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Leaving Certificate Art

Art is an excellent choice for the Leaving Certificate. As a creative subject, it not only offers a space to reflect and breathe during the intensity of the Leaving Certificate years, it also provides an opportunity to see and interpret the world in a new way. Even mundane things can seem fresh and exciting when colour and shape awakens the imagination.

From 2018, Art will have an added advantage. Two of the practical components will be assessed as one unit, and this work will be generated entirely within normal class time over a period of 10 weeks. This means that exactly half of the Art examination is free from highly pressurised conditions.

Art as a Leaving Certificate subject can also prove highly valuable in later careers. The role of Art in creative problem-solving has long been identified as an essential tool to help solve issues for which there is no single, clear solution. Many employers seek people with an innovative approach, and this is exactly what artists – or those with artistic styles of thinking – can provide.

Art as a career

Art, of course, continues to be an option for students wishing to pursue ‘traditional’ creative careers, such as Architecture, Interior Design or Painting-/Fine Art-related professions, but the emergence of the internet has provided a new and very practical reason to study Art, generating as it has an abundance of exciting new roles.

With the proliferation of computers, smartphones, tablets and other portable electronic devices, there are increased opportunities for digital designers and multimedia artists.

Film

The Irish film industry has grown hugely over the last decade, and is now estimated to be worth over €550 million. Among the 6,000 individuals and 500 businesses employed directly and indirectly, there are numerous Art-related opportunities. In recent years,
two Art-based animated Irish films, *The Secret of Kells* and *Song of the Sea*, were nominated for Best Animated Feature at the Oscars.

**Exam format**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAPER</th>
<th>EXAM DURATION (HOURS)</th>
<th>TIME OF YEAR</th>
<th>MARKS ALLOWED</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF THE EXAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical Coursework</td>
<td>30 hours of class time</td>
<td>Jan–Apr</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftwork/Design and Imaginative Composition/Still Life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sketching</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Appreciation of Art (3 essays, each worth 50 marks)</td>
<td>2½ hours</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Revised assessment for Practical Components 2018**

Two of the four examination components for Leaving Certificate Art, which were previously carried out as invigilated examinations, will instead be carried out as a single coursework component in the examination of 2018 and afterwards.

*Imaginative Composition or Still Life* and *Craftwork or Design*

will be executed as coursework in schools over an extended period of time.

**Practical Coursework**

*Craftwork or Design and Imaginative Composition or Still Life*

The completed coursework component submitted for assessment must consist of two realised works from the Leaving Certificate Art Coursework Brief and a *record of their development* in the Coursework Workbook. Your investigation and development based on your chosen theme must be recorded in your Coursework Workbook using the prescribed structure.

The coursework component you submit for assessment must be your own individual work. To enable your *Art teacher* to validate your coursework component and to ensure that similar constraints apply to all candidates, the workbook and realised works in their entirety must be executed in school under the supervision of your class teacher.

*The use of primary sources is required* (you must work from real objects, not pictures). Primary sources are sources, physical or conceptual, that are viewed in their original state and are not filtered through another person’s interpretation of them. You may use a
combination of physical and conceptual sources (working from imagination, memory or feeling).

**Practical Coursework links**
To watch a short video on the Art student’s experience, go to YouTube and search for ‘PDST ART STUDENT EXPERIENCE’ (2:59).
To see the work of some exceptional Art students from all over the world, visit www.studentartguide.com/featured

**Life Sketching**
- Drawing from the human figure.
- A standing pose is completed in 15 minutes and a longer pose in 30 minutes.
- Students must draw the full figure and it may be completed in any medium.

**History and Appreciation of Art**
The fields of special study covered by the exam are as follows:
- **Section I**: Art in Ireland (from prehistoric times to the present).
- **Section II**: European Art (from AD 1000 to the present).
- **Section III**: General Appreciation topics based on everyday visual experience.

The History and Appreciation of Art paper offers a choice of topics and will include one from each special study area. You will be asked for three fully illustrated, essay-style answers, one from each of the three sections of the paper. Each essay carries equal marks.

**History and Appreciation of Art**
The Art History syllabus is extremely broad and general. The style and content of the exam has changed over the years, but questions are framed to test quite detailed knowledge, especially at Higher Level.

