VISUAL CULTURE STUDIES: PAPER I

MARKING GUIDELINES

Time: 3 hours

100 marks

These marking guidelines are prepared for use by examiners and sub-examiners, all of whom are required to attend a standardisation meeting to ensure that the guidelines are consistently interpreted and applied in the marking of learners’ scripts.

The IEB will not enter into any discussions or correspondence about any marking guidelines. It is acknowledged that there may be different views about some matters of emphasis or detail in the guidelines. It is also recognised that, without the benefit of attendance at a standardisation meeting, there may be different interpretations of the application of the marking guidelines.
QUESTION 1 VISUAL LITERACY

1.1 Bloom's Taxonomy Level 3: interpret, execute, solve, demonstrate.

- *Reflections* is a massive sculpture and this allows it to tower over the landscape of the Karoo as well as the people attending AfrikaBurn.
- It makes the work monumental.
- The scale of the work makes it powerful and potentially intimidating for the viewer.
- Any suitable answer.

1.2 Bloom's Taxonomy Level 5: evaluate, appraise, argue, defend.

- Daniel Popper is the leading artist which means that it is his idea. Under the banner of Conceptual Art the idea is more important than the creation of the artwork.
- The fact that his name is the only name connected to the sculpture means that he owns the idea and therefore the sculpture.
- The community owns the artwork because this is the point of AfrikaBurn. It is an experience and therefore those who created the artwork and who were there to experience it, "own" it.
- The idea behind Arikaburn is for the community to create impermanent artworks. It adds to the experience. The text specifies that nothing is advertised or commercial therefore it is not a conventional work of art and the community owns the sculpture.
- Any suitable answer.

1.3 Bloom's Taxonomy Level 5: evaluate, appraise, argue, defend, judge.

**Argument for "Craft"**

- *Reflections* is part of a burning festival and this festival is not overtly advertised.
- The sculptures made by the community are impermanent and therefore form part of the holistic experience. Images of the artworks don't go into a gallery space after the event.
- They are made by amateurs and some artists and they are not made for the purpose/function of being categorised as "High Art".
- The raw element of found materials and the technique of using interwoven wood could be argued as elements synonymous with "craft".
- The size of the work is bigger than a 'Craft' item.
- The work doesn't have a utilitarian function.
- Craft can be used as a commodity where "art" is not always seen as a "commodity."
- Any suitable answer.
Argument for "Art"

- *Reflections* has a title and although the artwork was made by many people, Daniel Popper has been named as the leading artist.
- AfrikaBurn is about the collective experience and it involves many other forms of "Art" like performance art. Therefore the sculpture should be considered as "Art".
- Even though the information says that these sculptures are not advertised the artwork can still be found on the internet. The impermanent nature of this "land art" piece has still been immortalised via the internet and therefore it should be considered as "Art".
- Please note that candidates may argue that *Reflections* is both Art and Craft.
- The artist has taken a risk which adds conceptual value.
- There are no boundaries in the art world anymore.
- The process of the participant building and burning the work is more important than the final product.
- *The learner can define 'art' in relation to 'craft to justify or categorise the artwork.*
- *Any suitable answer.*

1.4 Bloom's Taxonomy Level 3: interpret, execute, solve, demonstrate.

- Both works existed and were made outside the confines of a conventional space and/or gallery.
- The works were exhibited but not in a conventional way. The photographs in *Image C* were glued onto the ceilings of the rooftops.
- *Reflections* was built in a landscape by people who had the intention of destroying the work – the viewers were part of the building and destruction of the artwork – unconventional and/or unofficial.
- AfrikaBurn prides itself on being a "closed" and non-commercial festival.
- JR is an activist so *Image C* is seen almost as an act of activism as opposed to conventional art.
- Both works have specific contexts.
- In both cases the works are experiential in that the viewers have to experience the artworks.
- These works could arguably be official as there are no boundaries in the art world anymore.
- *The learner could connect both experiential artworks with other Conceptual Art modes and criteria, i.e. unsaleable, Performance Art, Happenings, etc.*
- *Learners must make two valid points pertaining to both artworks.*
- *Any suitable answer.*
1.5 **Bloom's Taxonomy Level 5: appraise, argue, defend, value, critique.**

