

## Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2019 AP® Studio Art Free-Response Questions

The following comments on the 2019 free-response questions for AP® Studio Art were written by the Chief Reader, Paul Jeanes, from the School of Art Institute of Chicago. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student misunderstandings. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

**Please note: Each section of the AP Studio Art Portfolio Exams is considered a free-response question. Students respond to requirements of the Range of Approaches/Breadth section, Sustained Investigation/Concentration section, and Selected Works/Quality section. Artwork and written statements submitted for the Portfolio Exams are student responses.**

## 2-D Design

2-D Design			
• Number of Exams Scored	37,749		
• Number of Readers	179		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	7,918	21.0
	4	11,887	31.5
	3	12,820	34.0
	2	4,061	10.8
	1	1,063	2.8
• Global Mean	3.57		

**Section #1**      **Task:** Selected Works (Quality)  
**Max. Points:** 18

**Mean Score:** 11.47

*What were responses expected to demonstrate in relation to this section?*

- Students are expected to present five physical (actual) works of art showing understanding of and engagement with 2-D Design.
- The group of works should demonstrate confident decision making, experimentation, invention, and technical competence through application of 2-D Design elements and principles.

*How effectively did the responses demonstrate understanding of the course content related to this section? How effectively did the responses integrate the skills required for this section?*

- In general, 2-D Design Selected Works sections most effectively demonstrated competence in technical skills, such as the use of design elements and principles to create compositions.
- Less common were demonstrations of the application of technical skills to experiment and/or take risks within the realm of 2-D Design.

*What common student misconceptions were seen in the responses to this section?*

<i>Common Misconceptions</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experimentation with materials, processes, and ideas was often limited to traditional and well-established conventions of art and design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful works demonstrated attempts at experimentation, particularly with materials and processes, while using effective applications of 2-D art and design skills.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superficial application of the use of elements and principles of 2-D design was apparent in many of the low- to mid-scoring photography portfolios. These portfolios often included pictures of well-designed subjects but without using the elements and principles of design in the creation of the photography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful photography portfolios used photography as a tool to investigate and explore the issues of 2-D design in more complex ways.</li> </ul>

*Based on your understanding of student responses evaluated at this year's AP® Reading, what advice do you offer to teachers to help them improve student performance for this section of the exam?*

- Promote active and nonconventional experimentation with ideas, materials, and processes.
- Discuss a multitude of diverse and contemporary approaches to 2-D design that integrate ideas with the use of materials and processes.
- Help students avoid superficial and clichéd techniques and processes in their works.

***Which resources do you recommend to teachers to help them better prepare students for demonstrating content knowledge and skill(s) required for this section?***

- Leading Critiques in AP Studio Art Classes <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/leading-critiques-ap-studio-art-classes?course=ap-studio-art-drawing>
- AP Studio Art Exhibit with Commentary from Students and Teachers <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/2018-19-ap-studio-art-exhibit>
- AP Studio Art Portfolio Requirements Brochure <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-art-and-design-portfolio-requirements-2019-20.pdf?course=ap-studio-art-drawing>

**Section #2**

**Task:** Sustained Investigation (Concentration)

**Max. Points:** 12

**Mean Score:** 6.87

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Students are expected to show 12 digital images (some of which may document process or details) of works they have created that show a sustained investigation of an idea in 2-D Design.
- Digital images and written commentary are submitted to demonstrate integration of the idea that is investigated and the work that is created.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- In general, student responses demonstrated moderate to good proficiency in the investigation of an idea through 2-D Design.
- In a clear majority of student works, demonstration of technical competence was more sophisticated than demonstration of conceptual competence as it related to the investigation.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treating technical skills as more important than conceptual skills</li><li>• Merely naming a topic rather than investigating it</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrated and synthesized the technical material skills with the conceptual skills used to investigate a subject</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All works must appear to be “finished” works of art and design.</li><li>• Not enough works that document the process of experimentation, practice, and revision over time, thereby showing how the body of work developed over time.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most successful sustained investigations demonstrated growth over time by showing the processes used in the investigation as well as the effects of growth in the more finished works.</li></ul>

**Based on your understanding of student responses evaluated at this year’s AP® Reading, what advice do you offer to teachers to help them improve student performance for this section of the exam?**

- Focus on ideation and concept development while learning technical skills with materials and media.
- Help students deepen their ideas and topics rather than keeping them too broad.
- Discuss how elements and principles of design can be used in service of student’s investigation topic.
- Help students develop writing skills and build a vocabulary that correlates with their art and design investigations.
- Help students avoid using trite and clichéd subject matter.

