

## **Principal Assessor Report 2003**

**Assessment Panel:**

**Art and Design**

**Qualification area:**

**Subject(s) and Level(s)  
Included in this report**

**Art and Design – Standard Grade**

## Statistical information: update

|                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Number of entries in 2002</b> | 21463 |
| <b>Pre appeal</b>                | 21390 |

|                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Number of entries in 2003</b> | 21941 |
| <b>Pre appeal</b>                |       |

### General comments re entry numbers

This year's total of 21941 represents the largest number of candidates ever to be presented in Standard Grade Art and Design. In the past three years, figures of 21000 plus have been the norm.

**Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report**

N.B. Art and Design at Standard Grade is directly graded. This section is not relevant.

**Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area**

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## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

In **Critical Activity**, the quality of work continues to be of a very good standard. Some markers commented on the fact that the standard of work was similar to previous years while others indicated that the quality ranged from good to excellent. Although some markers commented that there were fewer exceptional submissions this year, all markers reported that they marked very few poor submissions.

This year saw the introduction of an advisory maximum of 1500 words for each area – Expressive Critical and Design Critical. The response to this advice varied throughout the country. Markers reported that they noticed a notable reduction in the length of submissions, indicating that this introduction had been successful. Others pointed out that many centres still continued to ignore the advisory maximum and submitted lengthy scripts. A few markers felt that a 1500 words essay was not sufficient and suggested a 2000 maximum. Some concerns were expressed with regard to the advisory nature of this directive.

Candidates, as a whole, dealt with appropriate expressive and design contexts. It is clear that candidates have used a wide range of resources and that a variety of teaching approaches have been adopted. Markers commented on the number of different artists and designers whose work was discussed by candidates. The work of Vincent Van Gogh, Charles Rennie MacIntosh and William Morris continue to be very popular but would appear to be less so this year. The paintings of Monet and Impressionism, in general, proved to be a popular choice as were the works of contemporary Scottish artists such as Bellany, Watt and Morocco. The Scottish Colourists, Joan Eardley, Matisse, Dali, Munch provided the bases of some fine submissions. A broad range of design issues was covered, including the architecture of Gaudi, chair design, product design, jewellery and fashion design.

In **Expressive Activity**, there is evidence of very good teaching and preparation for the Examination. Many candidates continue to produce work using traditional approaches of closely observed monochromatic or colour studies, using a wide range of materials. High levels of graphical and media handling skills are clearly evident. There were very few poor submissions. The vast majority of the work produced for the examination was two-dimensional and, where 3-D work was evident, it was usually the result of teaching preference or staff expertise, with a complete section or, in some cases, a whole centre producing ceramic or sculpture submissions. Nonetheless, three-dimensional work amounted to no more than 5% of the total work submitted for the Expressive Activity Examination.

The use of paint, including watercolour, acrylic, gouache and poster colour continues to grow in popularity. This year saw an increase in high quality pieces produced in oil paste and coloured pencil, as well as some fine work done in chalk pastel and charcoal. There was little evidence of printmaking, although what there was, was often of a good quality, produced in one colour on tinted paper. There were few examples of batik, both silk painting and paper batik. Collage submissions, mostly based on landscapes, tended to be of a poor standard and few candidates submitted photography. Despite the limitations of media-handling skill, pencil drawing continues to be the sole medium used by some centres for the entire submission.

Still life continues to be the most popular genre, followed by portraiture, landscape and the built environment. Fantasy and abstract art were limited in number this year. The themes selected for this year's examination produced a wide variety of responses and, in general, generated good work. The most popular titles were "On the Shelf" and "Gifts from the Garden", resulting in some very good still life pieces. "The Real Me" provided some very personal and expressive portraits and "Painting the Seasons" and "Open Door" allowed the opportunity for landscape.

Markers indicated that they were very impressed by the standard of work produced for the Expressive Activity Examination.

### **Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well**

In Critical Activity, work of the highest quality was often as a result of studying an area of Art and Design that was of personal interest to the candidate and where opportunity existed for personal opinion and comment. As in previous years, submissions showing enthusiasm and interest were evident when candidates used original sources such as a visit to an art gallery or design studio or as a result of a talk from a visiting artist or designer. Markers commented on the high quality of skill in the presentation of Critical Activity submissions.

In the Expressive Activity Examination, some excellent examples of painting were produced, demonstrating excellent skills in use of colour, technique and painterly qualities. Draughtsmanship was often of the highest order. A high standard of work was clearly evident in pastel studies, often oil pastels, where candidates used bright, vibrant colour against black or dark paper. Most of the best work was in still life, working from first-hand sources. This year also saw an increase in the number of quality pieces of portraiture, where candidates produced work that was pupil-centred and where good direction had been given.

### **Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty**

Problem areas still exist in Critical Activity submissions, where candidates do not submit work that is clearly "Expressive Critical" or "Design Critical". This type of problem is often to be found in work that deals with some of the following: stained glass, stamps, illustration, poster design, textiles, wallpaper and public art. Similar difficulties can occur when candidates discuss topics that place an over-emphasis on engineering and technical information, such as motorbike or car design. Difficulties can often arise when candidates rely too heavily on description and, or, make reference to expressive terminology at the expense of appropriate design criteria.

In Expressive Activity, markers continue to register their concerns in regard to those centres that appear to encourage all of their candidates to complete the entire submission in pencil. Markers feel that the medium is too restrictive, formulaic and does not sufficiently stretch all candidates to achieve their true potential. Candidates may also have difficulty achieving their full potential when several candidates all work from the same second-hand source eg photograph, as this leaves the candidate with little personal choice in interpretation of the theme. Similarly, candidates encountered difficulties when given an open choice and are left to their own devices. Unless candidates are given clear direction, the quality of their work will suffer.

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

With regard to Critical Activity, centres should be reminded of the following:

To ensure that all candidates adhere to the advisory 1500 words maximum for both pieces of Critical Activity.

To ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to engage in critical comment and provide personal opinion in their submissions and that historical/biographical or technical information is not seen as a substitute for this.

To be aware that over-long submissions do not always equate with high grades in that they can often be repetitive.

To be aware of the need to include bibliographies with all candidates' work.

To ensure that all bibliographies include all sources used such as teachers' notes, books, magazines, CD Roms, Internet websites etc.

To ensure that all written submissions are completed in pen, not pencil, on one side of A4 paper.

To ensure that the original work of the candidate is submitted and not a photocopied substitute.

To ensure that Critical Activities deal with contexts that are clearly Expressive and Design.

To ensure that no teachers' comments, corrections or marks appear on candidates' submissions and that no grades are entered on EX.6 flysheets or EX.6 forms.

With regard to the Expressive Activity Examination, centres should be reminded of the following:

To encourage candidates to employ a wide range of media.

To encourage candidates to work from first-hand sources, when possible.

To discourage candidates from using grids as a fail-safe means of producing drawings from photographs.

To ensure that no more than one candidate works from the same second-hand source eg photographs.

To discourage candidates using works of art by established artists as source material for Expressive Activity.

To ensure that 3-D or bas-relief clay work is photographed before firing to obviate the risk of accidental damage when firing.

To ensure that clay work is initialled by both candidate and invigilator to confirm that the work has been produced on the day of the examination.

To ensure that photographs accompany 3-D submissions.

To ensure that candidates do not use any form of tracing, photocopying or tracing tables during the examination.

To ensure that all chalk pastel and charcoal work is sprayed with fixative on completion of the examination.