
AP Art History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 4

The work shown is Lintel 25 from Structure 23 in Yaxchilán, Chiapas, Mexico, 725 C.E.

Describe at least two visual characteristics of the ritual depicted in the work.

Use at least two examples of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work.

Explain the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers.

Scoring Criteria

Task	Points
1 Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work.	1 point
2 Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work.	1 point
3 Accurately uses ONE example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work.	1 point
4 Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work.	1 point
5 Accurately explains the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers.	1 point
Total Possible Score	5 points

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Question 4 (continued)

Scoring Information

Describe at least two visual characteristics of the ritual depicted in the work.

Lintel 25 from Structure 23 depicts a scene from a bloodletting ritual and conjuring event. Hieroglyphic inscriptions describe that the ritual was performed by Lady Xoc, the queen and primary wife of Shield Jaguar (Itzamna B'ahlam II), the ruler of Yaxchilán. Lintel 25 portrays Lady Xoc making contact with a spirit who emerges gripping a spear from the open jaws of a vision serpent. This serpent has been called forth by the blood sacrifice of Lady Xoc. In her left hand, Lady Xoc holds a bowl or a basket that contains instruments of bloodletting as well as bloodied bark paper. A similar object is placed on the ground before her. This also contains bloodied bark paper and from it rises the vision serpent.

Lady Xoc is dressed in an ornately patterned *huipil* trimmed in fringe and pearls, as well as a Sun God pectoral, jade wristlets, and an intricate headdress whose form seems to suggest aspects of the vision serpent before her. Such elaborate attire reflects the ceremonial nature of her actions. Blood scrolls are carved on her cheek near her mouth, reflecting the bloodletting that she had performed in Lintel 24, the previous lintel in the series, also found in Structure 23.

Use at least two examples of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work.

Lintel 25 and the series to which it belongs were originally found placed above the central doorway of Structure 23. These lintels depict scenes from intimate bloodletting rituals and conjuring events performed by the elite in dark, sacred spaces like the interior of Structure 23. The placement of the lintels above the central doorway — which marks a transitional or liminal space — parallels the symbolism of the events depicted as well as the symbolism of the vision serpent as a portal or a gateway between worlds. Some scholars have suggested that the figure emerging from this serpent represents an ancestral warrior spirit, or perhaps even the founder of the kingdom of Yaxchilán. It might also represent Shield Jaguar.

Inscriptions presented through glyphs on both Lintel 24 and Lintel 25 identify the date of this particular bloodletting ritual as October 28, 709 C.E., and they note that the purpose of the ritual was to mark the anniversary of Shield Jaguar's ascension to the throne in October 681 C.E. Such an association could refer to the rule of Shield Jaguar himself or to the construction of Structure 23, which Shield Jaguar had built in Yaxchilán after a 150-year lapse in building palace architecture. Inscriptions state that Shield Jaguar dedicated Structure 23 to Lady Xoc and that it was considered to be her space; some scholars have theorized that it might be her tomb.

More details about the ritual are presented in Lintel 24, which show Lady Xoc pulling a spiked rope through a hole in her tongue while Shield Jaguar provides illumination with a blazing torch to a presumably dark space. The fire could also have been used to ignite the bloodied bark paper in the container set between them. The smoke, pain, and possible ingestion of hallucinogens produced conditions favorable for the conjuring of a vision serpent.

Explain the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers.

Bloodletting was a form of sacrifice that was expected of Maya rulers and was particularly associated with ceremonies of renewal and rebirth. The Maya believed that their gods sacrificed their own divine blood to create humankind. In return, the Maya were expected to make blood sacrifices to the gods to maintain the

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Question 4 (continued)

order of the universe. Bloodletting, or sacrificing one's own blood, was one way to achieve this. This bloodletting ritual was performed most dramatically by members of the royal family, but it was also performed by other Maya elites and religious leaders. Bloodletting took place at every major political and religious ceremony because it was the means by which the gods or ancestors could be present to sanctify the event. "Present" is meant literally in this case: the Maya believed that the act of bloodletting opened a portal to the Other World through which gods and spirits could pass, as depicted in Lintel 25.

As such, bloodletting rituals connected Maya royals to the sacred sphere and legitimized their social and political positions as divinely sanctioned rulers. On Lintel 25 the central role played by Lady Xoc in this bloodletting ritual would have legitimized Shield Jaguar's reign and reinforced her power as his primary wife and queen. This assertion was perhaps necessary because it was through Lady Xoc and her lineage that Shield Jaguar was able to justify his claim to the throne of Yaxchilán.