**Section #3**

**Task:** Range of Approaches (Breadth)

**Max. Points:** 12

**Mean Score:** 6.86

**What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?**

- Students are expected to submit 12 digital images of works they have created that demonstrate application of 2-D Design principles to a broad range of design problems. The range of approaches to 2-D Design can be conceptual and/or material/process based.

**How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?**

- Overall, responses demonstrated moderate to good competence in exploring a broad range of approaches to 2-D Design. Skills required for this section include creation, selection, and presentation of 2-D works to show a variety of conceptual and/or technical approaches.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only displaying a range of approaches to technique and materials rather than a range of conceptual approaches</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Successful response demonstrated a range of conceptual approaches, along with a range of approaches to the use of the elements and principles of 2-D Design.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Superficial application of 2-D Design skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Successful responses demonstrated a thorough exploration of 2-D Design principles through a variety of approaches.</li></ul>

***Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?***

- Not applicable because this section will be discontinued in 2019-20.

## 3-D Design

3-D Design			
• Number of Students Scored	6,040		
• Number of Readers	179		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	% At
	5	606	10.0
	4	1,351	22.4
	3	2,268	37.5
	2	1,555	25.7
	1	260	4.3
• Global Mean	3.08		

### Section #1

**Task:** Selected Works (Quality)

**Max. Points:** 18

**Mean Score:** 9.96

*What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?*

- Students are expected to present 10 digital images (two views of five works they have created) showing understanding of and engagement with 3-D Design.
- The group of works should demonstrate confident decision-making, experimentation, invention, and technical competence through application of 3-D Design elements and principles.

*How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?*

- In general, 3-D Design Selected Works sections demonstrated moderate to good competence in using design elements and principles of design.
- Overall, demonstration of technical skills with media and processes that are needed to design and create successful 3-D forms was somewhat limited.

*What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?*

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on the embellishment of the surface of the 3-D form rather than focusing on its spatiality and context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses demonstrated an engagement with 3-D Design issues, including the use of occupied and unoccupied space and how the form exists in a place and a contextual environment.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving photographic views of the 3D form that do not help depict how the form occupies space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses used the two views of the 3-D form to show how the form exists in space from two different vantage points so that the reader could discern how it appears from all sides.</li> </ul>

*Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?*

- Discuss how 2-D design and 3-D design relate to one another and how they differ.
- Help students use drawing as a way to further the development of their 3-D Design skills.
- Emphasize the importance of selecting materials and processes that correlate with the ideas that they are investigating.
- Discuss different aspects of spatiality.
- View and discuss diverse contemporary approaches to 3-D art and design.

**Section #2**

**Task: Sustained Investigation (Concentration)**

**Max. Points: 12**

**Mean Score: 6.24**

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Students are expected to show 12 digital images (some of which may document process, different views, or details) of works they have created that show a sustained investigation of an idea in 3-D Design.
- Digital images and written commentary are submitted to demonstrate integration of the idea that is investigated and the work that is created.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- In general, student responses demonstrated moderate to good competence in the investigation of a topic/idea through 3-D Design.
- Demonstration of technical competence was generally more sophisticated than demonstration of conceptual competence related to the chosen investigation.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More emphasis on technical skill with materials and processes than on conceptual development of a sustained investigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In successful responses, the focus of the investigation and the work presented were clearly integrated. The materials, processes used, and ideas were integrated with the focus of the investigation; practice, experimentation, and revision were clearly evident.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only focusing on showing the final work rather than displaying the processes of ideation and the processes of material transformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses demonstrated how the student conceived of 3-D Design through documentation of the student’s thinking process and through the documentation of the physical process of material transformation.</li> </ul>

***Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?***

- Help students write about their ideas before, during, and after the art-making and design process.
- Discuss how 3-D Design principles are used in service of an idea.
- Discuss the relationships of materials, processes, and ideas and how they can integrate in a work of art and design.
- Discuss examples of 3-D Design and art that move beyond issues of craft and technique.

**Section #3****Task:** Range of Approaches (Breadth)**Max. Points:** 12**Mean Score:** 6.18***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Students are expected to submit 16 digital images (two views of eight different works they created) that demonstrate application of 3-D Design principles to a broad range of design problems. The range of approaches to 3-D Design can be conceptual and/or material/process-based.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Overall, students demonstrated moderate to good competence in exploring a broad range of approaches to 3-D Design. Skills required for this section include creation, selection, and presentation of 3-D forms to show a variety of conceptual and/or technical approaches.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on a single technical process rather than exploring a wide range of processes in the development of a 3-D form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses explored an array of different techniques, processes, and approaches to 3-D Design.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on a single medium rather than exploring a wide range of media and materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses explored a wide range of materials, processes, and ideas while effectively using the elements and principles of 3-D Design.</li> </ul>

***Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?***

- Not applicable because this section will be discontinued in 2019-20.