- **Successful.** The rooftop photographs are large and this helps to highlight the existence of the women living in the community.  
  The nature of the photographs reveals the women in an optimistic and expressive manner. The women look happy and are smiling.  
  The black-and-white photographs are visually contrasted by the rust-coloured shanty houses that surround them. This contrast creates visual interest which in turn creates awareness.  
  They say the eyes are the window to the soul and when looking at the pictures, you get a real sense of the hardships these women have to face daily.  
  The photographs make people aware that there are human beings living in poverty down there.  
  The scale of the photographs creates a level of intimacy with the viewer yet they also protect the women's anonymity.  
  *Any suitable answer.*

- **Unsuccessful.** The women's identities are obscured and even though there is visual contrast between the black-and-white photographs and the rust-coloured houses, the viewer is merely being assaulted with nameless faces and parts of faces.  
  You can only see the photos from a bird's eye view so on ground level you would not know that they are there.  
  This work was created in 2009 and I have become aware of these women only because of this exam paper.  
  If you consider how much this exhibition must have cost to make, I think it would have helped the community more to give them the money.  
  The women look happy in the photographs and this doesn't make the viewer realise how bad their lives are.  
  This work clearly divides the privileged who can see the work from inside an aeroplane and those on the ground who experience the hardships of their reality.  
  *Learners may argue that the work is both successful and unsuccessful,*  
  *Any suitable answer.*
QUESTION 2  
TWENTIETH CENTURY ART FROM DADA UP TO BUT  
EXCLUDING THE CONCEPTUAL ART OF THE 1970s

2.1 Bloom's Taxonomy Level 2: understand, describe, discuss.  
4 marks for names, titles and descriptions. No marks awarded for title without a valid description, i.e. 2 marks for each artwork.

Example:
Jackson Pollock (1 mark) created *Lavender Mist* which is an *abstract painting that consists of a multitude of drips and splatters of lilac-toned and grey paint.* (1 mark)

2.2 Bloom's Taxonomy Level 3: apply, execute, solve.

3 marks per discussion of artist. 6 marks in total.

- Pollock created his works by laying a big piece of canvas on the floor. He attacked the canvas with paint using unconventional methods of dripping and splattering paint.
- The rhythmic motion of this painting process captured his subconscious thoughts and emotions at the time the painting was being created.
- Once this process was complete, he evaluated the piece of canvas and selected a suitable portion that reminded him of something and/or had artistic merit.
- This is further evidence of his subconscious at work. In the case of this artwork the painting he selected reminded him of lavender mist, hence the title.
- *Learners may be awarded 4 marks for one example and 2 marks for the other example if the discussion justifies it.*

2.3 Bloom’s Taxonomy Level 5: evaluate, appraise, argue, defend, value critique.

5 marks in total.

Possible arguments:
- VCS has informed my understanding because without having studied the artworks I would not have understood the underlying concepts.
- Without knowing what was happening at the time of the artworks’ creation or why the artists did what they did, I would label these artworks as unskilled and/or deliberately childish.
- Without VCS I might have understood the works on some level but I would not have been able to verbalise my understanding.
- Without VCS I would have glanced over both these artworks, they would have had little impact on me because neither is aesthetically pleasing.
- VCS has given me insight and the tools to analyse and appreciate the artworks. Without VCS I would not have had any real interest as *Lavender Mist* has no subject matter and is therefore visually unstimulating.
- *Any suitable answer.*
Possible arguments:

• Uninformed viewers might have a slight understanding of *Lavender Mist* because the title alludes to the artist's meaning.

• Uninformed viewers might see this artwork as nothing more than a layering of drips and splatters of paint. They need to understand the Abstract Expressionist movement to fully appreciate the artwork.

• In many ways a lack of response by a viewer would be playing into the artist's hands. The Abstract Expressionists wanted the audience to interpret the artwork as they saw fit. A lack of response is still a response.

• Regardless of how educated the audience is, one can never control how a viewer will interpret an artwork.

• *Any suitable answer.*
QUESTION 3  CONCEPTUAL AND CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL ART

3.1  Bloom's Taxonomy Level 2: understand, describe discuss.

4 marks for names, titles and descriptions. No marks awarded for title without a valid description. 2 marks for each artwork.

