

Assessment Report

Scholarship, 2007

Art History

Commentary

Successful candidates demonstrated they could engage intellectually with the questions asked. They had extensive knowledge of the art they had studied, had a good general understanding of context and had the ability to apply ideas to a range of periods or types of artworks. They could establish an argument, sustain it throughout their essay and employ detailed analysis of works to support their stance.

For Scholarship, candidates must have real understanding of the material they are using. Rote learning chunks of material is more often than not a handicap in this examination because candidates are not able to adapt and expand their response.

Candidates need plenty of practice in using their information to answer a range of questions, planning the key points they would make and detailing the works / contexts they would incorporate as examples. Flexibility and the ability to relate their material to a range of perspectives is a key skill in Scholarship.

The best performing candidates most commonly demonstrated the following skills and / or knowledge:

- selected questions appropriate for their area of knowledge and to which they could bring plenty of information
- were confident and knowledgeable and able to respond to the nuances of the questions with detailed and perceptive information
- engaged with the question as it was asked. Read the question (both lines) carefully and interpreted it accurately, addressed all parts (eg Q1 – kept the focus on the ways in which specific uses of light and shade created/implied depth – Q2 understood that at least three artists were required)
- planned their responses so that they were well-structured, well-considered, and well-developed. The best answers demonstrated evidence of considered thought and organisation of material
- clearly identified the stance being taken and maintained that throughout. The best answers remained focused on the question and were sustained in their quality of response
- reinforced key ideas by reference to specific works and analysed these works in some detail
- did not directly repeat information and examples from one question to the next. They used a range of works across the paper to demonstrate their ideas about the history of art
- took care to fulfill the requirements for the higher levels of the performance descriptors eg highly developed discussion / analysis of works and contexts in relation to the question, depth and breadth of knowledge, expansive argument etc. The descriptors clarify what is required at each level
- sustained the quality of response over both questions.

Candidates who did NOT achieve Scholarship lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge above and, in addition, they:

- did not read the question carefully enough and, therefore, produced irrelevant answers. Often, they did not show evidence of reading the second line of the question
- had not clarified their stance on the question before beginning, or lost track of it and went off on tangents
- failed to make reference to specific examples in their answer. Many students wrote well in very general terms about developments or concepts at work in various periods or styles of art. In many cases, they then failed to follow up by giving an example of where these ideas were demonstrated in works of art

- did not provide analysis of works. It is not enough at Scholarship level simply to name a work. Candidates need to provide some analysis of a work to indicate its relevance
- failed to recognise the nuances in some of the questions. Candidates need to read the question very carefully to ensure that they answer what is being asked of them
- tried to fit a pre-learned response to the question – ie in Q1, several launched into an essay on light (ignoring depth)
- were unable to sustain the quality of response across both answers. Some candidates seemed to have exhausted themselves on the first answer and performed particularly poorly in the second question
- did not have the depth of knowledge and understanding necessary for this level of discussion.