

AP Art History: Summer Assignments/ Paula Hansen, phansen@wcpss.net

Welcome to AP Art History! What an amazing journey through time you will have seeing history through the eyes of an artist! As with any AP course, there is much to accomplish in a short amount of time. This summer reading and related assignment should give you a good head start to a great year of examining and thinking about significant works of art created throughout the centuries.

The purpose of this class is to prepare students for success when taking the AP Art History test in May and is based on The College Board's criteria.

But . . .

. . . .Do we study art history because we love memorizing dates, names, and places? Or is there some other reason?

I believe that in developing an understanding of your world and your own place within that world, your sense of sight plays an invaluable role. The visual arts remind us of how images impact us daily, both consciously and unconsciously, by influencing how we construct identity and perceive meaning. **Visual literacy** is crucial in communicating with others and in receiving messages that dictate our own actions. In regard to history, images can actually impact world events. How we process information filtered through our sense of sight can be one of the most compelling reasons for studying visual imagery.

The study of art history is a study of perception. No subject is left untouched, for visual imagery addresses every facet of our human lives. In this way art is unique.

Does the discipline of art history have practical application only in the context of a museum or a historical site?

The AP Art History Exam consists of multiple-choice and free-response questions. The free-response questions are more heavily weighted, emphasizing the importance for students to engage in a dialogue when looking at works of art. Writing about art can be quite different than writing in other subjects. An essay that simply describes a work of art is often dull and useless; therefore, I'll be encouraging you to offer insights when writing in response to a particular issue or question. We will work to develop this skill throughout the year, and we will write frequently. You will also take comprehensive exams throughout the year so that you'll be well prepared for the AP Exam at the end of the school year.

To prevent you from writing essays that simply describe a work of art, I'll be encouraging you to focus on **five areas** in your writings and in class discussion:

1. Subject matter – What subject inspired the work? What subject is portrayed in the work?
2. Function- was this a utility object or did it have other purposes?
3. Artistic decision making/aesthetics – How did the artist make use of the elements of art and principles of design? What media and technology was used.
4. Context– How did the world around the artist affect the artistic process? What was the message (feeling, mood, idea) that the artist wanted to convey?
5. Cultural impact – What message (feeling, mood, or idea) did you get from the work? This might be different from the message that the artist wished to convey.

Contemplating these five factors will help you to see art as a meaningful part of your life. We will use these criteria for analysis not only when applied to masterpieces but also to images and objects found in our everyday world that we consider to be art.

WHAT YOU NEED FOR THIS CLASS:

1. Three ring binder. We will use this for classwork, timelines, compare/contrast and other DBQ's
If you don't have Internet at home, make sure you have access outside of class.
Some of the best study tools for this class are located online and through digital media
2. Simple drafting tools/ you are not judged on artistic ability!
3. REA Test Prep Study Book.
4. Gardner's **Art Through the Ages** is our text:

This is NOT required, but I have found the study guide very helpful.

These are your summer assignments:

- I. Read the **Introduction: 'What is Art?'** and **Chapter 1: 'Art Before History'** from Gardner's *Art through the Ages*. This can be found as a PDF file on most sites. This is the Introduction and first chapter of your coursework. Take note of the name, approximate date, and significance of each work. I am a fan of hand drawn timelines, as I find you have a better grasp of the information if you do the sketching. Know that I do not grade you on your artistic ability. Define each of the terms listed in your own words, and **draw** a thumbnail sketch of each object on the list.
 - a. Incise
 - b. Mesolithic
 - c. Post and lintel
 - d. Twisted perspective
 - e. Paleolithic
 - f. Neolithic
 - g. Venus of Willendorf
 - h. Dolmen
 - i. Cromlech
 - j. Trilithon
 - k. Carbon 14
 - l. Jericho
 - m. Catal Huyuk
 - n. Monolith
 - o. Megalith
 - p. Lascaux
 - q. Altamira

In addition to those terms and objects, please make sure you are familiar with (know the name, century created and significance of these art objects as well as a thumbnail sketch:

- Great Hall of the Bulls
- Camelid Sacrum (in the shape of a dog)
- Running Horned Woman rock painting
- Bushel with Ibex Motif
- Stonehenge
- The Ambum Stone
- Tlatlco female figurine
- Terra cotta fragment from the Solomon Islands

Not all of these are discussed in our text, but they are all related to information you need for the exam. Many of the chapters will contain objects on our list to study that are not included in our text.

II. **Your own personal collection of art –**

Become an art expert about three pieces of work from different time periods in the permanent collection of the NCMA, the Ackland, or any gallery that you visit over the summer. You should use the 5 areas of critical analysis that I have included, and make sure you add your own reactions to these 3 pieces. Please log onto Google Docs using your school account and send your research. My goal for this section is to get a writing sample from you at the beginning of the year. It's also meant to encourage you to visit the museum and sit for a while and experience actual works of art (if you've never been, it's a different experience from just seeing them in a book/magazine/online).

If you find that you need guidance, I will be checking my e-mail, phansen@wcpss.net, throughout the summer. **Blackboard** will no longer be available and we are transitioning to **Canvas**. Please contact me as needed. While it's my goal to assist you quickly, over the summer it may take me some time to get back to you – please bear with me in this process and thank you for your patience.

See you in August!

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