Lintel 25 demonstrates that Lady Xoc held enormous political and spiritual power during the reign of Shield Jaguar. It is possible that she commissioned this series of lintels, which would be a rare example of female patronage, and by extension female power, in Maya art.

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Question 4 (continued)

Scoring Notes

1	<p>Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lady Xoc is making contact with a spirit called forth by her blood sacrifice. She is dressed in an ornately patterned <i>huipil</i> trimmed in fringe and pearls, as well as a Sun God pectoral, jade wristlets, and an intricate headdress.• A vision serpent rises from bloodied bark paper. From one of the serpent’s mouths emerges a spirit who wears an ornate headdress, ear spools, and a pectoral, and carries a shield and a spear.• Two bowls or baskets contain instruments of bloodletting as well as bloodied bark paper. One is held by Lady Xoc, and there is a similar one on the ground from which the vision serpent rises.• Blocky hieroglyphic text at the top of the carving identifies specific information about the ritual depicted.
2	<p>Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work.</p> <p>See above.</p>
3	<p>Accurately uses ONE example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lintel 25 and the series of three lintels to which it belongs depict scenes from intimate bloodletting rituals and conjuring events performed by the elite in dark, sacred spaces.• More details about the ritual are presented in Lintel 24, which shows Lady Xoc pulling a spiked rope through a hole in her tongue while Shield Jaguar provides illumination with a blazing torch to a presumably dark space. The fire could also have been used to ignite the bloodied bark paper for the purpose of conjuring the vision serpent.• Inscriptions presented through glyphs identify the date of this particular bloodletting ritual as October 28, 709 C.E., and they note that the purpose was to mark the anniversary of Shield Jaguar’s ascension to the throne.• Some scholars have suggested that the spirit emerging from the vision serpent represents an ancestral warrior spirit, or perhaps even the founder of the kingdom of Yaxchilán. It might also represent Shield Jaguar.• The placement of the lintels above Structure 23’s central doorway — which marks a transitional or liminal space — parallels the symbolism of the events as well as the symbolism of the vision serpent as a portal between worlds.• The conjuring of the vision serpent was likely produced by a combination of blood loss, pain, smoke, and possibly hallucinogens.
4	<p>Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work.</p> <p>See above.</p>

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Question 4 (continued)

5 Accurately explains the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers.

- Bloodletting was a form of sacrifice that was expected of Maya rulers and was associated with ceremonies of **renewal and rebirth**. The Maya believed that their gods sacrificed divine blood to create humankind. In return, the Maya were expected to make blood sacrifices to the gods to maintain the order of the universe.
- Bloodletting rituals connected Maya royals to the **sacred sphere and legitimized their social and political positions as divinely sanctioned rulers**.
- Bloodletting rituals were **also performed by other Maya elites and religious leaders**. Bloodletting **took place at every major political and religious ceremony** because it was the means by which the gods or ancestors could be present to sanctify the event.
- **Lady Xoc's central role in this bloodletting ritual would have legitimized Shield Jaguar's reign and reinforced her power as his primary wife and queen**. This assertion was perhaps necessary because it was through Lady Xoc and her lineage that Shield Jaguar was able to justify his claim to the throne.

4. Suggested time: 15 minutes. p

The work shown is Lintel 25 from Structure 23 in Yaxchilán, Chiapas, Mexico, 725 C.E. p

Describe at least two visual characteristics of the ritual depicted in the work. p

Use at least two examples of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work. p

Explain the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers. p

One visual characteristic is the ~~paper~~ ~~burnt~~ paper stained with blood on the bottom of the lintel. This signified that Lady Xocobal had just finished the ritual of bloodletting and had bled the paper to make a ~~spirit~~ ~~appear~~ ~~you~~ appear.

The figure ~~at~~ ^{right} at the bottom ~~right~~ ~~corner~~ had a figure impersonally dressed in wealthy styles of clothing and jewelry. He has an impressive headdress and is covered with ear earrings, ~~bracelets~~ bracelets, and necklaces, showing his wealth and prestige. This ~~figure~~ ~~person~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~only~~ ~~figure~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~image~~ ~~who~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~the~~ ~~lord~~ ~~Xocobal~~.

~~Another~~ Another visual characteristic is the appearance with a serpent god. The ^{appearance of} serpent god means that the ritual of bloodletting has been finished and the blood-stained paper burned because the blood has dried and led to the appearance of the Snake/Serpent god.

