



**AP[®] European History
2004 Sample Student Responses
Form B**

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Painting, throughout history, has always reflected the thoughts and intellectual concerns of the eras in which the pieces were created. While Raphael's School of Athens exhibits the importance of Renaissance humanism and a preoccupation with the classics of Greece and Rome, Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger demonstrates an interest in new representation and a break from traditional technique in painting.

During the Renaissance there was a rebirth of interest in ancient Greece and Rome. Humanism, the literary movement which focused on classical philosophy and writing, paralleled the Renaissance burst of creativity. Raphael's School of Athens directly reveals this interest in the two ancient civilizations. His work depicts the great philosophers of Greece and Rome including men such as Aristotle, Socrates and Plato. The setting of the painting is in a classical building with broad arches and engaged columns. Raphael even included niches in the walls of the building holding two classical statues.

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Everything about the painting heeds the Greek and Roman cultures. All the men portrayed were considered the greatest philosophers and thinkers of the world. During the Renaissance it was these men who artists and philosophers looked to for inspiration and truth. Raphael's painting clearly exhibits this intellectual concern of his day.

The painting also exhibits the artistic concerns of including harmony, balance and realism in every work. The work is symmetrically balanced and pleasing to the eye. Each figure is fully ~~and~~ an individual with his own gesture and expression.

Picasso's painting is similar in the way it expresses the concerns of its day, however these are very different. Picasso's painting is most concerned in showing the scene from a number of angles. Picasso was not interested in ~~the~~ depicting realism. Rather, during the late 19th century a new movement called Expressionism emerged which involved emotion and non traditional representation. Picasso, along with Braque created the cubist movement which transformed the way artists

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looked at their subjects. This painting clearly shows the way in which Picasso combined several different view points into one painting.

During this time, there was great conflict throughout Europe. Artists frequently began to paint "for art's sake" and to express their emotions rather than for the church or wealthy patrons. Picasso's style reflects this conflict of ideals which was occurring as countries underwent revolution, change in government and prepared to enter the first world war.

Picasso's ~~was~~ influence by African art, particularly African masks, is also apparent in this painting. Once again during the early 20th century new cultures and traditions were being transported into Europe as countries took colonies in Africa, South America and elsewhere. These influences can be seen in the art work created of this period.

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Humanity has always found art to be an efficient method to express concerns or current ideas. This is seen by the works of two of the greatest art-figures of history: Raphael and Picasso. Living in very distinct time periods, each of these artist's works ~~that~~ give insight on the artistic and intellectual concerns of their era. Therefore, through their paintings, one can understand the artistic and intellectual stress and concerns of each of the painter's era.

Through Raphael's painting, one is ~~given~~ exposed to the artistic and intellectual concerns of the Renaissance. Raphael's most ~~famous~~ renowned painting is titled the "School of Athens". In this painting, he portrays Classical protagonists of intellectual life, such as Plato and Aristotle, and places them with ~~important~~ ~~leading~~ ~~to~~ leading figures of the Renaissance, like Da Vinci and Michelangelo. This shows the will of Renaissance scholars to unite the Ancient world to their current world. Their will ~~is~~ also ~~present~~ presents itself with the Renaissance revival of the study of Classical manuscripts in original language (~~shown in the painting in the bottom left corner w/ man and manuscript~~ ~~and classical latin~~) ^{shown in the painting in the bottom} their artistic techniques of close natural studies (attention to details of natural shapes). As a cause of ~~the~~ ^{the} latter, a realistic style of painting evolved, with single-point perspective ~~and~~ three-dimensional shapes, ~~and~~ realistic proportions ^{and} chiaroscuro showing shadows and light. ~~At~~ Raphael shows the concern of Renaissance painter in

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"School of Athens" by using ~~the techniques of~~ a realistic style of painting. In his painting, single point perspective, ~~and all other~~ ~~more~~ natural proportions, increase interest in studying and knowledge, and unification of the old and new world are all shown, making this painting suitable to provide insight on the concerns of the artists and intellectuals of the Renaissance.

Similarly, Picasso shows ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~current~~ artistic and intellectual concerns of his era. "Les Femmes d'Alger" depicts French prostitutes ⁱⁿ "nudes". Picasso's painting style is known as cubism, and therefore he is not concerned with a realistic impression of the subject matter. Like his contemporaries, Picasso is concerned with the emotion of emotions and the interpretation of the individual. This concern comes directly from the early 20th century ~~to~~ emphasis on individualism and the ~~rights of~~ and the ~~Freud~~ ^{Freud} theories ~~movement~~. Individualism and ~~Freud's theories~~ ^{Freud's theories} based on the ^{belief} ~~importance of each~~ ^{and importance that that} ~~the ability of each~~ individual ~~to have a~~ ~~strong~~ ~~should~~ ~~have~~ has a unique response to the world and that each individual should be allowed that freedom. Freud's theories support the idea that each individual has his/her own experience, due to our ~~conscious~~ ^{unconscious} subconsciousness. Freud thought that humans were not just rational, but were also controlled by something of the subconscious, of the emotional nature. Therefore, Picasso's painting shows the stress on individualism and the ~~effect~~ ^{under acceptance} of Freud's theories in his painting.

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~~A common phrase in our society is that history repeats itself. This concept ^{becomes} is clear when looking at the ~~the~~ ~~rise~~ rise of power of 17th century absolute monarchs and 20th century dictators. There are many similarities in the way Louis XIV and Stalin gained and maintained their power, ~~but there are also differences~~ ~~between the way~~~~

Therefore, artists of different eras show us the different concerns of their society. Their style of painting, their subjects and the emphasis of their painting give us an insight on their complicated lives. Art is beauty, as we often say, ~~because~~ but it is because it shows the efforts of humanity.