

AP® ART HISTORY 2007 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3

Left slide: William Hogarth. *The Marriage Contract*, from *Marriage à la Mode*. ca. 1743-45.
Right slide: William Hogarth. *The Breakfast Scene*, from *Marriage à la Mode*. ca. 1743-45.

3. Both of these paintings were made by the same artist. Identify the artist. Citing specific details from the paintings, analyze how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of the time. (10 minutes)

Background:

William Hogarth (1697–1764) is credited with creating a distinctively English style of painting, what he called “modern moral painting,” which satirized contemporary society and carried a moralizing message. Hogarth’s highly topical narrative scenes appealed to a broad urban public. The eighteenth century was the golden age of literary satire in England. Hogarth, who was influenced by the theater and the rise of the novel, was a close friend of Henry Fielding, the author of *Tom Jones*. The six paintings that comprise *Marriage à la Mode* (1743-45) served as models for the set of engravings, published by subscription in 1745. Hogarth turned to French engravers to ensure the technical virtuosity and elegance of the prints. The series satirizes arranged marriages and fashionable taste, the decadence and impotency of the aristocracy, and the crass social striving of the wealthy merchant class. Hogarth utilizes the mock-heroic structure to comment on the weaknesses and foibles of his protagonists. *Marriage à la Mode* is a biting satirical commentary on the decadence of fashionable taste and mores, conspicuous consumption, and the Rococo style, which he parodies, notably in *The Breakfast Scene*.

The Marriage Contract and *The Breakfast Scene* establish the narrative arc of the series and foretell its tragic outcome. The paintings are intended to be “read” sequentially like the scenes of a play. Hogarth’s dense “novelistic” structure focuses on visual details, which propel the narrative, disclose character, and function symbolically. He uses paintings within paintings, dress, decor, and visual parody to indict his characters and satirize their decadence and pretension. *The Marriage Contract* depicts gout-ridden Earl Squander (who points to his illustrious family tree), marrying his son to the daughter of a wealthy London merchant. The cynical arranged marriage provides money to repair the earl’s crumbling Palladian house and buys an aristocratic title for the merchant’s daughter. *The Breakfast Scene* depicts the young couple’s foundering marriage, decadent lifestyle, and dubious taste. The curvilinear composition parodies the fashionable Rococo style. The garishly decorated interior betrays their lack of taste just as their negligent clothing and body language connote their immorality and dissipated lifestyle.

Students have two tasks:

- (1) They must identify the artist as William Hogarth.
- (2) They must analyze how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of the time, citing specific details from the paintings to make their case.

The best responses will display an understanding of how satire functioned as a rhetorical strategy in eighteenth-century England, amusing the public and carrying a subversive or moralizing message. Simply describing the narrative action and visual elements in the two scenes is **not** sufficient. Rather, students must analyze **how** Hogarth used satire as social commentary and interpret how elements, such as the crumbling Palladian house in *The Marriage Contract*, or the over-the-top Rococo clock and nouveau-riche taste in *The Breakfast Scene*, function emblematically.

**AP® ART HISTORY
2007 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 3 (continued)

Points to remember:

- Students are not asked to identify the period or the individual paintings, but they must understand the artistic and cultural context in order to analyze how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of the time.
- This is a 10-minute question.

Scoring Criteria

Score Scale 0–4

- 4** Correctly identifies the artist as Hogarth. Analyzes how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of his time. Analysis is full and without significant errors.
- 3** Correctly identifies the artist as Hogarth. Analyzes how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of his time. Analysis is not as full and may contain minor errors.

OR

Does not correctly identify the artist as Hogarth but is otherwise a 4.

- 2** Correctly identifies the artist as Hogarth. Discusses how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of his time, but the answer lacks specificity and may contain errors.

OR

Does not identify the artist as Hogarth but is otherwise a 3.

- 1** Correctly identifies the artist but includes no other discussion of merit.

OR

Does not identify the artist as Hogarth but is otherwise a 2.

- 0** Makes an attempt, but the response is without merit because it fails to identify the artist or makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements.
- This is a nonresponse, such as a blank paper, crossed-out words, or personal notes.

