

## External assessment

The method used to assess students in visual arts is detailed assessment criteria specific to each assessment task. The assessment criteria are published in this guide and are related to the assessment objectives established for the visual arts course and the arts grade descriptors.

### External assessment tasks—SL and HL

#### Part 1: Comparative study

##### **Weighting: 20%**

Students are required to analyse and compare artworks, objects or artifacts by different artists. This independent critical and contextual investigation should explore artworks, objects and artifacts from differing cultural contexts.

Throughout the course, students will have investigated a range of artists, styles, images and objects from a range of cultural contexts, through an integrated approach to exploring the three syllabus areas: visual arts in context, visual arts methods and communicating visual arts. Students select artworks, objects and artifacts for comparison from differing cultural contexts that may have been produced across any of the art-making forms, and that hold individual resonance for the student and have relevance to their own art-making practice. This is of particular importance to HL students.

Students at both SL and HL must examine and compare at least three pieces, at least two of which should be by different artists. It is valuable for students to have experienced at least one of the works in real time and space, such as a painting at a gallery, a sculpture in a park or an artifact from the local community that is brought into the school, although this is not essential. Good quality reproductions can be referred to when a student's location limits their access to such works first hand. The works selected for comparison and analysis should come from contrasting cultural contexts.

Students use research and inquiry skills to investigate and interpret the selected pieces, applying aspects of critical theory and methodologies to the works examined and presenting their findings as a personal and critically reflective analysis, using both visual and written forms of notation. Students must support their interpretation with references to sound and reliable sources. Candidates are required to submit the list of sources used and in-text referencing is required throughout the comparative study. A recognized system of academic referencing must be used in line with the school's academic honesty policy. A candidate's failure to acknowledge a source will be investigated by the IB as a potential breach of regulations that may result in a penalty imposed by the IB final award committee.

## Preparation process

In preparation for this task, within the core syllabus students at SL and HL must have had experience of the following.

	Visual arts in context	Visual arts methods	Communicating visual arts
Theoretical practice	<p>Examining and comparing the work of artists from different cultural contexts using a range of critical methodologies.</p> <p>Considering the contexts influencing their own work and the work of others.</p>	<p>Looking at different techniques for making art.</p> <p>Investigating and comparing how and why different techniques have evolved and the processes involved.</p>	<p>Exploring ways of communicating through visual and written means.</p> <p>Making artistic choices about how to most effectively communicate knowledge and understanding.</p>
Visual arts journal	<p>Recording their experiences and learning, together with impressions, reflections and any relevant research that they need to be able to reference, in the visual arts journal.</p>		

Students then undertake the process outlined below for assessment.

## Task details

Students at both SL and HL must select at least three artworks, objects or artifacts, at least two of which should be by different artists. For each of the selected pieces, students should:

- carry out research from a range of different sources (that they must be able to reference)
- analyse the cultural contexts in which the selected pieces were created
- identify the formal qualities of the selected pieces
- interpret the function and purpose of the selected pieces
- evaluate the material, conceptual and cultural significance of the selected pieces to the cultural contexts within which they were created.

Students at both SL and HL should then:

- compare the selected pieces, identifying links in cultural context, formal qualities, function, purpose, material, conceptual and cultural significance
- present a list of sources used during the study.

Students at HL should also reflect on the investigation outcomes and the extent to which their own art-making practices and pieces have subsequently been influenced by artworks, objects or artifacts examined in the comparative study.

### Using the visual arts journal in this task

Students should use their visual arts journal to specifically document their investigation and responses to the selected pieces. This includes their detailed interpretations, evaluations and comparisons. Students will select, adapt and present what they have recorded in their journal as the basis for the comparative study task.



### The role of the teacher

Teachers must ensure that their students are appropriately prepared for the demands of this task through the careful planning and delivery of the core syllabus activities outlined above. This assessment task must not be teacher led and students must be made fully aware of the assessment criteria against which their work will be judged.

Teachers are required to meet with students at each stage of inquiry, action and reflection to discuss the progress made to date, and to verify the authenticity of the coursework being created by each student. The key outcomes of these one-to-one interactions, which might be formal meetings and/or informal discussions in the classroom, must be summarized by the teacher on the DP visual arts Coursework authentication form (6/VACAF), which is submitted to the IB as part of the upload of external assessment material. This form can be found on the visual arts page of the OCC.

The teacher should discuss the choice of selected artworks, objects and artifacts with each student. It is important that the selected pieces are the student's own choice. Teachers should also ensure that the students are acknowledging all sources used and referencing them appropriately.

Teachers should read and give advice to students on one draft of the comparative study. The teacher should provide oral or written advice on how the comparative study could be improved, but should not edit the draft. The next version handed to the teacher must be the final version for submission.