Examples:

First selection:
Marina Abramović's (1 mark) Rhythm O consisted of the artist giving herself up to an audience for six hours. 72 objects lay on a table in front of her and the audience was given permission to use these implements to physically engage with the artist. (1 mark)

Second selection:
Tracey Emin's (1 mark) My Bed consists of the artist's real, wooden bed with wrinkled sheets, pillows and twisted blankets, but also with tangled nylon stockings and crumpled towels. Strewn around the bed is a clutter of personal effects: empty vodka bottles, slippers and underwear, crushed cigarette packs, a snuffed-out candle, condoms and contraceptives, a cuddly toy and several Polaroid self-portraits. (1 mark)

3.2  Bloom's Taxonomy Level 3: apply, execute, solve, demonstrate.

4 marks per discussion of artist. 8 marks in total.

First selection:
- To test the limits of the relationship between performer and audience, Abramović developed one of her most challenging (and best-known) performances. She assigned a passive role to herself, with the public being the force that would act on her. Abramović placed 72 objects on a table that people were allowed to use (a sign informed them) in any way they chose.
- Some of these were objects that could give pleasure, while others could inflict pain or harm. Among them were a rose, a feather, honey, a whip, olive oil, scissors, a scalpel, a gun and a single bullet.
- For six hours the artist allowed the audience members to manipulate her body and actions. This tested how vulnerable and aggressive the human subject could be when protected against social consequences.
- By the end of the performance, her body had been stripped, attacked, and devalued into an image that Abramović described as the "Madonna, mother, and whore".
- Additionally, markings of aggression were apparent on the artist's body. There were cuts on her neck made by audience members, and her clothes had been cut from her body.
In her works, Abramović affirms her identity through the perspective of others, but, more importantly, by changing the roles of each player, the identity and nature of humanity at large is unravelled and showcased. By doing so, the individual experience morphs into a collective one and creates a powerful message about the dark side of human nature.

**Second selection:**
- Emin presented her bed, in the form of an Installation, exactly as it looked during a difficult time in her life.
- In an interview Emin elaborated: "I had a kind of mini nervous breakdown in my very small flat and didn't get out of bed for four days. And when I did finally get out of bed, I was so thirsty I made my way to the kitchen crawling along the floor. I pulled myself up on the sink to get some water, and made my way back to my bedroom, and as I did I looked at my bedroom and thought, "Oh, my God. What if I'd died and they found me here? What if I took all of that out of this bedroom and placed it in a white space? How would it look then?"
- When she put her bed into a white space, some people were shocked. The artwork is raw and in some ways macabre, which is why it is still one of the most controversial artworks ever.
- The artist revealed her state of mind in an honest way, and by doing this, she made a shocking statement regarding her mental health.
- This process of self-reflection had a profound impact on Emin. In her statement quoted above, she admitted that she was shocked when she saw her flat. She realised she could have died there.
- By turning this experience into an artwork, she is exposing the truthful reality of what it is like to have a nervous breakdown.
- It is an issue that many can relate to, but due to societal pressures, many do not discuss it or make it public.

3.3 **Bloom's Taxonomy Level 5: evaluate, appraise, argue, defend, value, critique.**

- Abramović's *Rhythm* O is a timeless artwork. The manner in which she created the work and its concept are still valid today and it will still be relevant in 100 years' time. This said, the world today is bombarded with all sorts of grotesque imagery because of the internet. As compelling as the work may be in the abstract, via the internet, one can only in person truly appreciate the situation she was conveying.
- There are means of capturing the performance via camera and film but cameras and images can lie. We only know about this artwork through these historical recordings but what would it have been like to actually witness such an event?
- The fact that the concept is understandable via digital means is a testament to the artist's genius; of this, there is no doubt. This said, however, those who saw this work in "real life" would have been profoundly moved by the events that took place. They would have been shocked to the core.
- The recording of the work is shocking enough as it is, but to have been there in person would have been life-changing.
3.4 **Bloom's Taxonomy Level 5: evaluate, appraise, argue, defend, value, critique.**

- Everyone has seen a messy room and everyone has seen aspects of what the artist put on display as part of this artwork.
- These everyday objects are therefore not hard to imagine in the abstract.
- More and more people are subjected to mental health issues as a by-product of our hectic lives. Thus the concept behind this artwork is not hard to understand.
- The work is shocking and therefore it will have an impact on the viewer. This is so for two reasons. Firstly, that this human debris can be viewed as "art" and secondly, that the artist herself was brave enough to showcase her issues in such a shocking manner.
- It is a kind of shock that everyone, regardless of gender, colour or creed, can understand.

