

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2007 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 5

- Left slide: *Harold swears fealty to William, Duke of Normandy*. Detail from *The Bayeux Tapestry*. 11th c. Wool Embroidery on Linen. Musée de la Tapisserie, Bayeux.
- Right slide: *Duke William Exhorts his Troops to Prepare Themselves Wisely Like Men for the Battle Against the English Army*. Detail from *The Bayeux Tapestry*. 11th c. Wool Embroidery on Linen. Musée de la Tapisserie, Bayeux.

5. The slides show details of a larger work. Identify the work. What were the likely political motivations for its creation? How are these motivations expressed in the work? (10 minutes)

Background:

The Bayeux Tapestry is actually an embroidered wall hanging that illustrates events related to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. It was likely commissioned by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, between 1066 and 1082. Odo, the half brother of William the Conqueror, became Bishop of Kent after the Norman Conquest. His familial and political ties to the Normans influenced the interpretation of the Norman Conquest on *The Bayeux Tapestry*; where it is depicted as a heavenly sanctioned and just result of Harold's duplicity. The narrative tapestry, 230 feet long and 20 inches high, details the Norman propagandistic account that legitimizes the conquest of England. Harold is captured by the Duke of Brittany and is ransomed by Duke William of Normandy. In exchange for his freedom, Harold swears a sacred oath on the relics of Bayeux (as seen in the slide on the left) that he will forgo the crown of England and allow William to succeed Edward the Confessor as King of England. Upon his release, however, Harold breaks his vow and is crowned king upon Edward's death. This act of usurpation prompts William to amass an invasion force against England, resulting in the Norman Conquest and the death of Harold. The tapestry portrays the conquest as a righteous act that allows William to assume the crown as the proper ruler and punish the breaking of Harold's oath with defeat and death. Odo's role in the conquest is underscored throughout by his clearly labeled figure and by the implicit role played by the bishop as the head of the church whose relics affect the Norman victory. The veracity of the account is underscored by both the lengthy narrative and the exacting depiction of armor, tools, costumes, and other quotidian details. These details further accentuate William's image as a good, efficient leader who possesses great skills of organization. The embroidery was most likely done by women in Bayeux or Canterbury in Kent; both sites were politically linked to Odo.

Students have three tasks:

- (1) They must identify the work as *The Bayeux Tapestry* (or *The Bayeux Embroidery*).
- (2) They must identify the likely political motivations for its creation.
- (3) They must analyze how these political motivations are expressed in *The Bayeux Tapestry*.

Better responses will identify the likely political motivations for the creation of *The Bayeux Tapestry* and may even discuss the propagandistic nature of its particular representation of the Norman Conquest of England. The best responses will analyze how these political motivations are expressed in the tapestry.

Weaker responses will simply describe the subject without offering substantive analysis of its political agenda.

The work is most commonly referred to as *The Bayeux Tapestry*. *The Bayeux Embroidery* is acceptable, as it is more precise.

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2007 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 5 (continued)

Points to remember:

- Students are asked to identify but not date the embroidery. However, the relationship to the events of 1066 is important in assessing political motivations, and the best responses may provide a chronological context. Even though they are not asked to name it, students cannot really assess the relationship between the embroidery's imagery and its probable political motivations without noting its relationship to the Norman Conquest.
- The slides are included here as visual prompts to aid discussion of the whole embroidery and not necessarily to generate discussion of the specific details shown.
- This is a 10-minute question.

Scoring Criteria

Score Scale 0–4

4 Correctly identifies the work as *The Bayeux Tapestry* (or *The Bayeux Embroidery*). Analyzes, with a high degree of specificity, how Norman political motivations are expressed in the work. There are no significant errors.

3 Correctly identifies the work as *The Bayeux Tapestry*. Analyzes, with a fair degree of specificity, how Norman political motivations are expressed in the work. There may be minor errors.

OR

Does not identify the work as *The Bayeux Tapestry* but is otherwise a 4.

2 Correctly identifies the work as *The Bayeux Tapestry*. Offers minimal, erroneous, or no discussion of the propagandistic nature of the portrayal. Describes the work without analyzing it.

OR

Does not identify the work as *The Bayeux Tapestry* but is otherwise a 3.

1 Correctly identifies the work as *The Bayeux Tapestry* but includes no other discussion of merit.

OR

Does not identify the work as *The Bayeux Tapestry* but is otherwise a 2.

0 Makes an attempt, but the response is without merit because it fails to identify the work or makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements.

