

2024 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Art History
Level:	2
Achievement standard(s):	91180, 91181, 91182

General commentary

The examination provided a range of images and questions that covered the breadth of the three areas of study. The questions and selection of plates in the Resource booklet were clear, assessable, and appropriate for the questions used in the examination. Area One: Aspects of Gothic Art and Area Three: Art in Aotearoa continue to have very few candidate responses. The Towards Modernism option dominated candidate responses, with some plates being more popular than others, especially those from the earlier part of the course. Candidates demonstrated confidence in using works of their own choice for 91181 and 91182. Attention to the requirements and criteria of each particular standard is important for optimum achievement, especially for 91180 with its focus on style and understanding of the formal elements and the role they play in art works. All standards require the use of art historical terminology and specificity in response to the given questions.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91180: Examine the effects of formal elements of art works

Assessment

The assessment reflected the standard: style, the role, and effects of formal elements and visual analysis. There was, however, a shift evident in the understanding and interpretation of formal elements and effects – the essence and criteria of this standard. While the standard has not changed, the description and explanation of formal elements and their effects tended to blend into meanings (91181) and contexts (91182) standards. This has been a trend noted in previous years and commented on in the 2023 panel report for this standard. More direct focus on the criteria of this standard, as well as understanding what formal elements are and what effects are created by these elements, is encouraged.

Commentary

The examination provided a range of images across all areas of study. Area Two (Towards Modernism) continues to be the area of choice, with the vast majority of responses. For Area One (Gothic Art), and Area Three (Art in Aotearoa) the number of responses was very limited.

Question 3, on different styles, was the most popular choice, with some candidates selecting Question 4 – everyday life. The most popular pairings of plates were plates 7, 8, and 9 (works by David, Delacroix, and Courbet). There seemed to be less familiarity with plates 10, 11, and 12 (works by Manet, Cassatt, and Gauguin).

Composition, colour, and/or form were often selected as formal elements. Responses tended to blend meanings and contexts rather than describing and visually analysing what is meant by a formal

element and effect. For composition, as an example, a description of the structural organisation would be expected, with appropriate terminology (golden ratios, grid, vertical and horizontal formats, focal points, horizon line, diagonals, symmetry, geometric emphasis, etc). Linking effects to the characteristics of the movement is helpful. For example, effects for Neoclassicism could include rationality, logic, balance and harmony, classical inspiration, enlightenment and scientific inspiration, etc. More in-depth understanding of key stylistic features of the art work's movement is recommended for the completion of the second part of the question. Strong formal analysis and convincing explanation of the importance of the effects are required to meet the criteria for Merit and Excellence.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- wrote long, overly descriptive responses, with limited visual analysis
- wrote descriptively about some formal elements and/or effects
- described formal elements incorrectly as symbols in descriptions of art works
- provided some and appropriate visual evidence from art works
- focused responses on effects of formal elements but applied limited understanding to the second part of the question
- demonstrated some generalised understanding of the question.

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

- described in some detail formal elements and effects with some unevenness between art works
- described in depth the formal elements and effects in two art works
- described visual analysis of formal elements incorrectly as being symbolic
- provided relevant visual evidence from selected art works to broaden the description of formal elements and effects
- demonstrated an even, in-depth knowledge of effects linking to the second part of the question
- used art historical terminology with some accuracy.

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

- described detailed visual analysis of effects of formal elements convincingly, with perception
- provided interpretive explanations of effects of formal elements with sophisticated skilled analysis in one or both art works
- visually analysed the art work, signposting the effects of the stylistic characteristic linking to part b of the question perceptively
- showed a comprehensive knowledge of art works supported by a depth of contextual knowledge
- focused consistently on the question and provided competently articulated ideas and key points with fluent art historical terminology
- used art historical terminology with confidence and fluency
- wrote a comprehensive, well structured, essay response.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- identified rather than described formal elements with little or no evidence of effects in art works selected
- wrote a narrative of the art works' content, rather than addressing formal elements and/or effects
- wrote about background information not relevant to the question rather than formal elements and effects

- selected plates and/or questions from different areas of study, or their own art works not provided in the resource booklet
- wrote about one work and/or did not complete a sufficient response to meet Achievement.

Achievement standard 91181: Examine the meanings conveyed by art works

Assessment

The examination provided a range of images that covered all movements in the three areas of study. Towards Modernism was the preferred area selected by candidates, with few responses from the other two areas of study: Gothic Art and Art in Aotearoa. Popular selection/pairing of plates were Plates 7, 8, and 9 (works by David, Delacroix, and Courbet). The overall knowledge of Neoclassicism, Romanticism, and Realism outweighed the knowledge of Impressionism and Post-Impressionist art movements, with minimal responses to the Post-Impressionist work by Gauguin (Plate 12). This could be an indication of greater focus and completion on the earlier movements and not completing the course content up to the end of Post-Impressionism.

