

# AP<sup>®</sup> ART HISTORY

## 2007 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 7

Left slide: Tree of Jesse, lancet window in the west facade, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France. c. 1150-70.  
Right slide: Blank

7. Identify the medium and art-historical period of the object shown. Explain the religious and visual reasons for the extensive use of this medium during its period. (5 minutes)

#### **Background:**

A hallmark of Gothic architecture, the concentration of masonry into a load-bearing skeletal structure of stone allows for a large amount of wall mass to be opened up for windows. This is achieved through the use of ribbed vaulting, pointed arches, external buttressing, and ashlar masonry. The windows were filled with stained glass through which sacred stories, as well as secular images, could be given luminous form. This technique involves the use of small sections of colored glass set into tracery to create both narrative and iconic images. Early Gothic stained glass, such as the example seen here, reveals a predilection for rich blue and red hues. The lavish decoration of stained glass and stone sculpture frequently interrelate and create the sense of the Gothic cathedral as a sermon in stone and glass. Although stained-glass windows are, of course, difficult to read from the viewpoint of the worshipper, they could inspire, console, and reassure the faithful, reminding them of the teachings and holy passages they so often heard and recited. The window shown here is directly above the portal exalting the Virgin on the west façade of Chartres. The Tree of Jesse imagery relates to the rising cult of the Virgin, as it elucidates the genealogy of Mary from the house of Jesse, articulating her role in the transition from Old to New Testament. This should come as no surprise; the Cathedral of Chartres is dedicated to the Virgin and was one of the most important Marian shrines in Europe. Emphasis on Marian imagery underscores both Chartres' dedication to her and the general increase in devotion to the Virgin during the Gothic era. Light streaming through these windows, illuminating their imagery in a dazzling wash of color, would have a powerful effect upon both the senses and emotions of the viewer, creating an ever-shifting, shimmering perception of divine splendor. This feeling would be intensified by the belief that God was manifest in light, following the mystic theology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Aereopagite and others. The contemplation of light and color allowed the worshipper to mystically approach the divine. Therefore, dazzling images in stained glass were arguably illuminated by God's presence. Furthermore, the passage of light through a window was metaphorically and symbolically linked to the Virgin's impregnation, as her body is penetrated but her virginity remains intact. The Gothic cathedral served as a vehicle to anagogical contemplation of the divine, incorporating both sensual and intellectual faculties.

#### **Students have two tasks:**

- (1) They must identify the medium as stained glass and the art-historical period in which the window was made as Gothic.
- (2) They must explain the religious and visual reasons for the use of stained glass in the Gothic period.

The best responses will explain the religious and visual reasons for the creation of Gothic stained glass. They may reference Suger's description of *lux nova* or the spiritual manifestation of light as it passes through stained glass.

Weaker responses will simply describe the appearance of stained glass, state that it illuminates the church interior or educates the illiterate, or focus superficially on the structural innovations of cathedral design.

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## 2007 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 7 (continued)

#### Points to remember:

- Students are not asked to identify this particular window but only to identify the medium and art-historical period.
- This is a 5-minute question.

#### Scoring Criteria

##### Score Scale 0–4

- 4** Correctly identifies the medium as stained glass and the art-historical period as Gothic. Explains the religious and visual reasons for the use of stained glass during the Gothic period. There are no significant errors.
- 3** Correctly identifies the medium as stained glass and the art-historical period as Gothic. Explains **either** the religious **or** the visual reasons for the use of stained glass during the Gothic period. There may be minor errors.
- 2** Correctly identifies the medium as stained glass and the art-historical period as Gothic but includes no other discussion of merit.

#### OR

Correctly identifies **either** the medium as stained glass **or** the art-historical period as Gothic but is otherwise a 3.

- 1** Correctly identifies **either** the medium as stained glass **or** the art-historical period as Gothic but includes no other discussion of merit.

#### OR

Does not identify the work as a Gothic stained glass window but includes some discussion of merit.

- 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. .

7. Identify the medium and art-historical period of the object shown. Explain the religious and visual reasons for the extensive use of this medium during its period. (5 minutes)

This stands as a stained glass <sup>lancet</sup> window from the Gothic period. Utilized in the elaborate and expansive Gothic cathedrals, these stained glass windows served as welcome of light into the ~~to~~ tall ceilings. Because the purpose of these cathedrals such as Notre Dame de Paris, Saint Chapelle, and Amiens was to bring a 'spiritual center that transcends upward to meet with God, these tall lancet windows filled their large walls. Visually, the stained glass windows aid in bringing the eye upwards to the glory of God. The importance of sunlight shines through the different colored pieces of glass that bring a translucent and other-worldly feeling to the church as the light changes throughout the day. Religious stories from the bible were represented extensively on the windows as well. The extensive use of these windows was significant in adding a luminescent and spiritual quality signature to the Gothic cathedrals.

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7. Identify the medium and art-historical period of the object shown. Explain the religious and visual reasons for the extensive use of this medium during its period. (5 minutes)

This piece is ~~carved~~ from the Gothic period, and it is stained glass. This time period in the history of the church emphasized glorifying God through earthly beauty. This stained glass piece is a reflection of that. The strong colors, when light shone through, would cast colored light on the eyes and faces of churchgoers. This beauty was a way for them to focus on God by visual means. This art is intended to direct the viewer's focus to God by means of beautiful surroundings.

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7. Identify the medium and art-historical period of the object shown. Explain the religious and visual reasons for the extensive use of this medium during its period. (5 minutes)

The medium is stained glass and the art-historical period is ~~the Romanesque~~ late Gothic. The religious reason ~~was~~ for stained glass was to ~~help~~ beautify and seal church windows. The visual reason was the different colors produced by stained glass, when light passed through, illuminated Christian churches.

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**AP<sup>®</sup> ART HISTORY**  
**2007 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Question 7**

**Overview**

Students were required to identify the medium of the Tree of Jesse (from the lancet window of the west facade of Chartres Cathedral) as stained glass, and the art-historical period in which it was made as Gothic. They were also asked to explain the religious and visual reasons for the use of stained glass in the Gothic period. The question asked students to analyze the use of stained glass, decorated with religious imagery, as a visual object to look at, as *lux nova* (i.e., the spiritual manifestation of light as it passes through stained glass), and as a structural hallmark of Gothic architecture (e.g., large windows).

**Sample: 7A**

**Score: 4**

This essay identifies the medium as stained glass and the art-historical period as Gothic. The student addresses both the visual reasons for the use of stained glass (to bring an “other-worldly” and spiritual quality to the church), and the religious reasons (to depict “[r]eligious stories from the bible”). There are no significant errors.

**Sample: 7B**

**Score: 3**

The essay correctly identifies the medium as stained glass and the art-historical period as Gothic. Although the student addresses the visual reasons for the use of stained glass (“glorifying God through earthly beauty,” and “focus[ing] on God by visual means”), the religious reasons are never clearly articulated.

**Sample: 7C**

**Score: 2**

The essay correctly identifies the medium as stained glass and the art-historical period as Gothic. The student vaguely addresses the visual reasons for the use of stained glass, implying that it existed to illuminate church interiors. An explanation of the religious reasons is missing.