

The AP Art History Curriculum Framework

Introduction

The study of art history invites students to discover the diversity in and connections among forms of artistic expression throughout history and from around the globe. Students learn about how people have responded to and communicated their experiences through art making by exploring art in its historic and cultural contexts. The AP® Art History course welcomes students into the global art world as active participants, engaging with its forms and content as they research, discuss, read, and write about art, artists, art making, and responses to and interpretations of art.

The redesigned AP Art History course specifies learning objectives, defines course content, and limits the number of works of art students are required to understand in order to support their in-depth learning, critical analysis skills, and discovery of connections among global artistic traditions. This approach allows students to develop profound understanding of representative works of art from diverse cultures, including fundamental information that places these works in context and illuminates relationships among them. The course is not designed to encourage or reward students' memorization of isolated facts about works of art, artists, or cultures.

The *AP Art History Curriculum Framework* articulates big ideas and essential questions that encourage student investigation of art, and it contains clear learning objectives that represent the art historical skills valued by art historians and higher education faculty. The framework also limits the required course content to 250 works of art, aligning with college and university faculty expectations of the number and types of works students should know. This number of works allows teachers to present artwork in greater depth and invites students to actively engage with the works, constructing understandings of individual works and interconnections of art making throughout history. Similarly, by providing detailed information about and parameters for what is expected of students, the framework offers teachers freedom and flexibility to tailor instruction to meet the needs and interests of their students and encourages them to include additional works they value within their individual course content. Ultimately, the depth of learning students experience in AP Art History results in readiness for advanced college coursework in art history and other disciplines.

Overview of the Curriculum Framework

AP Art History is designed to be the equivalent of a two-semester college course. This curriculum framework is designed to provide a clear and detailed description of the course curriculum and course content. The key sections of this framework are described below.

- ▶ The curriculum and content of the course are based on three sets of **big ideas** and **essential questions** intended to encourage investigation of art throughout time and place and to foster students' understanding of the discipline of art history. Big ideas help students make connections between art historical concepts and the works contained in the image set; essential questions frame explorations of the nature of art, art making, and our responses to art.
- ▶ The AP Art History curriculum includes 12 **learning objectives**, each with a statement that explains how students can demonstrate their achievement of the learning objective by applying it to required course content. These learning objectives represent the **art historical skills** that college and university faculty expect students to possess at the end of an introductory college-level art history course.
- ▶ Enduring understanding and essential knowledge statements define the chronological and geographic boundaries for each of the 10 content areas. These statements outline specific cultural ideals and practices, sources of contextual information about the content area, and general characteristics of art and architecture of each content area with respect to form and content. **Enduring understanding** statements describe overarching concepts about each content area in the AP Art History course for students. **Essential knowledge** statements provide specific information that supports further exploration of the enduring understanding statement. Enduring understanding and essential knowledge statements are found within the Content Outline section.
- ▶ The AP Art History required course content is represented within a specific **image set** of 250 works of art categorized by geographic and chronological designations, beginning with works from global prehistory and ending with global contemporary works. The image set includes thumbnail images of each work of art accompanied by identifying information: title or designation, name of the artist and or culture of origin, date of creation, and materials.
- ▶ As students study works of art in the image set, they apply the essential art historical skills within the learning objectives, such as visual, contextual, and comparative analysis.

The learning objectives will be targets of assessment on the AP Art History Exam. Students will be asked to demonstrate achievement of the course learning objectives by responding to exam questions that focus on applying art historical skills to the course content, which includes contextual knowledge from the enduring understanding and essential knowledge statements. This strong alignment of curriculum and assessment allows students to focus their learning on the explicit skills within the learning objectives and apply those skills to the works of art within the course image set. Students combine art historical skills, contextual understanding, and in-depth knowledge of specific works of art to demonstrate achievement on the exam.