Commentary

The most popular question selected by candidates was Question 4: Conflict and/or suffering. Most responses to this question demonstrated a high level of engagement and preparation. Some limitations were noted when candidates selected to discuss 'suffering' and not 'conflict and suffering'. The inclusion of conflict encouraged a wider lens and meant that candidates were able to expand on social or political aspects affecting artists and art works, and why suffering featured in the work. This question had the greatest inclusion of candidate selected works paired with a plate from the Resource booklet, enabling more interpretive and perceptive responses with even engagement between pairings.

There were a significant number of responses to Question 3: Depiction of women. For this question, some difficulties were evident in the selection of David's *The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of his Sons* and Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*, with the combined description/explanation of men and women in many responses. This may have been a misreading of the question, or the result of a rote learned response. The inclusion of men, when not specified in the question, often limited the level of depth in evidence and use of supporting contextual information about Neoclassical and Romantic depictions of women. While this is not a standard that requires stylistic assessment, reference to the influence of the art movement on how the women are depicted helped towards meeting the criteria for assessment at Excellence level.

Overall, the Plates proved popular, with knowledge and engagement providing some exceptional responses.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- selected two art works for the question
- described some meanings in one or both chosen art works
- referenced one or more symbols/motifs from each art work and attempted to link them to the question
- provided some visual evidence from the plates to expand on points made
- provided some appropriate art terminology when describing symbols and meanings
- supported description of meanings with limited contextual understanding of art work(s).

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

- selected two appropriate art works suited to the question
- explained meanings using art terminology
- wrote an uneven response that varied in the explanation of meaning between the two art works
- used specific evidence from art works in explaining meanings related to some parts of the question
- explained in depth and evenly the meanings with specific symbol/motifs from both art works
- demonstrated an informed understanding of art works in relation to accurate contextual influences on the question.

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

- selected appropriate and complementary art works providing in-depth interpretation of meanings
- constructed coherent fluent responses, effectively supported by evenly interpreted symbol/motifs from selected art works
- articulated ideas/meanings with sophisticated art terminology and addressed the question without expansive irrelevant content
- interpreted a range of significant ideas/meanings in art works with specific symbol/motifs
- critically evaluated original interpretations of meanings with comprehensive critique of evidence from art works in relation to expansive contextual support.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- wrote an incomplete response
- selected the wrong art work and/or question from different areas of study
- attempted the question with only one art work and/or art work that did not meet the requirements of the question
- attempted to identify some meanings of an art work(s) with limited knowledge of the art work
- provided irrelevant content not asked for in the question, without explaining specific meanings in art works.

Achievement standard 91182: Examine the influence of context(s) on art works

Assessment

The examination provided a range of images across all areas of study with a number of candidates bringing in their own art works. For Area One, (Gothic Art) and Area Three, (Art in Aotearoa), very few responses were submitted. Area Two (Towards Modernism) continues to be the area of choice and the candidates write with confidence in this area. The most popular pairings of plates were plates 7, 8, and 9 (works by David, Delacroix, and Courbet). Less knowledge and understanding were evident in the selection of plates 10, 11, and 12 (works by Manet, Cassatt, and Gauguin). Overall, candidates were confident to bring in their own art works and often this supported higher achievement.

Commentary

Most responses were submitted in Area Two. The questions seemed to provide significant crossover between social and/or political and philosophical contexts. Many candidates used philosophy such as the Enlightenment and Socialism as evidence when engaging with social and/or political contexts. In-depth knowledge in this standard was supported by concise writing and the use of specific facts as evidence, such as accurate dates, people's names, specific revolutions, philosophies, etc. Including Art History terminology and specific visual analysis as evidence in explanations demonstrated

thorough understanding, as did the use of key words from the question (social, political, philosophical) to focus the discussion.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- wrote long, overly descriptive responses, with limited engagement with chosen context
- wrote descriptively when engaging with the chosen art work, with description of the subject matter
- did not connect the art work with the context in an explicit manner
- provided some appropriate visual evidence from art works
- demonstrated some generalised understanding of the question
- used limited art historical terminology.

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

- described the chosen context in some detail with minor factual inaccuracies
- described in depth the chosen art works and the influence of context
- used art historical terminology with some accuracy.

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

- showed a comprehensive knowledge of context with the use of specific facts as evidence
- made perceptive links with visual analysis to emphasise the influence of context on chosen art works
- focused consistently on the question and provided competently articulated ideas and key points
- used art historical terminology with confidence and fluency
- wrote a comprehensive, well structured, essay response
- supported the response, often quoting artists/people of significance from their chosen context with a sophisticated nuanced integration of wider contexts, to support explanations.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- identified some aspect of a context with insufficient supporting visual evidence from art work(s)
 - wrote a response with no supporting evidence or understanding of context(s)
 - wrote an incomplete and insufficient response with little engagement with chosen art works and limited art terminology when attempting to describe evidence
 - wrote about one context and art work and/or did not complete a sufficient response.
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