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**QUESTION 4  RESISTANCE ART IN SOUTH AFRICA (1976–1994)**

4.1 **Bloom's Taxonomy Level 1: remember, define, state.**

- The image is an artist's interpretation of Sam Nzima's photo of Hector Pieterson – 1 mark.
- During the Soweto Riots in 1976.
- Any indication of understanding of where the subject matter comes from should be given at least 1 mark.
- Reference to the Pieta is also acceptable.

4.2 **Bloom's Taxonomy Level 2: understand, explain, identify, remember.**

- Red symbolises the spilling of blood.
- White refers to purity, innocence or martyrdom.
- *Any suitable answer.*

4.3 **Bloom's Taxonomy Level 2: understand, describe, discuss.**

4 marks for names, titles and descriptions. No marks awarded for title without a valid description. 2 marks for each artwork.

**Example:**

*Helen Sebidi's Mother Africa* depicts a crowded scene of mostly human figures and a goat in the foreground. The work is rendered in an emotional and gestural manner.
4.4 **Bloom's Taxonomy Level 4: analyse, differentiate, examine, relate. AND Bloom's Taxonomy Level 5: evaluate, appraise, argue, defend.**

10 marks. 5 marks per level. 5 marks for the discussion of each artwork.

- Sebidi's cramped compositions are said to be reminiscent of the cramped living conditions in informal settlements.
- Given the intensity of her mark-making, the viewer is definitely left with an uneasy feeling when viewing her work. She is trying to convey the uncomfortable and oppressed situations in which her people lived.
- It is no secret that black people were removed from their original homelands and forced into migrant labour and informal settlements.
- Although not directly about this particular aspect of oppression during the apartheid regime, Sebidi's work does embody a sense of being trapped and an absence of relief or indeed opportunities of freedom or liberty.
- Because of the laws; Bantu Education and general restrictions meant families were doomed to perpetuate living in poverty from one generation to the next. Sebidi's work speaks to the aggravation of not having an opportunity to escape poverty.

4.5 **Bloom's Taxonomy Level 5: evaluate, appraise, argue, defend.**

2 marks

- Helens Sebidi's artwork is still relevant today because many black South Africans are still trapped in poverty.
- We still have issues with the lack of education and thus many families are caught up in the on-going cycle of poverty.
- Not many can afford tertiary education; hence the #FEESMUSTFALL campaigns in recent years.
- Our government has made many promises but has not lived up to these and thus people are still forced to live in informal settlements as the oppressed did in the past.
- It could also be argued that the kind of oppression is in current times extended beyond the previous demographic borders.
QUESTION 5  CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN ART (POST 1994)

Write an essay of approximately 4 pages in which you critically consider the degree to which South African Contemporary Art provokes a sense of optimism in the viewer. Select THREE Contemporary South African artists and ONE artwork by each selected artist to develop and substantiate your argument.

(Total of three artworks discussed. Please note: candidates may choose to discuss Nelson Makamo but they may not refer to the artwork referred to in this question.)

Possible thoughts on the types of arguments we may encounter:

- It could be argued that all art, whether or not the subject matter or concept is positive or negative, is positive, because art highlights issues that people weren't previously aware of. This sparks conversation; and this process of debate is positive, thus creating optimism and hope.
- Many artists don't deal with the positive or negative issues of society; they merely reflect their own agendas or aspects of their particular identity. This type of art does not create hope and/or optimism, e.g. Bernie Searle's Profiles.
- There are so many problems in South Africa/the world at present that there are not many artists who portray South Africa/the world in a positive light. There is not much to be positive about and therefore artists don't delve into the positive and they don't inspire optimism or hope.
- Other artists use their art as a means of creating social awareness amongst the South African public by portraying negative aspects. This is just a bleak reminder of how bad things are in our country.
- Many South African artists live and work abroad and thus don't portray South African subject matter at all.
- It is impossible to speculate on the degree to which feelings of optimism and hope in the viewer can be provoked by an artwork.
Argument For:

