

AP[®] ART HISTORY
2006 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 9

9. Throughout history, works of art have included symbolic or allegorical images.

Select and fully identify two works of art that include symbolic or allegorical images. Your choices must be from different art historical periods. Discuss how each work uses symbols or allegory to convey meaning. (30 minutes)

Background:

Artists use symbols and allegories to convey abstract concepts, human qualities, moral lessons, or hidden meanings that allude to more than what is first apparent to the eye. Although artists generally use symbols and allegories that are part of a visual language shared by people of a particular culture, time, and/or place, they may also choose to represent images and narratives of a personal or esoteric nature, thus denying most viewers full access to the work's meaning.

This question asks students to discuss the construction of meaning through the use of symbolic or allegorical images in a work of art. Rather than describing a work by simply listing the symbols and what they represent, students are asked to discuss **how** symbols or allegories are used to convey meaning.

Points to remember:

- The intent of this question is to get students to think critically and independently about the entire continuum of the history of art. Thus, students must demonstrate a clear understanding of a difference and distinction between two art historical periods to earn a higher score.
- **Stronger essays** offer a full identification of appropriate choices and a complete, accurate understanding of their symbolic or allegorical content. These essays **analyze how symbolic or allegorical images convey meaning**. Especially strong essays will demonstrate an understanding of historical context, traditions, cultural attitudes, or religious beliefs.
- **Weaker essays** use inappropriate choices or have little familiarity with a work's symbolic or allegorical content. They will **fail to discuss how symbols and allegories convey meaning** and tend to describe the work instead. Especially weak essays will fail to recognize symbols or allegories in a work of art.

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Question 9 (continued)

Scoring Criteria

Score Scale 0–9

- 9–8** **Fully identifies** two works of art from two different art historical periods that include symbolic or allegorical images. Provides a full and correct discussion of **how** each work uses symbols or allegory to convey meaning. The lower score is earned when an answer contains some imbalance or has minor errors of fact or interpretation.
- 7–6** **Fully identifies** two works of art from two different art historical periods that include symbolic or allegorical images. Provides a discussion of **how** each work uses symbols or allegory to convey meaning, but the discussion may be unbalanced and may contain errors of fact or interpretation. The lower score is earned when the discussion is notably unbalanced or the errors are significant.
- 5** This is the highest score an essay can earn if it **deals with only one appropriate choice but does so fully and correctly**.

OR

- Identifies** two works of art from two different art historical periods that include symbolic or allegorical images, but the identification may be incomplete or faulty. The discussion may attempt to address how each work uses symbols and allegory to convey meaning, but it mostly **describes** the works, referring to what is seen rather than how symbols or allegories convey meaning.
- 4–3** **Identifies** at least one work of art that includes symbolic or allegorical images but may fail to grasp the concept of symbolism or allegory. The identification may be incomplete, and the discussion may describe the works, referring to what is seen rather than how symbols and allegories convey meaning. The lower score is earned when the essay lacks meaningful discussion or contains significant errors of fact or interpretation.
- 2–1** The identification is incomplete and/or choices are inappropriate. If choices are appropriate, there is minimal discussion. The lower score is earned when there is no discussion of merit.
- 0** Makes an attempt, but the response is without merit because it restates the question, includes no identifiable choices, or makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements.
- Indicates a nonresponse, such as a blank paper, crossed-out words, or personal notes.

Directions for Question 9: You have 30 minutes to answer Question 9. Read the question and take a moment to think about what the question asks. You can receive full credit only by answering the question asked. Therefore, spend a few minutes organizing or outlining your response in the blank space provided above the question. Notes in the blank space will not be graded. Be sure to analyze each question carefully and choose appropriate examples. Identify your examples as fully as possible.

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Symbolic and allegorical images are fun credit they. They are, well, symbolic of ideas in different, we can ~~again~~ again go back to the Seated Khopse of Ancient Egypt to discuss its symbolic aspects. I believe the Romans are one culture that enjoyed the use of allegorical images. Allegorical figures appear as propaganda in works such as the *Vra Paxis Augustae*.

First, the Seated Khopse of Ancient Egypt contains examples for many aspects of art. This is a statue of Khopse depicts this Egyptian pharaoh seated upon a "throne". It's really just a block of diorite but whatever. This contains many symbolic elements to glorify the pharaoh. The symbols of the gayer and lotus are carved on the side of the throne to show the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt for which the symbols represent. Being carved upon Khopse's throne shows that he rules over all of Egypt and glorifies his power. The

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

thrones legs are carved in the shape of lions paws to further show the pharaoh's power. The headdress and fake beard signify the title in the statue of a pharaoh. The only real allegorical figure in this statue is the falcon perched behind Khafre's head. This is symbolic of the Egyptian god Horus watching over the pharaoh. This also reinforces that Khafre was a pharaoh because the Egyptians believed that during their pharaoh was the embodiment of Horus. They become the god Osiris after death. This is particularly why preserving the dead was so important for them and call for these elaborately carved diorite statues and great sealed pyramid tombs.

