

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2013 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 6

The works were painted by two different artists associated with the nineteenth-century movement called Realism.

Using specific evidence, analyze how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. (10 minutes)

Background

This question asks students to analyze two contrasting views of the 19th-century artistic movement called Realism through an analysis of two Realist paintings, one by Gustave Courbet and one by Jean-François Millet. The intent of this question is to prompt students to consider that artistic styles, in this case Realism, can have multiple interpretations even by artists who consciously associate themselves with that style.

Realism flourished in France in the mid-19th century, although its origins can be traced to earlier writings. An assertion of the artist's objective recording of the facts, Realism can be defined as an attitude toward one's subject matter rather than a specific set of rules or techniques. It reflected a sense of the seriousness and truthfulness of art in its capacity to reflect the world. Taking as its subject matter scenes drawn from contemporary life rather than history or mythology, Realism purposefully included individuals and events previously seen as inappropriate subject matter for high art. Realist works could be politically charged, either in artistic intent or critical reception, although this was not always the case. As a style, Realism could encompass a variety of visual characteristics from highly refined, detailed, and polished surfaces typical of academic painting to coarse, flat, and heavily worked surfaces with broad brushstrokes and daubs of paint applied with a palette knife.

The works shown are, on the left, *Burial at Ornans* (1849–1850) by Gustave Courbet and, on the right, *The Gleaners* (1857) by Jean-François Millet. While both Courbet and Millet described their works as Realist, their understanding of the term diverged widely. Courbet's *Burial at Ornans* was intended to capture the diverse and mundane aspects of rural life in a particular city at a particular event, while Millet's *The Gleaners* was intended to ennoble the hard life of peasant labor more generally. Through their works, Courbet presents an unsparing, specific, concrete, and often purposefully clumsy depiction of modern life, while Millet celebrates the timeless, nonspecific, agrarian, anti-urban, and even religious nature of his subjects.

More specifically, in *Burial at Ornans*, Courbet depicts a wide variety of rural types attending a time-honored cultural event: a funeral. The painting records a specific event, namely the funeral of a relative of the artist in the painter's birthplace, the provincial town of Ornans. The image includes portraits of specific individuals among the mourners, Courbet's parents and sisters among them. Previous representations of burial had suggested nobility, tranquility, repose and seriousness—all of which are conspicuously and purposely lacking in Courbet's scene. Instead, Courbet treats this ordinary funeral with an unflattering bluntness. The massive scale of the work (10 x 22 feet) was traditionally reserved for the heroic or religious scenes identified with history painting. Indeed, the original title of the work, *Painting of Human Figures, The History of a Burial at Ornans*, underscored the link to history painting. Yet the horizontal arrangement of figures, non-idealized faces and gestures, and blunt handling of pigment were seen as a challenge to academic conventions.

Millet's *The Gleaners*, by contrast, offers a competing vision of the "real," in which peasant labor is ennobled. Rather than the specificity of detail found in Courbet's work, Millet's three figures are largely faceless and wholly absorbed in the laborious mode of work called gleaning. Gleaning is the act of

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2013 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 6 (continued)

collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. Gleaning was traditionally handled by the most impoverished members of society. Despite the toil and repetitiveness of their labor, Millet's depiction of the scene suggests a timeless vision of agrarian life. Although the figures are isolated in the open field, Millet offers a glimpse of a larger way of life in the upper section of the painting where one sees numerous figures engaged in harvesting a field.

Together these two paintings show the diversity and complexity of Realism through their divergent styles, techniques and treatment of subject matter, despite their shared claim to access directly some kind of objective reality.

Two Tasks for Students

1. Identify specific evidence from each work that is associated with Realism.
2. Analyze how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism.

Points to Remember

This is a comparative analysis question that emphasizes difference rather than similarity; in this case, two artists' contrasting views of the same style. As such, students must contrast the two different views of Realism in the works shown in order to answer the question. A response that discusses only one of the two works is not, by definition, an exercise in contrast.

The highest score a response can earn if it discusses only one of the two works is 2 points.

To answer the question, students must define, at least in general terms, what is meant by Realism. If students do not define Realism, at least implicitly, they will not be able to analyze the works in a manner relevant to the question.

Students can answer the question by referencing the thematic and/or the stylistic traits of Realism seen in each work.