Simon Max Bannister (A) created Plastikos (W), a large circular disc (amongst other works) from plastic bags and plastic debris that he collected. (DES)

Plastikos was a unique exhibition where the art was created to raise awareness about pollution and human waste, particularly plastic and micro plastic and its impact on the oceans. (F) The works were made from reclaimed polyethylene plastic which Bannister collected by hand from the shorelines, roadsides and landfills of South Africa. (F)

Situated in the Atlantic Ocean Gallery of the Two Oceans Aquarium, (F) Plastikos included giant sculptures and micro plastics in suspension. From the entangled mesh of rope and micro debris, the artworks on display represented the monster of waste that must be confronted and overcome. (F)

Other elements of Plastikos included a microcosm of a littered beach, illustrating how our beaches are turning into plastic wastelands as a result of the careless disposal and poor management of plastic waste. The items on display were all collected from Muizenberg Beach. (F)

According to Bannister, "I have always hunted waste ... My journey has taken me along the coastlines of South Africa, the relentless rugged and beautiful headlands driving me on. I have made it my mission to transform the waste that I find into an art form, giving these objects new value and meaning and making them the story of my journey." (F)

Bannister's mission to create art from waste gives the viewer a profound sense of hope. Firstly, the artist is creating beautiful objects from human waste. (DA) These sculptural objects – part of the Plastikos exhibition – are unique and aesthetically pleasing. Arguably the viewer is seduced by the beauty he creates from virtually nothing. (DA) The circular disc that looks like a stained-glass window is fascinating to look at and one would scarcely believe that this artwork was created out of plastic waste (DA). This work gives us hope because the artist is making people aware of the environmental issues concerning ocean pollution. The fact that he is able to transport the viewer to an underwater wonderland further carries his message across. (DA) Once you learn more about his process and the hours he spends collecting his material, you gain even more respect for his plight and his artworks. (DA)

Argument Against:

Bernie Searle's (A) Profiles (W) consist of profile shots of the artist's face. Each profile shot reveals an object, representing one of the cultures she derives from, pressed into her cheek. (DES)

Searle's work deals with issues of race and gender, (F) and images of these issues are convincingly imprinted on her. It involves an elegant combination of photography and performance. (F) Searle will often include herself in her work, like she did in Profiles, but she performs only for the camera, producing performative works that explore issues of self-representation; (F) as well as the relationship between personal and collective identity and narratives connected to history, memory and place. (F) Her more recent work has a pervasive and growing sense of dissatisfaction, mirroring the continuous cycle of protests and strikes across the country. (F)
While these works are often explored in dialogue with the socio-political legacy of South Africa and in relation to current-day realities, her use of metaphor and poetic ambiguity transcend the specifications of context; drawing on universal human emotions associated with displacement, vulnerability and loss. (F)

There is no doubt that the kinds of subject matter explored by the artist do little in the way of provoking a sense of optimism or hope in the viewer. (DA) This is a different kind of art. It certainly evokes discussion and awareness but not necessarily in a manner that is going to leave the viewer feeling optimistic. (DA) Added to this, it could be argued that her work is extremely intellectual and that many people who do not understand her process or conceptual art may not even understand the artwork at all. (DA) The purpose of this work is to tell a story about the artist's own identity within a South African and global context. Her intention was never to create a sense of optimism or hope and this is also not an accidental by-product of the artwork discussed above. (DA)

Rubric for Question 5: Essay for 30 marks

| CONTENT: |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| • 18 MARKS     | • 3 ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS       | • MAXIMUM OF 4 FACT MARKS PER ARTWORK |
| Circle below the correct number for marks allocated for artist and artworks, and facts per artwork |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant selection in relation to topic of:</th>
<th>1 mark for correctly selecting and naming an artist</th>
<th>Symbol for marking protocol: RA</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tr>
<td>• artists</td>
<td>1 Mark for correctly selecting and naming artwork – the title must be followed by a brief description of the artwork</td>
<td>Symbol for marking protocol: RW</td>
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<th>Relevant factual content:</th>
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<td>Symbol for marking protocol: RF</td>
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<td>(12)</td>
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### Summary of mark allocation: development of argument (level 5–7)