Section I Art in Ireland and Section II European Art require factual knowledge. Section III General Appreciation requires a more general level of artistic awareness, but even in this section the questions can be quite specific.

**Preparing for the History and Appreciation of Art exam paper**
You should:
- Study your chosen sections in as much detail as possible.
- Carefully examine past papers and marking schemes.
- Practise answering questions from past papers.

**Key Point**
The exam paper has determined the History of Art syllabus for some time, so study past exam questions from the previous five or six years very carefully. Check the marking scheme to help you study in a more focused way.
Use the internet for full-size coloured images and extra information.
Visit museums and galleries whenever possible so that you can see the original works.

Study areas
Choose your study areas from the following:

Section I: Art in Ireland
Study at least one area in detail and have a good outline knowledge of another.

1. Pre-Christian Ireland
   - The Stone Age.
   - The Bronze Age: Early, Middle and Late.
   - The Iron Age/Celtic/La Tène era.

2. Early Christian Ireland
   - Architecture.
   - Manuscripts.
   - Metalwork.
   - Stone carving/High Crosses.

3. Georgian Ireland
   - Palladian architecture and decorative arts.
   - Neoclassical architecture and decorative arts.

Section II: European Art
Choose at least one area to study in detail.

4. Medieval Europe
   - Romanesque architecture and sculpture.
   - Gothic architecture and sculpture.
   - Gothic stained glass.
   - Fourteenth-century Gothic architecture.
   - Fourteenth-century Gothic painting and sculpture.
   - Painting in Italy: Giotto.

5. The Renaissance
   - Painting: Early and High.
   - Sculpture: Early and High.
   - Architecture.
   - Renaissance in Venice.
   - Renaissance in Northern Europe.
6. Impressionism and twentieth-century art movements
- Painting in nineteenth-century France.
- Modern European art movements.
- Individual artists associated with nineteenth- and twentieth-century art movements.

Section III: General Appreciation
Topics vary considerably, but some topics appear regularly. Some of these can be studied (e.g. film and design), while others depend more on a general awareness of visual surroundings.
- Museum and gallery visits.
- Film studies.
- Roadside and public sculpture.
- The built environment.
- Graphic design, interior design and product design.
- General topics relating to visual appreciation.

Revision plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>LESSON 1 (1 HOUR) SAT: 10AM–11AM</th>
<th>LESSON 2 (30 MINS) TUES: 5PM–5.30PM</th>
<th>LESSON 3 (30 MINS) THURS: 9PM–9.30PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>READ BOOK</td>
<td>READ BOOK</td>
<td>DRA W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RESEARCH</td>
<td>READ OVER PREVIOUS ESSAYS AND HOMEWORK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INTERNET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MAKE NOTES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PLAN ESSAYS FROM EXAM PAPERS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1 2 DEC</th>
<th>THE STONE AGE</th>
<th>BACKGROUND</th>
<th>TOMBS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STONE MONUMENTS</td>
<td>LIFESTYLE</td>
<td>PATTERNS ON STONES</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 2 9 DEC</th>
<th>BRONZE AGE PERIODS</th>
<th>BACKGROUND</th>
<th>ORNAMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORNAMENTS METHODS OF DECORATION</td>
<td>LIFESTYLE</td>
<td>DECORATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MINING ALLUVIAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 3 16 DEC</th>
<th>LA TÈNE: THE CELTS &amp; IRON AGE CULTURE</th>
<th>LA TÈNE ORNAMENTS</th>
<th>ORNAMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA TÈNE: ART MOTIFS</td>
<td>STONE DETAIL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 4 6 JAN</th>
<th>PUBLIC SCULPTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>READ OVER PAST APPRECIATION QUESTIONS</th>
<th>DIAGRAMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORNAMENTS PAINTING SCULPTURE</td>
<td>OBJECTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| WEEK 5 13 JAN | ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE CHARACTERISTICS | MEDIEVAL EUROPE THE CHURCH & SOCIETY PILGRIMAGES | ROMANESQUE VAULTS PLAN OF PILGRIMAGE CHURCH |
Work out your time per week and the material you need to cover. These sample plans may help you coming up to the Pre-Leaving Cert in early spring. Use a similar method to plan again for the exam in June.