Students are not required to identify the names of the artists or to provide the titles of the paintings or to give the dates of their creation, although some students may do so.

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2013 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 6 (continued)

Scoring Criteria

4 points

Response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question.

Using specific evidence, the response clearly and correctly analyzes how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. The response may include minor errors that do not have a meaningful effect on the analysis.

3 points

Response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question.

Using specific evidence, the response correctly analyzes how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. However, the response may be somewhat unbalanced—with a stronger discussion of either *Burial at Ornans* or *The Gleaners*, although both are represented—and/or may include minor errors that have some effect on the analysis.

2 points

Response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the question.

Using evidence, the response attempts to address how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism, but the discussion of that evidence is less analytical than descriptive. It may be overly general, simplistic, or unbalanced. For example, the discussion of *Burial at Ornans* may be mostly accurate, whereas the discussion of *The Gleaners* includes errors that affect the response.

OR

Using specific evidence, the response clearly and correctly analyzes how one of the works reflects the artist's view of Realism.

NOTE: This is the highest score a response can earn that does not analyze both works.

1 point

Response demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response demonstrates some general familiarity with the issues raised by the question by attempting to address how either or both works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. However, the response is weak, overly descriptive, and/or contains significant errors.

0 points

Response demonstrates no discernible knowledge or understanding of the question.

The student attempts to respond, but the response makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements about Realism. The score of 0 points includes crossed-out words, personal notes, and drawings.

— This is a blank paper only.

6. The works were painted by two different artists associated with the nineteenth-century movement called Realism.

Using specific evidence, analyze how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. (10 minutes)

The painting on the left is by Gustave Courbet. Gustave Courbet is the father of Realism. He believes in painting existing and tangible reality, ~~in as a response to the romanticism period precedes~~

L contains depicts a funerary scene, in which a town of people have participated. However, it is obvious that the people in the background are not emotionally affected - they are turning away from the burial scene and engaged in their own conversations.

Courbet ~~does~~ ^{did} not use the traditional pyramid or triangular composition; instead, he placed all of the subjects along a horizontal line, with no ~~clear~~ romanticization of any specific subject. Art critics say that this painting marks the "death of Romanticism," and since it ~~only~~ depicts the reality as it is ~~with no subject~~. It exemplifies Courbet's quote, "Give a show me an angel, and I'll paint one." In L, he ~~definitely~~ painted a burial scene, with ~~no~~ realist details and nothing else.

The painting on the right is "The Gleaners" by Millet. It is a genre painting, which concerns itself with the life of ordinary people. Three women are picking up the leftovers of the harvest, and which indicate their low social status. Millet uses muted colors to accentuate the monotony of their work. The women were dressed in simple and worn-out clothing, and their performance of such grueling farm work further reflect their social position as poor farmers. Even though Millet only painted a realistic scene, the audience is nevertheless affected by the scene and therefore sympathizes with the farmers.

Courbet's painting, ~~however~~, does not contain ~~his~~ his personal

or subjective paintings. He added no additional details or alterations other than what he had seen; Millet, on the other hand, clearly sympathized with the women and incorporated his emotions into the painting using realistic techniques, and the painting generates deep emotions from the audience. Therefore, even though both of these works are ~~Real~~ part of the Realism movement, one ~~work~~ contains artist's emotions while the other is an entirely objective and realistic record of the reality: ~~the~~ Courbet and Millet's contrasting views towards Realism are thus presented.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

6. The works were painted by two different artists associated with the nineteenth-century movement called Realism.

03

Using specific evidence, analyze how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. (10 minutes)

Image L is by the realist painter Courbet. Image R is by the realist painter Millet.

Courbet's ~~to~~ Image shows his refusal to paint anything other than what he saw. This painting of a funeral is shockingly realistic in the way that there is no mystical connection to heaven. The only connection there is is the wooden shaft with the crucified Jesus on the top. Courbet wasn't trying to convey an idea, problem, or opinion. His purpose was to paint exactly what he saw. The clothing is accurate to the time period and the intense black palette of color depicts how a funeral ~~was~~ would look like. The body isn't visible, it is already in the ground. Courbet is showing the common village burial and nothing else. On the other hand, Millet has more of a purpose he wants to get across & show. First of all, he is clearly showing an agricultural scene with peasants. Millet was showing the lives of peasants & how they got their food by getting out into the field and gleaning for the left overs. As intensely real as that might seem, it was also painting this with a ~~to~~ nostalgic style. Looking back at how everyone used to gather their food but now only peasants & poor people do it this way. Courbet strictly painted what he saw while Millet was showing a realistic social change that had taken place.

