

VISUAL ARTS

This is a supplementary report following the May 2010 session and should be read in conjunction with the May 2009 extended essay report.

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 36

Candidate performance against each criterion

A: research question

It seems that the difference between a research question or a proposition for discussion, and an account that frequently becomes a biography, is still not understood. Candidates should avoid huge questions such as “What is art?” Successful essays were often those employing primary research, interviews and the candidate’s own photographs. There was good evidence at the top of the mark range of candidates engaging with historical research e.g. *What were the origins of the Romanesque in Arles?* or more contemporary e.g. *Are there influences of pop art in the decorations on Pakistani trucks?* There were many internet-based essays, as in *An account of graffiti*. Inevitably the latter candidates lacked the foundation for a secure essay.

B: introduction

Many candidates found it difficult to explain the significance of their chosen topic or to communicate why it is worthy of investigation. Where this was done successfully it added real value to the project.

C: investigation

Overall, candidates achieved the highest marks in this criterion by indicating interest and enjoyment. Primary research and especially that supported by more extensive reading is always discernible. Those extended essays relating to personal interest or topics of a local nature are often the most successful. The best papers included an imaginative range of sources including well formulated personal interviews, original photographs and artworks by candidates, surveys conducted, visits to architectural examples, museums and galleries to view works first hand. Whilst some candidates did find and use a good range of sources, there was an over reliance on unreliable sources such as *Wikipedia*. The Internet was the main source of information and the number of books used reduces each year. Some

candidates did carry out personal interviews, which were pleasing to see, however the quality of interviews was, on occasion, quite low failing to get to the key points of the argument.

D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

The strongest essays did provide an academic context but many struggled to do this. Subject knowledge should be evident e.g. that candidates can “read” a painting, understand the relationship between plan and elevation, etc.

E: reasoned argument

Background knowledge is required to form a context for debate. The single subject account still too frequently becomes a biography.

F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject

Candidates should be aware of the distinction between description and analysis. Making use of images and visual references in Visual Art essays varied. The higher scoring essays used many relevant images and/or close ups to illustrate their analysis. Other essays failed to use images at all in the main body, and thus their visual analysis was poor.

G: use of language appropriate to the subject

In many instances candidates could have worked harder to use formal subject specialist language when analyzing different forms of visual expression. Examiners frequently complained about anecdotal, unacademic language.

H: conclusion

The most effective conclusions were labelled as such and were reflective rather than simply providing a summary. Conclusions were often rushed.

I: formal presentation

It is important to ensure that candidates understand all requirements and that they review their essays in relation to each criterion before handing it in. Candidates are encouraged to rigorously edit essays before submission. Sufficient time should be allotted to conduct this activity to ensure work that reflects careful attention to details. Attention to the inclusion of high quality visual material that identifies the image AND sources for the picture still must improve. Overall presentation of visual arts essays could be of better quality. Please encourage candidates NOT to bind papers or encase pages in plastic protectors. Candidates should simply staple or attach the paper to the essay cover with materials provided by IB.

J: abstract

Ensure that all the 3 required elements are present in abstracts.

K: holistic judgment

Supervisors' reports, noting candidates' strengths and weaknesses, have improved, but there are still too many covers without a report from the supervisor. It is sometimes helpful if candidates identify their physical location as it may relate to the topic of their essay. This provides context for the reader, as the EE cover only provides the name of the school and not the actual country/locale of the school or candidate.