The allegorical figures seen on the Ara Pacis Augustae serves not a religious purpose but rather to glorify the Roman Emperor Augustus and the Pax Romana he brought about. On the Ara Pacis are depicted scenes of peace and prosperity. One panel contains the allegorical figures of wind, water, and earth. This panel is to show a peaceful beautiful spring time able to be enjoyed now during the Ara Pacis. The allegorical figures in this relief are depicted as idealized beauties with flowing drapery. The earth mother rests in the middle surrounded by wild life, and on either side of her are the figures for wind and water. One is floating upon the wind while the other sits upon a water dragon. This allegorical scene of nature shows the peace and beauty of the Pax Romana and glorifies Augustus as the emperor.

Allegorical figures appear in more modern figures and paintings as well such as muses of freedom or victory.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

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Jan Van Eyck -

Salvador Dali -

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Throughout history, works of art have included symbolic or allegorical images. Two such pieces are Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Wedding and ~~Salvador Dali's~~ Picasso's Guernica.

In van Eyck's Arnolfini Wedding, he includes many secular symbols, as well as religious ones, among the room in which the two main figures stand. In the background of the piece, a mirror (in a shape much like a snowflake) contains scenes of the passion of Christ. It also includes one lit candle in the chandelier to portray the presence of God. By placing wooden clogs beside the main figures, he symbolized that they were on holy ground. The secular symbols included a dog (symbolizes fidelity), a whisk broom (symbolizes domestic care), and oranges (which symbolized wealth since they

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

could only be bought in Spain and they were from the Netherlands). By placing the man by the window to suggest he worked in the world and the woman by the bed to suggest she took care of the domestic chores, van Eyck symbolizes the role in which society believed people should take. The inclusion of such symbols helps identify that a religious wedding is taking place.

In Picasso's Guernica he portrays the havoc caused by the Spanish civil war. The black, gray, and white tones of the figures symbolizes the hatred Picasso felt towards Spain. The main symbol in this piece is the lightbulb shown in the upper portions of the painting. The lightbulb represents the bomb used to kill thousands of innocent people. Another symbol is the bull that shreds and eats the people. The bull represents the soldiers and people who administered the bombing. The figures run about in despair trying to avoid their deaths. Picasso used this painting as a way to symbolizes his hatred towards Spain without depicting the actual scene or event.

Both artists, Jan van Eyck and Picasso, use symbols in their pieces to either depict a specific event without actually making it obvious or to depict their point of view on a piece. The symbols

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

Question 9 is repeated for your convenience.

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in these pieces are meant to enlighten the viewer by making them aware of different standards or events they may not have known about.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

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Symbols and allegory in art convey meaning in a metaphorical way.

In Ancient Greece, the sculpture Nike is an allegorical figure of victory. The sculpture was erected to commemorate a victory at battle.

During the Romantic era, Eugene Delacroix also uses an allegorical figure in his painting Liberty leading the people. The figure of Liberty, depicted as a woman of antiquity, is leading people of all classes under the French flag. It invokes nationalism and unity in a revolution.

Allegorical figures are used by artists to convey their message, which would otherwise be too

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

subjective to depict in a painting or
work of art. They can add clarity and define
a mood.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2006 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 9

Overview

This was the second 30-minute essay question. Students were asked to identify two works of art from different art historical periods that included symbolic or allegorical images and to analyze HOW each work of art used symbols or allegory to convey meaning. Students were not asked to describe the symbols or the allegory embedded within works of art or to compare images. Rather, they were expected to use their knowledge about symbols or allegory in works from different art historical periods to analyze how those symbols or allegories have been used differently in different times and places by artists, patrons, and cultures to communicate meaning.

Sample: 9A

Score: 9

This essay utilizes two appropriate choices from two different art historical periods, the Egyptian statue of Khafre and the Roman Ara Pacis. The discussion of the Khafre statue clearly demonstrates an understanding of what constitutes symbolic or allegorical content and **how** the Egyptian pharaoh is placed alongside symbols that glorify his rule and power. The essay also identifies allegorical figures in the Ara Pacis and how they interact within a prescribed context that conveys “the peace and beauty of the Pax Romana and glorifies Augustus as the emperor.”

Sample: 9B

Score: 6

This essay utilizes two appropriate choices from two different art historical periods, the *Arnolfini Wedding Portrait* by Jan van Eyck and *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso. The essay demonstrates a fair understanding of what constitutes symbolic or allegorical content. The discussion of **how** symbolic content is used in the Jan van Eyck painting is good, emphasizing where symbols are placed and how sacred imagery has been incorporated into a domestic setting. However, the discussion of **how** symbolic content is used in the Picasso painting is weak, relying mostly on description and failing to completely grasp the concept of symbolism. The essay, for example, states that “The black, gray, and white tones of the figures symbolizes the hatred Picasso felt towards Spain.” The essay is unbalanced and lacks specificity.

Sample: 9C

Score: 3

This essay utilizes two appropriate choices from two different art historical periods, a *Nike* figure and *Liberty Leading the People* by Eugène Delacroix. The identification of the *Nike* figure, however, is incomplete. The essay demonstrates recognition of an allegorical figure in its discussion of both works, but a meaningful discussion of **how** symbolic content is used to convey meaning is missing. Overall, the essay lacks specificity.