

- Visual Culture Studies is about **artworks**. Without artworks there would be no such school subject.
- The examination panel put much effort into creating a question paper containing colour illustrations, but too many candidates ignored the visuals and/or could not engage with studied and unseen works. Teachers must teach their candidates the **skill of visual analysis**:
 - A brief description
 - Analysis (use of media and elements of art such as colour, line and shape)
 - Interpretation (in relation to context of the work)
- The teaching of visual analysis is crucial for the Visual Arts examination paper, where a large part of the assessment is concerned with visual sources. It was clear that some candidates cannot engage with artworks using the correct art terminology. For instance, some candidates referred incorrectly to terms such as “abstract” and “naturalism”. Some did not understand what is meant by “the subject” of an artwork, or what is meant by such stylistic terms as “naturalism”, “abstractionism” and “expressionism”. Too many works were incorrectly described as “abstract”.
- There were many candidates who answered the examination paper without naming artworks other than those given in the paper. Candidates must use a variety of artworks to explain and substantiate movements and the work of individual artists. This does not mean a list of works, but rather engaging with certain works to explain movements and artists. A few candidates with exceptional visual analysis skills wrote excellent answers on, for example, Question 1 by referring only to the given visuals. However, for the majority of candidates, a range of artworks is necessary to ensure marks.
- Candidates must avoid diverting their discussion into personal or moral conjecture and judgements when this is not required by the question.
- Teach candidates to be specific and to avoid generalised statements or discussion. They must substantiate all comments.
- Each question requires an answer which deals only with specific aspects of the topic. However, candidates often ignored the specifics requested and embarked on a general discussion. Candidates must be taught to provide specific answers to specific questions, and not just give a summary of a movement or an artist's works. Of course, they may use their knowledge of the movement or artist, but they must focus only on those aspects of their knowledge that are pertinent to the question and make use of visual sources where required.
- There was often too much biographical information about artists when there should have been an evaluation of the artist's work and influences. Marks are awarded for biographical information only if it is used in connection with the work of the artist.
- Paragraph questions were often answered in point form, without a discussion structure. Candidates need to be trained in the correct writing of paragraphs, short essays and extended essays for this subject.
- It is impossible to score on brief essays when the question requires more discussion. Two or more pages (where indicated) are usually needed for a good answer.
- Candidates often paraphrased the question to form an introduction. Introductions and conclusions must form an integral part of the answer as a whole.
- A good answer will contain an appropriate balance between facts and insight, with the artworks at centre stage.