6. The works were painted by two different artists associated with the nineteenth-century movement called Realism.

Using specific evidence, analyze how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. (10 minutes)

The painting on the left is by Manet, from the Realism period. Manet focused on the flatness of the canvas and wanted things to appear two dimensional. He ~~depicted genre paintings~~ combined genre paintings with religious scenes. Just like in this painting, ~~where~~ where Jesus is seen crucified in the far left. Manet focused on landscape, the middle class, and challenging old artistic traditions (seen in Olympia). On the other hand, the painting to the right is The Gleaners by Millet during the Realism period around 1820 CE. Millet focused on the working class. He wanted to depict the hard struggle that laborers endured. Not only did the workers have to deal with the heat, but they were women! Millet wanted the world to see that the American Dream ~~was~~ ~~with the see right~~ did not come easy.

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2013 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 6

Overview

This 10-minute question asked students to analyze two contrasting views of the 19th-century artistic movement called Realism through an analysis of two Realist paintings, one by Gustave Courbet and one by Jean-François Millet. The intent of this question was to prompt students to consider that artistic styles, in this case Realism, can have multiple interpretations even by artists who consciously associate themselves with that style.

Sample: 6A

Score: 4

The response uses specific evidence from both works to clearly and correctly analyze how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. The response correctly analyzes Courbet's choice of subject matter and explains how it constitutes a key element of his interpretation of Realism. The response states that Courbet believed "in painting existing and tangible reality," and includes the artist's famous statement: "Show me an angel, and I'll paint one." Further detailing the work, the response comments that Courbet "depicts the reality as it is," noting the lack of emotional involvement among the observers. Turning to stylistic elements that constitute Courbet's Realism, the response describes how "Courbet did not use the traditional pyramid or triangular composition; instead he placed all of the subjects along a horizontal line with no romantization [*sic*] of any specific subject." Turning to Millet, the response clearly contrasts the two works by suggesting that the artists had contrasting intentions. The response also directly contrasts the effects of the two works. Specifically, Millet is seen to "sympathize with the women," while Courbet is seen to present an "objective and realistic record of reality." The response correctly discusses the content of Millet's painting as "concern[ing] itself with the life of ordinary people. Three women are picking up the leftovers of the harvest, which indicate[s] their low social status." Noting the "muted colors," the response explains that the artist thereby "accentuate[d] the monotony of their work." In this way, the response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question.

Sample: 6B

Score: 3

The response uses specific evidence from both works to analyze correctly how the works reflect the artists' contrasting views of Realism. The response discusses Courbet's "refusal to paint anything other than what he saw" as central to his Realism, further identifying specific features of the image that underline the contemporary nature of his portrayal. The content of the work is correctly described as a "common village burial," and the comment that "there is no mystical connection to heaven" underlines the way in which the artist's treatment of the subject constitutes Realism. In discussing Millet's painting, the subject matter is correctly discussed: "Millet was showing the lives of peasants and how they got their food by getting out into the field and gleaning for the leftovers." The response goes on to implicitly contrast Millet's treatment of subject matter with Courbet's by commenting that "as intensely [*sic*] real as that might seem [he] was also painting this with a nostalgic style," going on to reiterate that Courbet, by contrast, "strictly painted what he saw." In this way, the response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question.

Sample: 6C

Score: 2

The response uses evidence in an attempt to address the artists' contrasting views of Realism, but it is overly general and simplistic with a stronger discussion of one work than the other. The discussion of Millet's painting is the stronger of the two, with the response noting the artist's focus on "the working class" and his desire to "depict the hard struggle that laborers endured." Turning to Courbet's painting, Courbet is

AP[®] ART HISTORY
2013 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 6 (continued)

incorrectly identified as Manet. However, this error does not affect the score as the question does not require students to identify the artists. Also, the discussion includes several statements that are accurate about both Courbet and Realism, despite the misidentification of the artist. The response mentions “the flatness of the canvas,” a focus on “the middle class” in terms of subject matter, and how this resulted in a “challenge] [to] [*sic*] old artistic traditions.” In this way, the response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the question.