The process of bloodletting was done by cutting one's tongue or other body parts with a tool with blade-like objects. The blood then was dropped on a paper in order to burn the paper. Burning the paper would in essence call the god to watch and appear/pleased. ~~Other~~ ~~figures~~ ~~who~~ ~~were~~ ~~appearing~~ ~~usually~~ ~~only~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~

process
~~process~~ of bloodletting.

Royals were often forced to let themselves be produced blood for sacrifice. They were made to do it ~~down~~ very often in order to make sure the gods were appeased. Also, the Mayans ~~often~~ ^{or other tribes} often conquered nearby tribes in order to have sacrificial ~~offered~~ ~~victims~~ victims. Their prisoners were sacrificed to appease their gods, and this made many other fearful of the Mayans.

Mayan rulers were made to produce sacrificial blood through blood-letting in order to keep the gods happy. This ~~was~~ ~~great~~ this was necessary in order for protection and ~~the~~ prosperity and wealth to be passed on upon their nation. Also, this also was a personal religious conviction for the rulers as they were able to call gods and spirits to do what and what to them, ~~signifying~~ signifying a sort of divine right and connection ~~that~~ that allowed rulers to ~~have~~ the right to control their kingdom.

4B,

4. Suggested time: 15 minutes.

The work shown is Lintel 25 from Structure 23 in Yaxchilán, Chiapas, Mexico, 725 C.E. v

Describe at least two visual characteristics of the ritual depicted in the work. v

Use at least two examples of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work. v

Explain the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers. v

In this work, the man emerging from the mouth of the snake is holding a spear-like tool. This tool will be used for a blood-letting ceremony in which the queen will ~~may~~ pierce her tongue and her blood will be collected for this ritual. Furthermore, the viewer can identify the queen because of her attire. She is draped in clothing with elaborate patterns, and she is wearing a headdress that appears to have a snake on it. This snake motif ~~is~~ is often found within the Mayan culture. Within this work the snake motif is seen twice. ~~It~~ It is first seen ~~with~~ ^{when} the man ~~emerging~~ ^{emerges} from the snake, and it is also seen on the queen's headdress. The snake is a symbol of auspiciousness in the Maya culture; it is highly revered. Just as the snake is considered ^{sacred} to the Maya, blood is also important. The Maya had a fascination with blood, often making it the center of religious ceremonies. Whether it be sacrificing enemies ~~or~~ or performing the ritual depicted in this work, they all involve blood. Thus, this blood-letting ritual was specifically for ~~the~~ Maya royalty. The fact only royalty ~~was~~ was able to

4B₂

participate in a ceremony honoring the gods
emphasizes the power and authority they had
over all aspects of life.

4C1

4. Suggested time: 15 minutes.

The work shown is Lintel 25 from Structure 23 in Yaxchilán, Chiapas, Mexico, 725 C.E.

Describe at least two visual characteristics of the ritual depicted in the work.

Use at least two examples of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work.

Explain the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers.

Visual characteristics of Lintel 25 include the use of geometric forms, and idealization, and the use of headdresses. Geometric forms are seen in the glyphs & in the upper left of the work, as well as in the patterning of both figures. Although this work does not show classical European idealization, it shows what the Mayans considered to be ideal, such as a large nose and lips.

The ritual shown in the work is the result of a bloodletting ritual depicted in another lintel found at Yaxchilán, which showed the queen (the right figure) dragging a thorned rope through her tongue. Rulers in the Mayan world were connected to the

gods, and ~~proved~~^{proved} they were through bloodletting rituals. The Mayans did not shy away from human sacrifice or bloodletting rituals, and such rituals were important to Mayan religion. Because of the pain and blood loss resulting from a bloodletting ritual, the queen has a vision of a Mayan god. This establishes her connection to the divine, and thus her legitimacy as a ruler. Because this was done in a public place, the queen's legitimacy work was able to establish the queen's legitimacy to a wide audience.

This ritual carries great political and ritual ^{significance} ~~significance~~. So to Maya rulers. Mayan rulers established their legitimacy and divine connection through rituals such as the ones depicted at Yaxchilan. In addition, this would have been a spiritual experience, due to the encounter with a god.

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Question 4

Overview

This question asked students to analyze the ritual shown in Lintel 25 from Structure 23 in Yaxchilán, Chiapas, Mexico, describing visual characteristics of the ritual depicted in the work and then explaining the ritual using two examples of specific contextual evidence. Students then needed to explain the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers. This is a work from Indigenous Americas (1000 B.C.E.–1980 C.E.). The intent of the question was to have students situate a work, and its visual characteristics, within its specific historical, religious, and cultural context.

