



EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE

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2019 NSC CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

SUBJECT:	VISUAL ARTS
PAPER:	1
DURATION OF PAPER:	3 HRS
DATES OF MARKING:	3/12/19-10/12/19

SECTION 1: (General overview of Learner Performance in the question paper as a whole)

- The question paper was fair, but challenging in some subsections. The range of marks obtained in the paper reflected this.
- The standard of answers was often the same in a centre – most learners in one school would perform well, while in another school all the learners fared poorly or the entire class would fail. This is a worrying factor as it reflects on the teaching of the subject.
- There were some schools where all the learners' performance was excellent. These learners were well-prepared and had excellent visual literacy skills. They could also discuss a range of artworks in depth in each question.
- On the other hand, in some of the schools where all the learners performed poorly, these learners did not have basic art terminology and did not know how to discuss simple things such as colour or line. Learners do not read the captions of the visual sources.
- Learners who did not prepare properly for the questions where they have to discuss artists they have studied did very poorly, especially as these type of "prepared" essays outweighed the questions which are based on artworks that they could not prepare for. This reflects on the quality of teaching. The answers of these centres were also very short – a paragraph is not enough for 10 marks. (There are clear indications on the length of answers in the paper.) In one centre, hardly any of the learners answered these questions. They did not have artworks prepared and rewrote sections of the question paper.
- In a subject where language plays an important role, it is worrying that some learners struggle to express themselves in a clear and logical way. These learners have a limited vocabulary and cannot, for example, describe colour as subdued, rich, etc.
- Second language learners still struggled with expressing themselves in English which hampered their performance.
- Most learners could complete five questions and visual literacy skills are improving every year.

The approved textbook for Visual Arts Grade 12 (CAPS) helped teachers with teaching material and learners could discuss a range of artists and artworks.



SECTION 2:

Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

(It is expected that a comment will be provided for each question on a separate sheet).

QUESTION 1
(a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
<p>Question 1 was the most popular question and well answered by most learners. Many spent too much time on this question and wrote a lot more than the required 2 pages, resulting in some of them not finishing the paper.</p> <p>On the whole, Question 1.1 was well answered as learners are familiar with painting as a medium and the straight forward manner in which it can be analysed. The artworks are good examples of hardship, therefore the subject matter was understood by most. The visual sources are easily comparable as the subject matter and message is similar (human figures and architectural elements, hardship, poverty, back-breaking work, ties to Realism), yet they are visually diverse enough to also be able to identify many differences and therefore cover a variety of points. However, learners often did not read the instructions carefully and failed to spot that the answer must be in the form of a comparison. One mark was subtracted for not comparing the two examples.</p> <p>Question 1.2 was well-answered, because it was an open-ended question allowing learners to draw on a range of artists and artworks relevant to the question.</p>

(b) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
<p>The bullets "placement of figures within their particular settings" and "composition" are quite similar, as composition includes how elements are arranged on the picture plane. This resulted in some repetitive answers for learners. This is also true for the elements of shape and line, which are closely related, e.g. organic shapes/organic lines. The last bullet, "perspective" is ambiguous.</p> <p>Many learners refer to perspective as "depth" in an artwork, so when they read perspective some interpreted it as their viewpoint or perception of the work as these are also synonymous with perspective. The scope question was narrow in the sense that only colour, line and shape should be discussed rather than opening it up to diverse responses on all the art elements. The bullets "refer to the following" as opposed to "consider the following" makes the question prescriptive (they must answer <i>all</i> the bullets and <i>nothing</i> else) and learners are therefore limited in their analysis of the work. Poor answers also tend to be the result of lack of visual analysis skills. Writing becomes overly descriptive and without substantiating .</p> <p>When discussing works like George Pemba's "New Brighton, Port Elizabeth", learners tend to spend a disproportionate section of the essay describing the subject matter rather than analysing the elements and style.</p> <p>Lack of visual analysis skills: learners often struggled to substantiate or give generic responses. Very weak learners who did not prepare for this question rewrite what they wrote in 1.1 or they referred to another artwork in the paper to discuss.</p>

(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Art teachers should continue to place emphasis on the teaching of visual literacy skills. Teachers must equip learners with basic art terminology and the skills to analyse artworks (description, discussion, meaning and interpretation.)

Learners should know which keywords to look out for in a question e.g. "compare" and then teach them how to respond to the question with that keyword in mind. Teachers must provide ample opportunity for learners to engage with artworks both verbally and in writing.