**Planning and writing an Art History or Appreciation essay**

1. Read the question carefully.
2. **Highlight** key words that identify the task and indicate what needs to be done, e.g. ‘describe’, ‘discuss’.
3. **Examine** the dictionary meaning of the word **discuss**: to consider or examine by argument; to talk over or write about.
4. **Identify** the topic words that indicate the subject of the essay, e.g. Bronze Age.
5. **Study** the subject in your textbook and do some background research from internet sources.
6. **Make** written notes on important facts and relevant art terms.
7. **Plan** a response to the statement.
8. **Highlight** important points of your discussion. This will form the backbone of the essay. It will be stated in the introduction but it also needs to be restated with reference to named artworks.
9. **Select** facts related to the topic from your textbook and make sure these are relevant to the question.
Gold
No gold mines have ever been found. It is assumed that alluvial gold was found in rivers and streams in the Wicklow Hills.

Gold ornaments
Gold was first used in Bronze Age Ireland. It was worked in much the same way as bronze, but because gold is such a soft metal it had no practical purpose. It is, however, highly desirable for jewellery and ornaments, and these seem to have been in great demand with the society of that time. This suggests there were people of high status and may mean that an ‘aristocracy’ or royalty had developed.

The Bronze Age has three distinct periods:
- Middle (1500–1200 BC).
- Late (1200–500 BC).

Early Bronze Age (2000–1500 BC)

Gold-working techniques
Gold was beaten into a thin sheet using a hammer. This was then cut into the required shape and decorated.

Decoration
Patterns were abstract and geometric. Compasses were used for circular decoration.

Decorative techniques included:
- Repoussé: Hammering a design on the back of the thin sheet of gold.
- Incision: Cutting a design into the front.

Learn by making!
Cut out the objects in light card. Make incised decoration using a pointed instrument. Repoussé using a ballpoint pen on the reverse. Colour them in gold and paste them into your sketchbook.
## Metalwork: Early Bronze Age (2500–1500 BC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artefact</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Decoration</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Metalwork Technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discs</td>
<td>Pair of gold ‘sun discs’ (Tedavnet, Co. Monaghan).</td>
<td>Small discs of thin sheet gold 11.6 cm in diameter. Often found in pairs.</td>
<td>Cross motif of chevrons and zigzags. Repoussé technique.</td>
<td>Small holes near the centre suggest stitching to garments – possibly worn on the chest.</td>
<td>Circle cut from a thin beaten plate of gold. Decorated by hammering and punching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunulae</td>
<td>Gold lunula (Ross, Co. Westmeath).</td>
<td>Crescent or half-moon shapes. 20 cm across.</td>
<td>Combinations of lines, zigzags and hatched triangles. Incision (cutting) technique.</td>
<td>Likely to have been worn as neck ornaments.</td>
<td>Shape cut from thin beaten sheets of gold with slightly thicker extensions at the ends for locking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Function

Small holes near the centre suggest it may have been a kind of button. It may have been sewn onto a garment.

### Metalwork technique

Gold was beaten into thin sheets with a hammer and cut into discs.

### Decoration

- **Repoussé in the form of a cross encircled by concentric bands of chevrons (zigzags)**
- **Bands of decoration at the pointed ends**

Both of these may have been used for ceremonial purposes and worn by someone of high status.

### Metalwork technique

Gold was beaten into thin sheet using a hammer and then cut into the crescent shape.

### Decoration

The decoration is incised (cut on the front). There are bands of decoration with lines and motifs of triangles and chevron strokes.
**Middle Bronze Age (1500–1200 BC)**

The period from 1200 BC onwards was a very prolific time for gold ornaments.

