism (1900–1940)
4. Modernist Design and Architecture (1900–1960)
5. Modernism to Postmodernism (1940s–c.2000)
6. Contemporary Diversity (after 2000).

Question 7 was an open question, where candidates could select any art works in their response to the question.

Both art works may have been selected from the resource booklet, or they may have been art works of the candidate's own choice, or a combination of the two.

To demonstrate perceptive understanding, candidates needed to evaluate the relationship(s) between art and context, explaining the importance and impact of specific contexts in the aims and outcomes of the artists within a particular time.

Observations

Many successful candidates appeared to understand that they were being asked to demonstrate what they knew in relation to their chosen question.

Candidates performed better when they used the structure of their chosen question to shape their response, especially at the start. For example, candidates that directly answered the question while linking details of their chosen art works with the context, and continued to clarify their response in relation to the question, comfortably lifted their achievement level from Achievement to Merit.

Candidates gaining Excellence began fluently from the start, with a depth of knowledge in relation to both their art works and the context, with a perceptive and evaluative discussion. Question 7 was the most popular, which contained responses over a wide range of areas. Digital responses were often more concise and answered the question more directly.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- responded to their chosen question using relevant art works
- explained or clarified the relationship(s) between the context and the art works sufficiently enough to demonstrate understanding.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- described limited aspects of art and/or a context
- did not address their chosen question with relevant art works and/or explain the relationship(s) between their chosen art works and context.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- directly addressed their chosen question using relevant art works while focusing on the context
- discussed the relationships between the context and art works using detailed explanatory language while integrating supporting evidence to demonstrate a depth of understanding.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- demonstrated perceptive understanding in a well-structured, fluent response to their chosen question using pertinent evidence
- discussed a range of in-depth relationships between art works and the context
- consistently demonstrated comprehensive knowledge using analytical and evaluative language.

[Art History subject page](#)

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