Learners should be able to write on the outstanding characteristics of an artwork, e.g. colour, etc. They should also spend enough time on the different styles in art such as naturalism, expressionism, etc. and let learners apply them to unseen examples. This should be a process started in grade 10 and continued through the FET phase. Teachers must also place the South African artworks in a historical context.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

Lack of visual analysis skills: learners often struggled to substantiate statements for e.g. they would write overly descriptive sentences without substantiating statements e.g. "The buildings in the background are blue" and "The artist used curved lines on the people" as opposed to "The buildings in the background are blue, indicating atmospheric perspective" and "the many sharply curved lines create movement and a bustling atmosphere adding to the message that the people are hard at work."

Some learners construct their essays with generic responses/blanket statements like "warm colours in the foreground, cool colours in the background create depth", "the work contains bright primary and secondary colours", "lines are horizontal, vertical and diagonal" or "diagonal lines create movement in the work". These are rote answers and very popular in some centres indicating that learners have been taught to respond this way as these over-reaching observations are true for many paintings.

Teachers must guide learners to build on these statements with the addition of more specific details that are unique to the works they are analysing.

QUESTION 2

(d) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

Question 2 was the third most popular question and the answers ranged from well-answered to poorly answered, depending on the learner's visual literacy skills.

Learners were able to identify African influences in both works but often gave superficial, rote answers rather than focussing on specific details.

On the whole well answered, because it was an open-ended question allowing learners to draw on a range of artists and artworks relevant to the question.

(e) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

Some learners struggled with FIGURE 2b as the photograph was not large enough for them to see all the small details, especially the device in the hand of the woman. It is a pity as it was a richly detailed artwork with a lot of potential for various interesting interpretations.

As with Question 1 there was a lack of visual analysis skills as learners write in a descriptive manner, merely naming colours, shapes, mediums etc. without mentioning their effect in the work. A common error was the vague response of "the African influence is seen in the woman's African attire" instead of mentioning specifics like, decorative beadwork, copper bangles, animal skin, colourful geometric patterns on her skirt etc.

One center's candidates referred to "Afrocentric" and "Eurocentric" to describe, style, colours etc, but do not substantiate these observations by mentioning specifics. Basic art terminology and how to use it was lacking in the weaker learners. This was especially evident when it came to the difference between 'materials and 'technique' as well as what to discuss under 'style'. These learners would discuss "materials" as the fabric of the clothes worn by the woman in the artworks instead of discussing the materials/medium that was used to make the artworks.

Some learners discussed artists who do not fit in this theme of showing a clear influence of African and/or indigenous art. Others choose suitable artists and artworks but then don't mention any influences as required by the question.

(f) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Art teachers should place more emphasis on the teaching of visual literacy skills. Teachers must emphasize the influences of African art and/or indigenous art on their chosen South African artists studied in this section. They must also practice identifying influences in unseen examples and support their statement by clearly explaining/describing *how* the influence is evident in the work by referring to specific details in the artwork.

Teachers should guide learners on which artworks are appropriate to discuss in this question. This question often shows the lack of a good grounding in grade 10 and 11, since the question usually refers to influences from artworks studied in those grades (Impressionism, German Expressionism, Realism, Cubism etc.) Teachers must not study Irma Stern's *Eternal Child* in this section, as it does not show African/indigenous art influences.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

There were some answers with good insight. The fact that they had to disagree or agree with a statement gave some learners a little bit more guidance in the structuring of their responses to the artworks.

QUESTION 3

(g) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

3.1 This was the second most popular choice and thus answered by most learners despite the fact that they gave relatively poor responses - especially those who were not familiar with the historical context necessary to understand the subject matter. Answers were repetitive and interpretations were mostly without substantiation or analysis of formal elements.

3.2 On the whole well answered, because it was an open-ended question allowing learners to draw on a range of artists and artworks relevant to the question.

(h) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

3.1 Many learners (strong and weak) did not read the question properly and failed to see that they must discuss FIGURE 3a OR FIGURE 3b (the 'OR' being capitalised alongside the 'FIGURE' makes this word easier to miss). Instead of interpreting one artwork in depth, they did a quick half analysis of both for the 6 marks. The second analysis was then not marked resulting in many learners receiving 3/6 for this question.

Question 3.1 required learners to give their "personal interpretation" of one of the artworks and below question 3.2 the glossary defined "interpret" as "analyse (a detailed logical discussion of the formal elements of art) and evaluate(to give an informed opinion)". Not many learners paid attention to this glossary and chose to focus on the word "personal" in the question. This resulted in drawn out *uninformed* personal responses to the image/s without referring to art elements.

Learners struggled to interpret Figure 5a if they did not have the historical contextual knowledge of necklace murders in South Africa that were especially popular during the Apartheid era.

Learners, who performed poorly in Question 3.2 usually did not study examples relevant to the question or would just leave it out.