— This is a nonresponse, such as a blank paper, crossed-out words, or personal notes.

5. The slides show details of a larger work.

Identify the work. What were the likely political motivations for its creation? How are these motivations expressed in the work? (10 minutes)

This work is the Bayeux tapestry. It was created in order to glorify and justify the Norman Conquest of England, which occurred in 1066 after William of Normandy, known as the Conqueror, won the Battle of Hastings over the Anglo-Saxon forces of Harold Godwinson.

The tapestry justifies and glorifies the Normans in a number of ways. For example, the tapestry shows Edward the Confessor, the previous King, promising the throne to William, clearly implying that Harold is a usurper. The tapestry also shows a comet ~~cast~~ that foreshadows the triumph of the Normans. Harold is shown in the tapestry as weak and irresolute, slumped over on his throne when he hears of the comet. William, in contrast, is a bold and courageous leader. In the scenes showing the Battle of Hastings, William ~~valiantly~~ valiantly inspires his men and leads them to victory over the Anglo-Saxons. The whole thrust of the tapestry is

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the nobility of William and the
justness of his claim for the
English throne. He emerges victorious
in the end. This tapestry celebrates and
glorifies that victory

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5. The slides show details of a larger work.

5B,

Identify the work. What were the likely political motivations for its creation? How are these motivations expressed in the work? (10 minutes)

Work: Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry, constructed of thin wool thread woven into linen, was created as a historical narrative to recount the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The artist created this work to commemorate William the Conqueror's victory over the British natives and his new kingdom. The political motivation is expressed in the flattery of William. ~~The tapestry which was created in France was intended as a gift to him.~~ This is shown in the right-hand image on the right as he single-handedly brings down a large ~~group~~ grouping of native soldiers. The numerous people killed are represented on the lower register of the tapestry, while symbols of triumph and power adorn the higher one. It is most likely that the creator of this work, which was made in France, intended to celebrate William's taking over of England but also flatter him because his ~~empire, which is~~ empire, which previously consisted of only Normandy, had come to include the largest of the British islands.

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which also gave him control of essential waterways. The tapestry, as a gift, could be one to improve one's political ~~gain~~ standing and express support for the conqueror's new lands.

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5. The slides show details of a larger work.

Identify the work. What were the likely political motivations for its creation? How are these motivations expressed in the work? (10 minutes)

These slides are details of the Romanesque Bayeux Tapestry commissioned by King Odo. This woven tapestry which is extremely long and has several hundred animal ~~figures~~ and human figures within it, is representing the Battle of Hastings of 1066. The R detail obviously portrays the battle scene with a horse trampling over a dead stabbed body ~~figure~~ towards a group of men holding spears, bows-and-arrows, and axes along with shields in front. Spears are even flying in the air towards the man on the horse. The L detail depicts a conflict between two men trying to claim their right to a throne. One man holds a large sword while the other points back at him sternly.

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2007 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 5

Overview

This 10-minute question asked students to identify the Bayeux Tapestry (eleventh century), to speculate on the likely political motivations for its creation, and to indicate how these motivations were expressed in the work. The question seemed quite straightforward: the Bayeux Tapestry is a well-known work of art; there is nothing else quite like it; it is illustrated in most world history books as well as art history textbooks; and it was in the *AP Art History Course Description* until quite recently. Thus students should have been very familiar with it and its history. Knowing that most students should be aware of the narrative in the Bayeux Tapestry, this question asked about the possible motivation for its creation. Students were asked to question the function and purpose of the work of art, to ask themselves why it was created and for what purposes, and to find visible evidence of those possible motivations in the tapestry itself. This was a simple question, but it required students to draw connections between the work of art and the time and place in which it was made, and to analyze why it was made and how it functioned originally.

Sample: 5A

Score: 4

This essay correctly identifies the work as the Bayeux Tapestry and discusses its relationship to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. The student provides a clear and thorough analysis of the way in which the tapestry portrays the events of the Norman Conquest from the Norman perspective, legitimizing and glorifying Norman claims and accomplishments. The essay discusses how William is aggrandized and Harold is shown as a usurper to William's rightful claim to the throne of England.

Sample: 5B

Score: 3

This essay correctly identifies the work as the Bayeux Tapestry and discusses its relationship to William the Conqueror and the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The student notes that the tapestry's portrayal of these events was intended to "flatter" William but does not offer great detail or analysis.

Sample: 5C

Score: 2

This essay correctly identifies the work as the Bayeux Tapestry and mentions its relationship to the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The student then offers a description of the scene shown, without providing any analysis.