## Drawing

<b>Drawing</b>			
• Number of Students Scored	21,769		
• Number of Readers	179		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	4,519	20.8
	4	7,257	33.3
	3	8,052	37.0
	2	1,701	7.8
	1	240	1.1
• Global Mean			

### Section #1

**Task:** Selected Works (Quality)

**Max. Points:** 18

**Mean Score:** 11.46

*What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?*

- Students are expected to present five physical (actual) works of art showing understanding of and engagement with Drawing issues.
- The group of works should demonstrate confident decision making, experimentation, invention, and technical competence through application of drawing skills.

*How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?*

- In general, the Drawing Selected Works sections effectively demonstrated competence in technical skills, such as the use of traditional drawing tools and processes.
- Use of drawing skills to experiment and/or take risks within the realm of drawing was less common.

*What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?*

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on drawing predominately from photographic images, especially photographic images from the public domain rather than ones that were created by the student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most successful drawn responses demonstrated the effective use of drawing elements (line, light, shade, rendering of form in space, surface manipulation, illusion of depth, mark making) that moved beyond elements merely associated with 2-D Design and the photographic image. When photographs from the public domain were used, they were transformed in the service of the student's idea.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing more on 2-D Design issues rather than on issues of drawing,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most successful responses focus primarily on issues of drawing, even when digital media</li> </ul>

especially when digital tools were employed	and digital tools are used and utilize effective design in service of drawing issues
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**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- Discuss the relationships and differences in drawing, 2-D design, and 3-D design.
- Help students understand how drawing can be used as a process of thinking and as a way to create visual ideas.
- Observe and discuss the histories of drawing in different cultures and across the world while linking historical approaches to drawing to contemporary ones.

**Section #2**

**Task:** Sustained Investigation (Concentration)

**Max. Points:** 12

**Mean Score:** 6.95

**What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?**

- Students are expected to show 12 digital images (some of which may document process or details) of works they have created that show a sustained investigation of an idea through drawing.
- Digital images and written commentary are submitted to demonstrate integration of the idea that is investigated and the work that is created.

**How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?**

- In general, student responses demonstrated moderate to good competence in the investigation of an idea through drawing.
- In a clear majority of student works, demonstration of technical competence was more sophisticated than demonstration of conceptual competence as it relates to the chosen investigation.

**What common student misconceptions were seen in the responses to this section?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuing technical execution more than either the investigation of an idea with drawing or experimentation with what drawing can be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses demonstrated a thoroughly explored sustained investigation using drawing as the process of investigation and a means of thinking. The technical skills were developed over time and were fully integrated with the materials and processes used.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on 12 “finished” drawings rather displaying the processes of conceptual and technical development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses used drawn studies, sketches, and “finished” drawings to demonstrate the sustained investigation into an idea.</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- Teach students how designers and artists throughout history have used drawing as a means to investigate an idea and as a process of inquiry.
- Investigate drawing as both an action process (a verb) and as a form (a noun).

- Help students do more with drawing than just making finished pictures. Drawing can be used to diagram, take notes, create ideas, and record perceptions of the world.
- Help students write about their ideas and relate their use of verbal language to the visual realm of drawing.
- Promote the activity of sketching as a way to research, to invent, to perceive, and to analyze.

**Section #3                      Task: Range of Approaches (Breadth)**

**Max. Points: 12**

**Mean Score: 6.83**

*What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?*

- Students are expected to submit 12 digital images of works that demonstrate a broad range of drawing skills and ideas. The range of approaches to drawing can be conceptual and/or material/process-based.

*How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?*

- Overall, student responses demonstrated moderate to good competence in exploring a broad range of approaches to drawing.

*What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?*

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only exploring traditional and established methods and applications of drawing rather than experimental methods and applications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses demonstrated a wide array of explorations into drawing as a practice. These responses experimented with drawing processes, drawing tools, and ideas about drawing in imaginative and innovative ways.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only focusing on technical experiments rather than on conceptual experiments through drawing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses demonstrated a range of approaches to drawing conceptually and materially.</li> </ul>

*Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?*

- Not applicable as this section will be discontinued in 2019-20.