(i) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Art teachers should continue to place emphasis on the teaching of visual literacy skills. Teachers must equip learners with basic art terminology and the skills to analyse artworks (description, discussion, meaning and interpretation.)

Learners should know which keywords to look out for in a question e.g. "compare" and then teach them how to respond to the question with that keyword in mind. Teachers must provide ample opportunity for learners to engage with artworks both verbally and in writing.

Learners should be able to write on the outstanding characteristics of an artwork, e.g. colour, etc. They should also spend enough time on the different styles in art such as naturalism, expressionism, etc. and let learners apply them to unseen examples. This should be a process started in grade 10 and continued through the FET phase. Teachers must also place the South African artworks in a historical context.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

Learners' knowledge of South African history is extremely poor and they find it difficult to place studied works in context. Teachers should provide learners with basic historical information regarding South African history to place the works of art they study in context. Chapter 3 / Question 3 is about Socio-political Art, *including Resistance art of the 1970's and 1980's*, therefore knowledge of Apartheid and practices like necklacing is imperative. Teachers must teach learners to justify their observations by referring to formal elements in the artworks. Emphasis on visual analysis of artworks – formal art elements and principals, as well as the historical context to assist with interpretation and possible meanings.

QUESTION 4**(j) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?**

Very Few learners answered Question 4 and it was mostly poorly answered.

4.1 Poorly answered. It was very difficult for learners to write sufficient on only 3 bullets for 8 marks, especially as there was already an overlap in possible answers.

4.2 Although there were some good essays, often artists were discussed that do not fit into this theme.

(k) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

4.1 The mark allocation was too much for the simplicity of the question. There was not enough bullets in the question breakdown and not enough variety in examples for learners to easily write for 8 marks. Some of the information that learners could have provided was already included in the label information under the works and would therefore not be credited if repeated. Those that faired better had discussed more than what the question required. Learners had to choose two Figures and discuss pattern and colour, techniques and function of both of the crafts. Without a basic understanding of art and craft, their answers were very rudimentary. If they chose FIGURE 4a and FIGURE 4c (which was the most popular combination), they gave weaving as an answer for the technique of both and the function of storing things/decoration for both. They could not even say storing beer for FIGURE 4a as this information was already provided. If they were not familiar with the specific technicalities of the weaving techniques of these two baskets, they were left with discussing "pattern and colour" for 5 – 6 marks. Descriptions of the latter were mostly very basic.

Learners who performed poorly in Question 4.2 usually did not study examples relevant to question or would just leave it out. Learners answered this question

(l) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

This theme is a combination of crafts, art and spiritual works mainly from rural South Africa. It is a broad field of study and teachers should focus their choice of artists studied e.g. spiritual artworks, printmaking, crafts, etc., to ensure that learners understand the context of the chosen artists. This would aid the learners to write meaningfully on these artists. Teachers should focus on details of the technique and material used by various craft artists. It might also be helpful to include some of these techniques in practical assessment tasks so that learners understand them in more depth as opposed to just naming the techniques. Teachers must give ample opportunity to learners to describe specific elements in artworks in depth so they can improve their vocabulary and see beyond the obvious first observations. The approved textbook for Visual Arts Grade 12 (CAPS) provides teachers with teaching material regarding relevant artists for this section. It is also hoped that more teachers will teach this relevant section.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

Teachers do not teach the full scope of this theme.

QUESTION 5

(m) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

Question 5 was a popular question and moderately answered by most learners.

5.1 The contextual information given was of such a nature that it assisted learners in their analysis of the works without giving too much specific information. Most gave very similar responses to why the figures were incomplete and repeated, but there were also some excellent out of the box observations that were well justified. Some learners did not read the instructions carefully and failed to spot that the answer must be in the form of a comparison. One mark was subtracted for this.

5.2 Well answered but mostly a repeat of information from question 5.1 which would then not be credited in this question.

5.3 Well-answered if learners studied this section and used works with unusual materials and techniques.

(n) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

5.1 Learners 'answer' the bullets as if they are separate questions instead of writing a well structured essay where the bullets form part of a larger analysis. They do not take note of the phrase "consider the following" that introduces the bullets and then proceed to work through them one by one, only considering these prescriptive points and nothing else. This results in responses that are uninspired and predictable with very few learners attempting to analyse the work beyond the false narrow scope that the bullets imply.

5.2 Very few learners were able to achieve the full 3 marks for this question as it was very similar to the last part of 5.1. Both are about the success of the message of the works. This overlap in content resulted in forfeiting marks for repeated info in 5.2.

5.3 Learners fared badly if they made the wrong choices of artworks. It is important not to confuse mixed-media works like that of Willie Bester with multi-media / new-media artworks.

