

# Art Appreciation | H1 Notes

## The Basics

Art Appreciation is the third and final section of the exam paper. You **must answer one** question from this section, worth 50 marks, 1/3 of the papers' total marks. Generally, given the number of options, this question can be a good opportunity to pick up marks. The question may try to trick you or lead you off on a tangent, but more often than not the question is straightforward.

Some people find this question quite intimidating, but so long as you read it through and figure out **exactly** what it's asking and answer every point, you can't go wrong and will walk away with upwards of 40/50.

## The Questions

If you look over the past papers, you'll see that the questions are really very repetitive. For example, every year, the Gallery question comes up. (I'd still learn at least one other question though, especially for the Mocks, they often try to throw in funky stuff like not having the Gallery question). The topics are generally limited to the following; the **Gallery** question, the **Film Studies/Stage Design** question, the **Product Design** question, the **Graphic Design** question and the **Renovation/Architecture** question. Given the range of questions, I'd generally recommend learning no more than three, but the truth is, if you can answer one well, you can answer them all. On the day, if your "usual" questions let you down, don't be afraid to branch out and try a different one.

## The Gallery Question

The Gallery question is many students go-to question. The reason is clear, as it **comes up every year**. The question is usually pretty basic, but sometimes they try jazz it up such as asking you to write as if for a newspaper report, or discuss "modern techniques", or the "Role of Galleries in the Modern Era." Below is the Gallery question from the 2019 Mocks.

**16.** Although the internet provides instant visual access to a vast range of high quality art, craft and design imagery the experience of visiting an art gallery or museum in person and viewing original art works in reality can never be surpassed. Discuss this statement making reference to at least **one** specific internet site and **one** named gallery/museum that you have visited. In your answer describe and discuss **two** art works, referring to the artist, subject matter, materials, and style.  
**and**  
Briefly outline your visual concept for **one** change to the presentation, layout or the ambience in the exhibition space that would lead to an improved visitor experience. Give reasons for your design decisions.  
*Illustrate your answer.*

1. Discuss a site. It doesn't ask for a URL or anything, just **describe** it. (**Colours/user friendliness/visual appeal** etc.) Talk about the **photography** of the pieces themselves. If the site uses **Virtual Reality**, discuss this too. \*
2. Compare to a visit to a real life gallery. Discuss techniques used in the gallery (**lighting/colour schemes/materials**, anything you can recall) \*
3. The "**real-life experience**" versus the "**virtual experience**" Give your opinion (Yea/Nay)
4. For the "**and**" part, just make it up. It doesn't have to be ground-breaking, or even entirely valid. Just throw in a paragraph about how you'd change the colour of the walls so the examiner can tick it off their list.

\* (Remember, you only need to discuss **2 named artworks**. You can use the same two for both aspects of the question, or you can talk about one through the website, the other in the gallery. As the question doesn't specify, it's up to you.)

In an emergency, you can discuss some imaginary coffee shop-gallery in the middle of nowhere, or make up some arts centre somewhere. This way, you don't need to remember any names or pieces. E.g. "Erosion" by Mary Brown at the Seaview Artists Café, Ballynaheary, Co. Mayo. Obviously this is not without risk so keep that in mind.

## The Film Studies Question

Again, the Film Studies question would be pretty popular, as some element of Film/Stage comes up regularly. However, the **question can range** from the generic "discuss a film," to costume/set design, street theatre or poster analysis, and everything in between. As a result, if you're considering this question, you may need to **be ready to improvise**. The real trick is to be **versatile**. You don't need to learn anything off by heart, just learn how to **use what you've got**, how to **twist it** to answer the question.

For my Leaving, I studied 3 films. **Avatar**, by James Cameron, **Coraline**, by Tim Burton and **Back to the Future**, by Stephen Spielberg (**NB** know the **directors**) I chose these particular films because between the 3 of them I could answer any question. (Sci-fi? Avatar/Back to the Future. Horror? Coraline. Futuristic? Avatar/Back to the Future. Animated? Avatar/Coraline. CGI? Avatar.) I could talk about **sets, design concepts, costumes, make up, special effects, camera work, posters**, and more.

If the question were to ask about stage design, I could talk about the play I had for English, or completely **make something up** about the TY musical (they don't know if it never happened).

Take a look at the question below (2015 Mock). Give it a shot based off what you know already.

- 18.** Fantasy films create a world that allows the viewer to become mentally and emotionally involved in another time and another place. Describe and discuss how **one** fantasy film you have seen created this believable world. Refer in your answer to visual means and film making techniques such as location, special effects, lighting, costume, makeup, and colour. **and** Describe and discuss **one** scene that you considered visually appealing. *Illustrate your answer.*

(I'd recommend to make sure you know your vocab (live action/CGI/stop motion etc.) it would be a disaster if the day came and you lost marks by misinterpreting the question)

## The Product Design Question

My advice for this one is not to waste your time trying to predict exactly what the question will ask. (Realistically, there's very little you can do on that front anyway). Usually my strategy is to **know the basics** (as in the bare minimum), of product design, and **roll with whatever I get** on the day. Typically, the question will **outline exactly what it wants** you to discuss. Even if you know **absolutely nothing** about "technical" product design, as long as you **answer every point**, you'll easily get 30-40 marks out of 50. At Leaving Cert level, **they aren't looking for fully fledged product designers**. Keep in mind, another way they can ask the question is by asking about **packaging** design.

