

HISTORY OF ART

8285/01

Renaissance Art (1300-1520)

General comments

The standard of this year's cohort of candidates was varied, but there would appear to be an overall improvement on 2006. Candidates achievement across Papers 1 and 2 was equally matched at both the lower and upper levels, but more candidates achieved higher marks in the mid-range on Paper 2, perhaps reflecting their greater knowledge and understanding of early 20th century art (examples are accessible locally).

The actual marking process was thorough and consistent across both papers.

The question paper is well matched to the stated curriculum content, and should provide scope for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the assessment objectives. This was clearly shown by the majority of candidates, who take the examination very seriously, but when faced with such a breadth of factual information, many tended towards repetition rather than analysis. AS Level candidates embarking on a new subject will naturally tend towards description, and will likely be taught through a 'compare and contrast' methodology, for **Option B**. Experience needs to be gained in this way, before candidates feel confident enough to tackle unseen images through in-depth analysis.

From the choice of questions answered there would appear to be a similar pattern of selection occurring across all Centres, which is either teacher directed or due to a natural inclination on the part of the candidates. This may indicate that the curriculum content is too broad for AS level where candidates are studying for less than one year in a subject that is likely to be new to them.

The selection of images across both papers was very good, and provided ample scope for a very good range of responses. The questions themselves are very similar in both content and use of key words to 2005 and 2006. It appears that some candidates 'learn' or are taught the required content. More capable candidates will be able to use this knowledge and answer the specific question as it arises, but the mid to low range of ability will tend to produce a stock response. Both markers commented adversely on candidates '...providing as much information learned as possible rather than directly engage with the question' (Paper 1) or '...writing pre-prepared answers instead of addressing the question' (Paper 2).

There is a very full and detailed mark scheme available, which gives scope for excellent academic answers. The amount of material presented could however be seen as daunting. Perhaps some indication could be given within the mark scheme itself of how much of this knowledge has to be included, at what levels, in order to achieve mid or lower grades.

Paper 1 The Renaissance

Section A

The vast majority of candidates chose **Option 2**, '*Naturalism and Science in 15th century Italian Painting*' and fewer chose **Question 5**, '*Development of Landscape*'. This general question enabled candidates to draw on a variety of sources and practitioners. **Question 4** in the same option was the next most popular. The relationship of theory to practice allowed candidates to present comprehensive answers on key artists, but application of this theory was lacking in required depth.

Question 7, in **Option 3**, (*High Renaissance*) was equally popular with several strong attempts at a 'more difficult question' but *Michelangelo* is always a popular choice.

In all Centres, candidates attempted questions across the full range offered within each option. However, less than a handful of candidates chose either **Option 1** (*14th century Italian art*) or **4** (*Renaissance in Northern Europe*), which is the same pattern as last year, but with even lower numbers this year.

Section B: Comparative Analysis

This section reinforces the popularity of **Option 2**, as the majority of candidates chose **Question 14**, comparing the work of *Masaccio* with that of *Piero della Francesca*. A full range of marks was awarded to these answers, many of which demonstrated a sense of enjoyment in viewing the pictures.

Option 3, with two Renaissance portraits, was almost as popular. Again, *Leonardo da Vinci* will always be a popular choice for both teachers and candidates.

Options 1 and **4** again received scant attention.