



Visual Arts Specimen Examination Paper Question 1 (c)

An approach to addressing the question

Question 1 contains three parts: (a), (b) and (c). Each part focuses on a particular aspect of content: the Frames, the Conceptual Framework and Practice.

In the Specimen Examination Paper, (c) focuses on Practice.

Teachers are reminded that following the advice in the introduction to the Specimen Examination Paper, questions may not replicate the same aspects of content as the Specimen paper. Additionally parts of the question may not necessarily be organised in the same order, e.g. (c) could address either practice OR frames OR conceptual framework. The plates and extracts of text may also vary in number and type for each question part. For example, an extract of text could contain an artist's statement, or an art critic's writing.

The following questions have been developed to suggest ways of addressing **the sample question** about practice in the Specimen Paper 1 (c) and could be used by teachers and students to build a response. These suggestions can be adapted to suit the levels of understanding of students.

In addressing practice questions such as this, students will be able to develop strategies for finding clues in the information given them, which they can apply to variations on the style of a part (c) question, or to any of the parts of Question 1.

The following questions refer to the information provided in the sample, specifically on the artist, Rembrandt Van Rijn, but the strategies learned by students will have broader application. Some of the questions assume knowledge of concepts such as conventions regarding representation (portraits, gender, oil painting). Students should incorporate these into their understandings of art history in their response to practice.

Students need to be able to organise information based on the syllabus content, particularly practice, using the information provided in the question.

What is the question asking you to do?

- *To discuss Rembrandt's practice—consider the artist's intentions, choices, and actions within the context of his world.*
- *To discuss, implies the answer should be written in narrative form, if possible.*

What information does the question offer you to support your investigation?

- *Three images of artworks (plates) with citations*
- *Biography of significant events.*

What are the key words or phrases in the question?

- *Practice; intentions; choices; actions; world.*

The following questions refer to practice, Rembrandt's artmaking practice and art history. They address issues related to the artist's representations, his intentions, choices and actions. (Refer to the Stage 6 Visual Arts Syllabus: Objectives and Outcomes, pp. 12–13 and Practice in Artmaking, Art Criticism and Art History, pp. 19–22)

These questions are organised to provide clues as to the source of the information: the images, the citations, the biography.

The artist's world: Contextual factors which can be gleaned from the information and which have a bearing on his practice.

<p>Images What is the subject matter of the three works? Was this a convention of the time?</p> <p>What do the images reveal about the subject as a “man of his time”, and of his social status? (Pose, clothing, environment)</p> <p>Printmaking is a northern European tradition. Is Rembrandt working in the traditional form?</p> <p>What stylistic conventions in the images reveal that they are Baroque?</p> <p>Are Renaissance conventions of (male) portraiture evident in these works?</p> <p>What is the implication in Rembrandt's interest in self-portraiture, as in the plates, and the portraits as noted in the biography?</p>	<p>Citations Are the works the same or different forms? Is this important?</p> <p>What do the citations reveal about the form and materials? Does this suggest that these are conventions or innovations?</p> <p>The images are all the same size; are the actual works the same size as each other?</p> <p>What information in the citations suggest that the images are stylistically Baroque?</p>	<p>Biography What does it mean to be apprenticed, a master painter and a member of the guild?</p> <p>The biography mentions that Rembrandt was from a wealthy family. Is this relevant? (Refer to 1626: age, practice and to 1631: first mention of commissions)</p> <p>What is important about him taking on a pupil early in his career?</p> <p>From 1629 to 1630 he experimented with facial expressions. How is this relevant to his practice at the time and for his career?</p> <p>From 1631 to 1641 his main commissions were for portraits. What do plates 6 & 7 reveal about his portraits?</p> <p>What information is given in the biography about the events in his life at the time each of the three works were made?</p> <p>What can be assumed from his 1642 commission to paint <i>The Nightwatch</i>? Was this such a significant commission? How does it signify his status?</p> <p>What happened to his practice following 1642? What does this suggest?</p>
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Intentions, choices and actions: This part of the question asks you to identify what were the choices and actions that Rembrandt made and how these are aspects of his practice.

<p>Images What do the images and the titles suggest about the intentions of the artist? (refer to poses, compositional arrangements, paint quality, use of line, light and colour)</p> <p>What is significant about the change in stylistic form between plates 6 & 8?</p> <p>What is apparent about the change in conceptual practice between plates 6 & 8?</p> <p>How are the intentions of each work consistent with the conventions of the time (and Rembrandt's status)?</p> <p>What do the images reveal about how Rembrandt represents himself?</p> <p>What is apparent from the images about his use of the materials in each work (techniques)?</p> <p>What effect does this have on the form and way we (as audience) read the subject?</p>	<p>Citations Why would he have decided to do an etching of himself as a wide-eyed young man?</p> <p>The size of the paintings (plates 6 & 8) are significantly different. What do you think this signifies?</p> <p>What information is contained in the citations that assists you to understand the techniques and materials he uses?</p>	<p>Biography In 1629 he was experimenting with facial features. Why is this important?</p> <p>Why did he choose to paint commissioned portraits?</p> <p>Why did he choose to make self-portraits?</p> <p>And why three self-portraits, in the final year of his life?</p> <p>What information in the biography assists in determining the artist's intentions?</p> <p>What are the biography and the plates revealing about Rembrandt's practice, the social structures, beliefs, actions and ideas that sustain his work as an artist?</p>
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