3. Both of these paintings were made by the same artist.

Identify the artist. Citing specific details from the paintings, analyze how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of the time. (10 minutes)

The artist is William Hogarth. In the painting of the left, it depicts two fathers signing a contract, in which one would marry off his daughter and the other would receive money in return. Hogarth satirizes this by an incomplete building project ~~in the back~~ outside the window. This shows that people of the society of his time did not care about their children's happiness and only had their eye on money. The young man, who is probably the groom shows no interest in the girl whatsoever, ~~and~~ but does seem to be completely in love with himself. This shows the missing portion - love, which in Hogarth's opinion is vital to a good marriage. Meanwhile, the girl bride seems to be taking interest at another young man in the room, which probably foreshadows infidelity. In the painting on the right, the young girl enjoys herself while the young man slumps down in his chair. Even though they live comfortably in a huge house, there is no love or a bond in their marriage. This clearly illustrates Hogarth's disapproval of such superficial marriages. Also, a handkerchief is on the floor, which suggests sexual activities had occurred. Obviously the groom was not part of it, as he looks extremely unhappy. This was another way Hogarth made fun of the values of society class and taste of society. This disastrous marriage based on money had collapsed.

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3. Both of these paintings were made by the same artist.

Identify the artist. Citing specific details from the paintings, analyze how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of the time. (10 minutes)

The paintings were made by Hogarth. Hogarth was an English Rococo painter who used satire to comment on class and emphasize the changing views of society. The figures in both slides are delicate almost weightless and are clothed in gauzy shimmering material. The compositions are loose and the love of small objects is used to emphasize the satire. In the slide on the right the seated man has a black mark to symbolize the sickness he contracted from being unfaithful to his wife, who is equally unfaithful to him which is evident in the turned over chair and the paper letter on the floor. Hogarth demonstrates their social class in the settings both paintings are set in rooms with paintings on the walls as well as other knickknacks to demonstrate the wealth to spend money on such luxury items. Hogarth uses his pictorial devices to detail the ways of a certain social class and to comment on its lack of propriety and lack of taste. Hogarth often mass produced his works and art through printmaking.

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3. Both of these paintings were made by the same artist.

Identify the artist. Citing specific details from the paintings, analyze how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of the time. (10 minutes)

The artist of the painting is the British artist _____ . He displays a typical British wit in his depiction of high country families. For instance, the painting on the left, a portrait of a family viewing marriage contracts, is full of details that give to mock, rather than honor, the subjects. The ~~poco~~ poses of the men at the table are exaggerated to convey their pomposness and ridiculousness, while the couple to their left squabble over petty details. The right slide highlights the vanity of British society: the girl spends her time fussing with her hair while the gentleman beside her idly holds a dunc. Neither pay attention to the open book on the table before them, a fact that shows their self-absorbed nature and unintellectual nature. Through small details and subtle ~~shows~~ positioning of characters, the artist makes scathing, amusing comments on the culture and people of his time.

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**AP® ART HISTORY
2007 SCORING COMMENTARY**

Question 3

Overview

Students were asked to identify Hogarth as the artist of *The Marriage Contract* (1743-45) and *The Breakfast Scene* (1743-45) and, by citing specific details from the paintings, to analyze how the artist used satire to comment on class and taste in the society of his time. The intent of this 10-minute question was for students to analyze how satire functioned as a rhetorical strategy in eighteenth-century England, either to amuse the public or to carry a subversive or moralizing message. The best responses connected details of the particular narrative(s) shown in the slides to William Hogarth's use of satire to comment on changes in English class and taste.

Sample: 3A

Score: 4

The essay correctly identifies the artist as Hogarth and analyzes how satire is used to comment on class and taste in the society of his time. Significant specific details in the work are cited, and their satirical import is clearly identified; for example, the student comments that "an incomplete expensive building project outside the window" represents the aristocratic father's need for money, and the intended bride's flirting with another man "foreshadows infidelity."

Sample: 3B

Score: 3

The essay correctly identifies the artist as Hogarth and analyzes how satire is used to comment on class and taste in the society of his time. Significant specific details in the work are cited: "a black mark ... symbolize[s] the sickness he contracted from being unfaithful to his wife," and the "paintings on the walls as well as other knicknacks [sic] ... demonstrate wealth to spend ... on such luxury items." The satirical import of these specific details is clearly indicated, but the discussion of this importance is less full.

Sample: 3C

Score: 2

This student does not identify the artist but knows that he is British. The essay does analyze how satire is used to comment on class and taste in the society of Hogarth's time. However, the handling of significant details in the work and the discussion of their satirical import is less than full, as in comments such as "[t]he poses of the men at the table are exaggerated to convey their pompousness and ridiculousness"; and the examples of how "the vanity of British society" is demonstrated are flawed. There is a tendency toward description and a focus on minor rather than more significant details.