(o) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

It is important to note that the bullets, although written as questions, are guidelines to assist learners in navigating the various complexities involved in analyzing multi-media/new-media artworks (as opposed to the more straight forward formal elements analysis of the paintings in Question 1 and 2). These bullets are not prescriptive, and learners can be credited when they move beyond this scope provided that their responses remain relevant to the work discussed.

Due to the nature of new media work, this is a challenging section and question 5.1 is usually of a higher cognitive level. Teachers have an open choice in choosing any six sections (questions) to study and should only consider this section if they are confident that their learners can handle it. 'Stronger' learners really enjoy this section and get very involved with these artworks. It also influences their practical work which is very rewarding. Teachers need to expose learners to contemporary artwork such as installations, video works, et cetera. Visits to Zeitz MOCAA will assist teachers and learners.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

When asked to *describe* the style of the works learners often responded with *naming* styles e.g. "naturalistic", "distorted", "stylized". They must be able to refer to specifics about the works that places them within the styles mentioned.

An interesting range of artworks were studied in Question 5.2 and one could feel the learners' excitement about these works. Teachers must make sure that they teach works that can be classified under this theme. Although Penny Siopis is an excellent example of a Multi-media artist, some of her works such as the *Dora and the Other Woman* are not a multi-media work. Many learners are not able to identify multi-media artworks.

QUESTION 6

(p) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

Although there were learners who understood the concept of post-democratic identity and wrote excellent answers, some learners struggled with this question. It was unfortunate that the contextual knowledge of Figure 6a was not provided. It is a still of a multimedia performance, meaning it is not the actual artwork and interpretation thereof would therefore be very limited. If a description of the performance was included, it would have helped learners to write with more insight and understanding on this work.

The fact that the last bullet required learners to discuss two post-1994 South African artworks that they had studied beforehand saved many learners from a poor mark in this question as it was treated as a sub-question included in the 20 marks as opposed to as a separate question 6.2. This means they could make up marks lost in the first 5 bullets with a detailed discussion of artworks that they know well. Some learners answered on pre-1994 artworks which could not be credited.

(q) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

The vague and generalized answers of the work had to be credited due to the omission of contextual information. There was information provided, but it related to the interpretation of the work in that it described a mask as a way to disguise identity and take on a new personality. If learners repeated this information as part of their interpretation they were not credited as this interpretation was already provided in the question paper.

(r) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Teachers must engage learners with the concept of identity and factors contributing to forming identity. They must also teach artists/ artwork that falls under post-democratic identity in South Africa. Teachers can consider giving this theme for a practical assessment task so that learners can explore their own identity. This will help them to a greater understanding of factors that contribute to personal identity.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

The issue of identity can be explored from Grade 10 to Grade 12 in both practical work and Visual Culture Studies to create an understanding of how artworks portray identity.

QUESTION 7

(s) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

Learners did well in this question with only Question 1 receiving better marks on average. It was the fourth most popular question

7.1 Learners responded well to the visual examples and were to make various observations regarding typical representations of masculinity and femininity.

7.2 On the whole it was well-answered with a range of artists discussed.

(t) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

Learners who answered poorly did not have basic visual literacy skills and/or did not study artists. This was usually the last question answered and due to the time consuming visual literacy in previous questions some learners had to rush their answers and did not finish the question.

(u) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Teachers need to make sure that the learners have a clear understanding of gender issues such as concepts of beauty, stereotyping, gender roles etc. Some learners make stereotypical and bias statements about gender issues. Teachers must discuss and debate these issues in class to give a broader understanding of the issues regarding gender studies.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

Gender issues can be used to discuss many artworks from grade 10 and 11 to give learners a good background and understanding of this issue. Pupils need to build up confidence in analytical/interpretive skills and need to be able to articulate by being comfortable with the 'language of visual arts'. Teachers must also expose learners to contemporary artists.

QUESTION 8

(v) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

In the sample of 116 scripts only 4 learners answered the question. The highest mark by far was 6/20. Unfortunately, this has become the pattern for this question where learners attempt to answer it without the sufficient architectural knowledge. This has become a 'dead' question and very few schools study architecture.

(w) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

Weak learners sometimes chose this question without having the necessary background or architectural knowledge.

(x) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

In the sample of 116 scripts only 4 learners answered the question. The highest mark by far was 6/20. Unfortunately, this has become the pattern for this question where learners attempt to answer it without the sufficient architectural knowledge. This has become a 'dead' question and very few schools study architecture

Weak learners sometimes chose this question without having the necessary background or architectural knowledge.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

As stated above, it was mainly answered by learners without the necessary knowledge and the answers were very weak.