**Gold-working techniques**

- **Twisting**: Straps of gold were hammered to make narrow bands, then twisted to make neck ornaments, earrings or girdles.
- **Flange twisting**: Thicker bars were hammered at the edges and twisted to make neck ornaments called torcs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artefact</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Decoration</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Metalwork Technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earrings</td>
<td>Flanged gold earrings (Castlerea, Co. Roscommon).</td>
<td>Small, twisted rings with a ‘collar’ and rod-like ends. 3.6 cm in diameter.</td>
<td>Flanged and twisted.</td>
<td>Worn in the ears.</td>
<td>Four flanges created by hammering out the edges of an angled bar of gold. Twisted to 180°.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twisted bands for waist, arm and neck</td>
<td>Gold Ribbon Torc (Belfast, Co. Antrim).</td>
<td>Gold twisted band with locking device. 17.5 cm in diameter.</td>
<td>Twisting.</td>
<td>Worn as a neck ornament.</td>
<td>Strap of gold beaten out from the centre to very thin edges before twisting. Thicker metal forms buttons at the end to interlock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracelets</td>
<td>Gold armlets (Derrinboy, Co. Offaly).</td>
<td>Curved broad bands of gold.</td>
<td>Broad ridges with smaller ridges. Repoussé technique.</td>
<td>Worn as arm bands or bracelets.</td>
<td>Made from a length of broad gold ribbon. Thin edges of the ribbon coiled backwards and inwards to create a strong edge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Late Bronze Age (1200–500 BC)

The late Bronze Age is famous for its huge quantity, quality and variety of gold ornaments. Craftsmanship had reached a very high level of sophistication and is the highest standard known in Europe at the time. This is why the Late Bronze Age is often called Ireland’s first Golden Age.

Gold-working techniques

- Repoussé.
- Incision.
- Twisting.
- Gold wire: Very thin strips were twisted to make fine wire. This was used for holding objects together and for decorative purposes.
2017 Higher Level paper: Section II, Question 20

‘Street art has become popular in Ireland in recent years with cities and towns embracing the exciting potential of the urban landscape.’

Discuss this statement with reference to the illustration on the accompanying sheet. In your answer refer to subject matter, composition, location and scale.

and

Briefly outline your visual concepts for a mural in your own locality.

Illustrate your answer.

TIPS FOR ANSWERING AN APPRECIATION QUESTION

- Write an interesting, descriptive essay putting forward your own reasons as to why you think street art has become so popular.
- Address each of the specific elements, subject matter, composition, location and scale listed in the question.
- Make your points with confidence, enthusiasm and even a bit of humour. Try to keep your examiner engaged!
- If your ideas are good, you will pick up very easy marks.
- The ideas for a mural are entirely up to you and involve mostly drawing and colour. This makes it a lovely question for young artists. Go for it!

All of the following questions are also open to individual opinion. Yours is just as interesting as the next. Use your everyday experience and studies in art to inform your answers.

SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS (2017, HIGHER LEVEL)

Q.17: ‘Public sculpture plays an important role in commemorating people and/or events.’

Discuss this statement with reference to a named public sculpture you have studied. In your answer refer to subject matter, composition, materials, techniques, location and the context of the work.

and

Briefly outline your visual concepts for a public sculpture to be placed in your locality to commemorate a person or an event.

Illustrate your answer.
Q.18: ‘The purpose of graphic design is to attract attention and communicate information.’
Discuss this statement with reference to the posters illustrated on the accompanying sheet. In your answer refer to imagery, layout, typography, colour and briefly outline which poster is more effective.

and

Briefly outline your visual concepts for a poster based on a festival of your choice.

*Illustrate your answer.*

Q.19: ‘Product design should involve a balance between appearance and function.’
Discuss this statement with reference to the vacuum cleaner illustrated on the accompanying sheet. In your answer refer to form, function, materials and decorative qualities.

and

Briefly outline your visual concepts for a container/bag to carry your school lunch.

*Illustrate your answer.*

*(To see the 2017 exam paper with the accompanying illustrations, go to www.examinations.ie, click on ‘Examination Material Archive’, on the left-hand side of the page, and then click on ‘Examination Papers’)*

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**Answering a question on a visit to an exhibition or gallery**

Questions relating to a visit to an art gallery or an art exhibition feature regularly on the Appreciation section of the Leaving Certificate Art examination paper. The question is likely to ask you to discuss at least two of the works in detail, but it may also focus on aspects like:

- the architecture of the gallery or museum building
- the curation and layout of the exhibition
- the display and lighting.

**The building**

Many art galleries were built for other purposes and have been altered to house the artworks. Some have had modern extensions or have been renovated to suit the display of art. This often enhances the atmosphere and helps with the enjoyment of art. Comparisons of the works shown in an older building with those shown in purpose-built extensions can be very interesting. Facilities like shops, restaurants, cloakrooms and lifts should also be noted.