### Structuring the comparative study

Students should articulate their understanding through both visual and written forms, depending on the most appropriate means of presenting and communicating their findings. While the comparative study may include text-based analysis, it may also include diagrammatic and graphic elements such as annotated sketches and diagrams, annotations on copies of artworks as well as other visual organizing techniques (such as flowcharts, relative importance graphs, concept webs and Mind Maps®). An introduction to the study should summarize the scope of the investigation from which the focus artworks, objects and artifacts have been selected. Students should aim for a balance of visual and written content, and use an appropriate means of acknowledging sources. Students must ensure that their work makes effective use of subject-specific language where appropriate.

For each of the selected artworks, objects or artifacts, students at both SL and HL are encouraged to focus their analysis and interpretation of works through consideration of the role of the artist, the artwork, the audience and the cultural context. The scope and scale of the comparative study task will depend largely on the materials selected for investigation. Students may wish, however, to adapt the following structure to suit their needs. This structure is for guidance only and is neither prescriptive nor restrictive.

**Introduction**

Students summarize the scope of the investigation from which the focus artworks, objects and artifacts have been selected, and any thematic or conceptual framework used to draw the investigation together.

**The artworks, objects or artifacts and their contexts**

Students summarize their research from a range of different sources and present their inquiry into the identification and interpretation of selected artworks, objects and artifacts. They also explain how they have applied a range and combination of critical theories and methodologies to the works. Areas of investigation might include:

- identification of the cultural contexts of the selected pieces
- identification and analysis of the formal qualities of the selected pieces (elements such as shape/form, space, tone, colour, line, texture and principles such as balance, rhythm, proportion, emphasis, pattern, variety)
- analysis and understanding of the function and purpose of the selected pieces (such as the meanings of motifs, signs and symbols used in the work)
- analysis and evaluation of the material, conceptual and cultural significance of the pieces and the cultural contexts in which they were created.

**Making connections**

Students present their comparisons of the different pieces, clearly identifying links between them. These comparisons might include:

- comparing and contrasting the cultural contexts of the selected pieces
- comparing and contrasting the formal qualities of the selected pieces
- comparing and contrasting the function and purpose of the selected pieces
- comparing and contrasting the material, conceptual and cultural significance of the pieces.

**Connecting to own art-making practice (HL only)**

Students analyse and evaluate their research outcomes and the extent to which their own art-making practices and pieces have subsequently been influenced by artworks, objects, artifacts and their creators examined in the comparative study. These influences and personal connections, which should be evidenced in both visual and written forms, might include:

- cultural context
- formal qualities
- function and purpose
- materials, conceptual and cultural significance.

When referring to their own artwork and practices, HL students must be sure to identify and acknowledge their own artworks with the same rigorous attention to detail as with images from other sources.

**Sources**

Students must cite any source at point of use and include a list of sources used during the study.

**Academic honesty**

Every image used within the comparative study must be appropriately referenced to acknowledge the title, artist, medium and date (where this information is known) and the source, following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school. When HL students include any images of their own original work, these must also be identified and acknowledged in the same way. Candidates are required to submit the list of sources that they used and in-text referencing is required throughout the comparative study.



### Formal requirements of the task—SL

- SL students submit 10–15 screens which examine and compare at least three artworks, objects or artifacts, at least two of which need to be by different artists. The works selected for comparison and analysis should come from differing cultural contexts.
- SL students submit a list of sources used.

### Formal requirements of the task—HL

- HL students submit 10–15 screens which examine and compare at least three artworks, objects or artifacts, at least two of which need to be by different artists. The works selected for comparison and analysis should come from differing cultural contexts.
- HL students submit 3–5 additional screens which analyse the extent to which their work and practices have been influenced by the art and artists examined.
- HL students submit a list of sources used.

### Submitting assessment work

The size and format of screens submitted for assessment is not prescribed. Submitted materials are assessed on screen and students must ensure that their work is clear and legible when presented in a digital, on-screen format. Students should not scan multiple pages of work from their journals and submit them as a single screen, for example, as overcrowded or illegible materials may result in examiners being unable to interpret and understand the intentions of the work.

The procedure for submitting work for assessment can be found in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*. Where submitted materials exceed the prescribed screen limits examiners are instructed to base their assessment solely on the materials that appear within the limits.

## External assessment criteria—SL and HL

### Part 1: Comparative study

#### Summary

Part 1: Comparative study		Marks	Total
A	Identification and analysis of formal qualities	6	30
B	Analysis and understanding of function and purpose	6	
C	Analysis and evaluation of cultural significance	6	
D	Making comparisons and connections	6	
E	Presentation and subject-specific language	6	
F	(HL only) Making connections to own art-making practice	12	42

## Criteria

### A. Identification and analysis of formal qualities

To what extent does the work demonstrate:

- informed identification and analysis of the formal qualities of the selected artworks, objects and artifacts?

