AP® Art History

About the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®)

The Advanced Placement Program® has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP Art History Course Overview

The AP Art History course welcomes students into the global art world to engage with its forms and content as they research, discuss, read, and write about art, artists, art making, and responses to and interpretations of art. By investigating specific course content of 250 works of art characterized by diverse artistic traditions from prehistory to the present, the students develop in-depth, holistic understanding of the history of art from a global perspective. Students learn and apply skills of visual, contextual, and comparative analysis to engage with a variety of art forms, developing understanding of individual works and interconnections across history.

AP Art History is the equivalent of a two-semester introductory college or university art history survey course.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisite courses for AP Art History.

AP Art History Course Content

The course content is organized into ten commonly taught units, which have been arranged in the following suggested, logical sequence:

- **Unit 1:** Global Prehistory, 30,000–500 BCE
- **Unit 2:** Ancient Mediterranean, 3500 BCE–300 CE
- **Unit 3:** Early Europe and Colonial Americas, 200–1750 CE
- **Unit 4:** Later Europe and Americas, 1750–1980 CE
- **Unit 5:** Indigenous Americas, 1000 BCE–1980 CE
- **Unit 6:** Africa, 1100–1980 CE
- **Unit 7:** West and Central Asia, 500 BCE–1980 CE
- **Unit 8:** South, East, and Southeast Asia, 300 BCE–1980 CE
- **Unit 9:** The Pacific, 700–1980 CE
- **Unit 10:** Global Contemporary, 1980 CE to Present

Each unit is broken down into teachable segments called topics.

In addition, the following big ideas serve as the foundation of the course, enabling students to create connections across course concepts and develop deeper conceptual understanding:

- **Big Idea 1:** Culture
- **Big Idea 2:** Interactions With Other Cultures
- **Big Idea 3:** Theories and Interpretations
- **Big Idea 4**: Materials, Processes, and Techniques
- **Big Idea 5:** Purpose and Audience

Art Historical Thinking Skills

The following comprise the art historical thinking skills that students should develop during the course:

- Visual Analysis
  - Analyze visual elements of works of art.
- Contextual Analysis
  - Analyze contextual elements of a work of art, and connect contextual and visual elements of a work of art.
- Comparison of Works of Art
  - Compare two or more works of art.
- Artistic Traditions
  - Analyze the relationships between a work of art and a related artistic tradition, style, and/or practice.
- Visual Analysis of Unknown Works
  - Analyze visual elements of a work of art beyond the image set.
- Attribution of Unknown Works
  - Attribute works of art.
- Art Historical Interpretations
  - Analyze art historical interpretations.
- Argumentation
  - Develop and support art historical arguments.

AP Art History Exam Structure

AP ART HISTORY EXAM: 3 HOURS

Assessment Overview

The AP Art History Exam assesses student understanding of the skills and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 3 hours long and includes 80 multiple-choice questions and 6 free-response questions.

Format of Assessment

Section I:	Multiple-choice | 80 Questions | 1 Hour | 50% of Exam Score

- Set-based questions include one or more images of works of art and include 3–6 questions per set.
- Individual questions may also include images of works of art.

Section II:	Free-response | 6 Questions | 2 Hours | 50% of Exam Score

- Question 1: Long Essay–Comparison **(8 points; 35 minutes)**.
- Question 2: Long Essay–Visual/Contextual Analysis **(6 points; 25 minutes)**.
- Question 3: Short Essay–Visual Analysis **(5 points; 15 minutes)**.
- Question 4: Short Essay–Contextual Analysis **(5 points; 15 minutes)**.
- Question 5: Short Essay–Attribution **(5 points; 15 minutes)**.
- Question 6: Short Essay–Continuity and Change **(5 points; 15 minutes)**.

Exam Components

Sample Multiple-Choice Question

In the Egyptian stele shown, the imagery is organized in which of the following ways?

(A) As a diptych framed by an outline

(B) As composite figures placed in registers

(C) As a continuous narrative displayed in columns

(D) As multiple scenes presented in one-point perspective

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Sample Free-Response Question

The work shown is *Lac d'Annecy*, created in 1896 CE by Paul Cézanne.

Describe at least two visual characteristics of the work.

Using specific visual evidence, explain at least two techniques Cézanne uses to create a sense of space in this work.

Explain how this work departs from earlier Western traditions of landscape painting.

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