- The argument should be assessed by judging it throughout the whole essay.
- The level 5 descriptor is for the average learner or average essay.
- When assessing an essay choose descriptors that best/mostly describe the essay.
- Symbol for marking protocol: DA (development of argument)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVELS</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>MARKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7+</td>
<td>The excellent response:</td>
<td>12–11</td>
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<td>- Opening statements are erudite and show a clear understanding of the topic.</td>
<td>(100–92%)</td>
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<td>- The argument is complete and detailed, making unusual connections to more than one argument point to each of the selected artworks.</td>
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<td>- It is <strong>well-structured</strong>, addressing all aspects of the question and drawing them together accurately and with insight.</td>
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<td>- The candidate makes insightful links between facts and argument.</td>
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<td>- The candidate addresses all the complexities of the question weighing up, constructing, juxtaposing, hypothesising, etc.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The very good response:</td>
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<td>- Opening statements show a clear understanding of the topic.</td>
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<td>- The candidate is able to make reference to more than one argument point to each of the selected artworks.</td>
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<td>- The answer is well-structured and complete, addressing some aspects of the question and drawing them together accurately.</td>
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<td>- The candidate makes informed links between facts and argument.</td>
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<td>- The candidate grapples with some of the complexities of the question but may not be fully eloquent.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>The good response:</td>
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<td>- Opening statements show an understanding of the topic.</td>
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<td>- The candidate puts across valid arguments, making specific reference to more than one argument point to each of the selected artworks.</td>
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<td>- The candidate makes clear links between facts and arguments in the body of the essay in most instances.</td>
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<td>- The argument is well-structured.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The average response:</td>
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<td>- The argument shows an underlying understanding of the theme argument in the opening statements.</td>
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<td>- The candidate puts across the argument in a valid, but general way without addressing all aspects.</td>
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<td>- Inconsistent arguments/the argument is not sustained across all 3 artworks.</td>
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<td>- Interesting arguments could be present, but could be without supporting facts and/or adequate validation.</td>
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<td>- The essay relates to aspects of the topic but the argument is not fully developed.</td>
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<td>- There is a good attempt at structuring an argument in the essay.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The fairly struggling response:</td>
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<td>- shows a fairly limited understanding of the question topic and responds to it in a one-dimensional way in the opening statements.</td>
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<td>- attempts to put across the argument but in a vague way without addressing all aspects being asked or alternatively the candidate hasn’t substantiated their argument throughout the essay.</td>
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| 6     | The struggling response:  
• makes simple, underdeveloped links between fact and argument which show limited understanding of the question.  
• muddles arguments, usually without supporting facts.  
• shows an attempt to structure argument within the essay but is not entirely successful. |
| 5     | The fairly weak response:  
• shows flawed and very incomplete responses to the topic. AND/OR  
• is unfocused with many sweeping statements and generalisations. AND/OR  
• muddles arguments, without supporting facts. AND/OR  
• omits or misunderstands key concepts of content that are important in building the argument. |
| 4     | The weak response:  
• shows flawed and very incomplete responses to the opening statement.  
• has vague and unfocussed or non-existent arguments and opening statements. AND/OR  
• sustains the argument for only one artwork. AND/OR  
• presents opening statements that may be reworded from the given text.  
• has no structure to support the argument. |
| 3–2   | The very weak response:  
• presents opening statements that may be reworded from the given text or are unfocused.  
• is inaccurate or simplistic.  
• does not discuss enough artworks to build an argument or makes no attempt at an argument at all.  
• has an argument unrelated to the topic or the candidate has completely misunderstood the question.  
• has no structure to support the argument. |
| 1–0   | The poor response:  
• presents opening statements that may be reworded from the given text or are non-existent.  
• Does not address the issues because of a lack of understanding.  
• attempts to address aspects of the question, but indicates only partial understanding.  
• does not discuss enough artworks to build an argument.  
• has no structure to support the argument.  
• has no argument present. |

Total: 100 marks