Mark	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard identified by the descriptors below
1–2	The work provides an outline of the formal qualities of the selected pieces but this is limited, superficial or relies heavily on personal opinion.
3–4	The work provides a largely descriptive account of the identified formal qualities of the selected pieces. There is some evidence of informed analysis, but this is underdeveloped.
5–6	The work provides a consistent, insightful and informed identification and analysis of the formal qualities of the selected pieces.

### B. Analysis and understanding of function and purpose

To what extent does the work demonstrate:

- informed analysis and understanding of the function and purpose of the selected artworks, objects and artifacts within the cultural context in which they were created?

Candidates who do not examine and compare at least three artworks by at least two different artists from at least two contrasting cultural contexts will not be awarded a mark higher than 2 in this criterion.

Mark	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard identified by the descriptors below
1–2	The work provides an outline of the function and purpose of the selected pieces, but this is limited, superficial or relies heavily on personal opinion.
3–4	The work provides a largely descriptive account of the function and purpose of the selected pieces from at least two contrasting cultural contexts. There is some evidence of informed analysis and understanding, but these are not fully developed.
5–6	The work provides a consistent, insightful and informed analysis and demonstrates thorough understanding of the function and purpose of the selected pieces from at least two contrasting cultural contexts.

### C. Analysis and evaluation of cultural significance

To what extent does the work demonstrate:

- informed analysis and evaluation of the cultural significance of the selected artworks, objects and artifacts within the specific context in which they were created (such as the cultural, sociopolitical and historical significance of the works, with respect to the original audience and purpose, as well as to a contemporary audience)?

Candidates who do not examine and compare at least three artworks by at least two different artists from at least two contrasting cultural contexts will not be awarded a mark higher than 2 in this criterion.

Mark	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard identified by the descriptors below
1–2	The work provides an outline of the material, conceptual and cultural significance of the selected pieces, but this is limited, superficial or relies heavily on personal opinion.
3–4	The work provides a largely descriptive account of the material, conceptual and cultural significance of the selected pieces from at least two contrasting cultural contexts. There is some evidence of informed analysis and evaluation, but these are not fully developed.
5–6	The work provides a consistently insightful and informed analysis and thorough evaluation of the material, conceptual and cultural significance of the selected pieces from at least two contrasting cultural contexts.

#### D. Making comparisons and connections

To what extent does the work demonstrate:

- effective critical analysis and discussion of the connections, similarities and differences between the selected artworks, objects and artifacts?

Candidates who do not examine and compare at least three artworks by at least two different artists will not be awarded a mark higher than 3 in this criterion.

Mark	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard identified by the descriptors below
1–2	The work outlines connections, similarities and differences between the selected pieces, with little analysis. These connections are largely superficial or inappropriate and demonstrate a basic understanding of how the pieces compare and contrast.
3–4	The work analyses and describes the connections, similarities and differences between the selected pieces, with some critical analysis. The connections are logical and coherent and demonstrate an adequate understanding of how the pieces compare and contrast.
5–6	The work critically analyses and discusses the connections, similarities and differences between the selected pieces. These connections are logical and coherent, showing a thorough understanding of how the pieces compare and contrast.

#### E. Presentation and subject-specific language

To what extent does the work:

- ensure that information is conveyed clearly and coherently in a visually appropriate and legible manner, supported by the consistent use of appropriate subject-specific language?

Mark	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard identified by the descriptors below
1–2	The work is limited or inconsistent in conveying information clearly or in a visually appropriate manner. The work contains some appropriate subject-specific language, but this is limited.

Mark	Descriptor
3–4	The work clearly and coherently conveys information, in a visually appropriate and legible manner, with some consistent use of appropriate subject-specific language.
5–6	The work clearly and coherently conveys information which results in a visually creative and legible study that enhances the impact of the work and the reader's understanding. Subject-specific language is used accurately and appropriately throughout.

**At HL only****F. Making connections to own art-making practice**

To what extent does the work:

- analyse and evaluate the outcomes of the comparative study investigation and on how this has influenced the student's own development as an artist, identifying connections between one or more of the selected works and the student's own art-making processes and practices?

Mark	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard identified by the descriptors below
1–3	The work outlines the outcomes of the investigation in a limited way. There are few or only superficial connections to their own art-making practice.
4–6	The work provides some analysis of the outcomes of the investigation. The student describes the extent to which their own art-making and pieces have been influenced by artworks, objects and artifacts examined in the comparative study, making inconsistent or incomplete connections.
7–9	The work provides an analysis of the outcomes of the investigation. The student explains the extent to which their own art-making and pieces have been influenced by artworks, objects and artifacts examined in the comparative study, making adequate connections.
10–12	The work provides a consistent and insightful evaluation on the outcomes of the investigation. The student effectively analyses and evaluates the extent to which their own art-making and pieces have been influenced by artworks, objects and artifacts examined in the comparative study, making informed and meaningful connections throughout.