Sample: 4A

Score: 5

Task 1: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response describes one visual characteristic of the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response describes “the basket filled with papers stained with blood on the bottom of the lintel.”

Task 2: Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response describes another visual characteristic of the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel: Lady Xoc is “sumptuously dressed in wealthy [*sic*] styles of clothing and jewelry. She has an impressive headdress and is covered with earrings, bracelets, and necklaces, showing her wealth and prestige.” This elaborate attire reflects the ceremonial nature of Lady Xoc’s actions. The response also notes the presence of the vision serpent in the lintel. While not required to earn the point, the additional description enhances the quality of the response.

Task 3: Accurately uses ONE example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response uses one example of specific contextual evidence to explain the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response explains that “The process of bloodletting was done by cutting one’s tongue or other bodily parts with a rope with blade-like objects.”

Task 4: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response uses another example of specific contextual evidence to explain the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response explains that the basket filled with bloodied bark papers “signified that Lady Xochital [*sic*] had just finished the ritual of bloodletting and has burned the paper to make a god appear.” The response notes, “Burning the paper would in essence call the god to awaken and appear.”

Task 5: Accurately explains the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers. (1 point)

The response explains the political or religious significance of this bloodletting ritual for Maya rulers by observing that “Mayan rulers were made to produce sacrificial blood through blood-letting in order to keep the gods happy. This was necessary in order for protection and prosperity and wealth to be blessed upon their nation. Also, this allowed a personal religious connection for the rulers as they were able to call gods and spirits to awaken and come to them, signifying a sort of divine right and connection that allowed rulers to the right to control their kingdom.”

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Question 4 (continued)

Sample: 4B

Score: 4

Task 1: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response describes one visual characteristic of the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response describes the spirit as “the man emerging from the mouth of the snake [who] is holding a spear-like tool.”

Task 2: Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response describes another visual characteristic of the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response notes that Lady Xoc is identifiable “because of her attire. She is draped in clothing with elaborate patterns, and she is wearing a headdress that appears to have a snake on it.”

Task 3: Accurately uses ONE example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response uses one example of specific contextual evidence to explain the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response explains that during this ritual “the queen will pierce her tongue and her blood will be collected for this ritual.”

Task 4: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work. (0 points)

No point was earned. The response does not use another example of specific contextual evidence to explain the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response makes an attempt by observing that snakes were “highly revered” by the Maya and that blood was at “the center of religious ceremonies”; however, these statements are too general. To earn the point, the response needed to provide specific contextual evidence to support these assertions and connect them to the ritual. For example, the response could have explained how the vision serpent has been interpreted as a portal or gateway between worlds. The response could have noted that the serpent has been theorized as representing an ancestral warrior spirit or perhaps even the founder of the kingdom of Yaxchilán.

Task 5: Accurately explains the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers. (1 point)

The response explains the political or religious significance of this bloodletting ritual for Maya rulers. The response explains that the exclusive nature of the ritual contributes to its significance: “this blood-letting ritual was specifically for Maya royalty. The fact [that] only royalty was able to participate in a ceremony honoring the gods emphasizes the power and authority they had over all aspects of life.”

Sample: 4C

Score: 3

Task 1: Accurately describes ONE visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work. (0 points)

No point was earned. The response does not describe one visual characteristic of the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response makes an attempt by observing the presence of “geometric forms” and “patterning.” These statements, however, are too general and are not clearly connected to the ritual depicted. To earn the point the response could have noted the elaborate patterning on Lady Xoc’s *huipil*, or the presence of the vision serpent rising from the bloodied bark paper.

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Question 4 (continued)

Task 2: Accurately describes ANOTHER visual characteristic of the ritual depicted in the work. (0 points)

No point was earned. The response does not describe another visual characteristic of the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel.

Task 3: Accurately uses ONE example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response uses one example of specific contextual evidence to explain the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response explains that “The ritual shown in the work is the result of a bloodletting ritual depicted in another lintel found at Yaxchilan, which showed the queen (the right figure) dragging a thorned rope through her tongue.”

Task 4: Accurately uses ANOTHER example of specific contextual evidence to explain the ritual depicted in the work. (1 point)

The response uses another example of specific contextual evidence to explain the bloodletting ritual depicted on the lintel. The response explains that “Because of the pain and blood loss resulting from a bloodletting ritual, the queen has a vision of a Mayan god.”

Task 5: Accurately explains the political or religious significance of this ritual for Maya rulers. (1 point)

The response explains the political or religious significance of this bloodletting ritual for Maya rulers. The response notes that the bloodletting ritual “establishes her connection to the divine, and thus her legitimacy as a ruler.”