When looking at a product, these are the three most basic aspects I would look at:

- **Usability**. Can this product actually be used? Does it **fulfil its purpose**? Can it be **used by everyone**? Is the design **flawed**?
- The next thing I'd look at is **visual appeal/impact**. Is the design **interesting**? Quirky? Off-putting? Amusing? **Innovative**?
- Something else to consider is **safety**. Is the product dangerous to use?

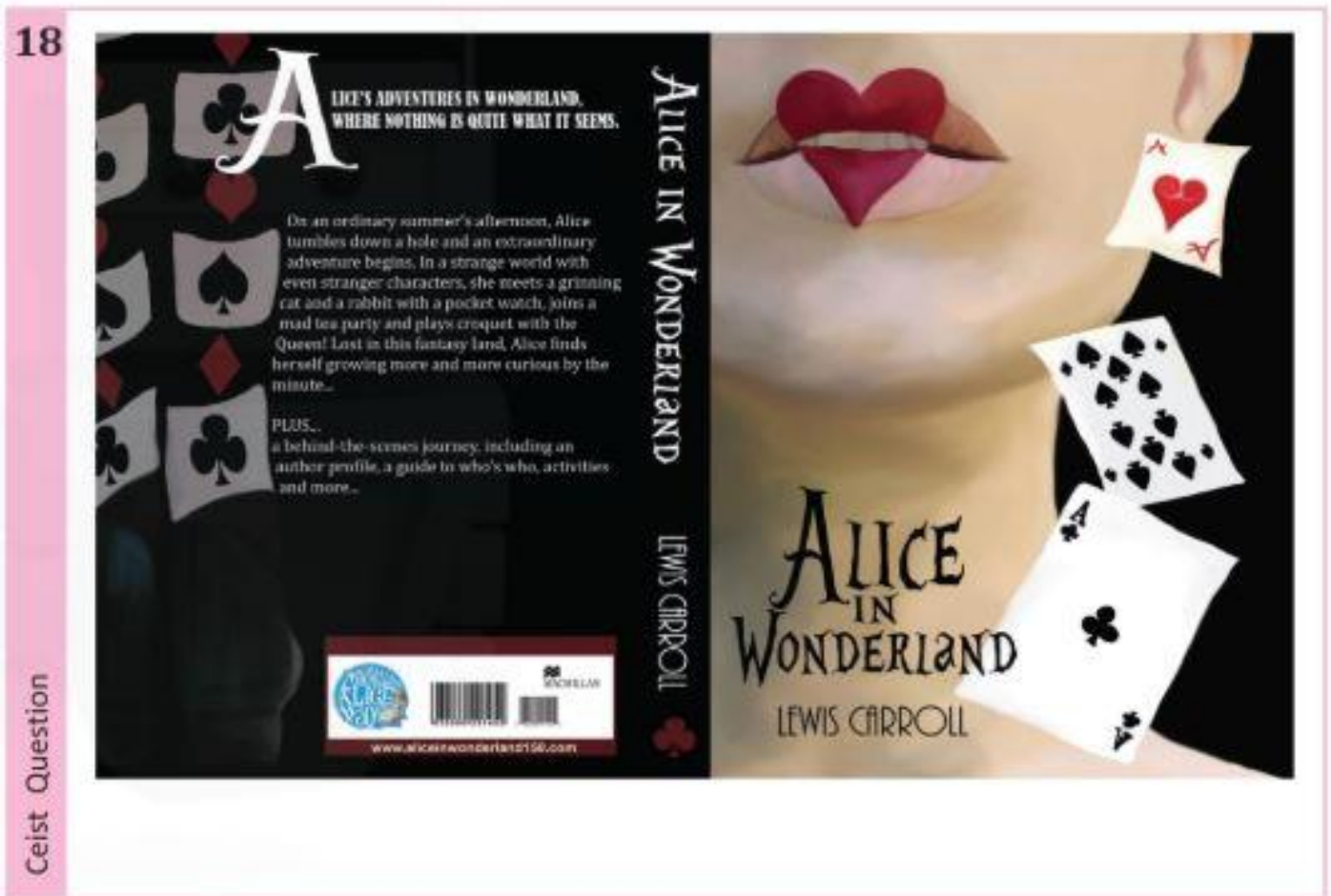
**If I was designing it, what would I improve???** Try out the question below (2018 Mocks)

- 19.** Good packaging design is vital to the successful marketing of a product, attracting the attention of the customers and enticing them make the purchase. Discuss this statement, referring to **two** specific examples of packaging that you consider to be effective and well-designed. Refer in your answer to design concept, materials, function, typography, imagery, layout and use of colour.  
**and**  
Briefly outline your ideas for a design for a carrier bag for a shop that sells organic fruit and vegetables. Give reasons for your design decisions.  
*Illustrate your answer.*

## The Graphic Design Question

This question is pretty **open-ended**. You could be asked about posters, billboards, game design, literally **anything** that a graphic designer has had something to do with. In general the question follows the **same format**. Take a look at the question below (2018 LCHL). If you can answer that, you can answer pretty much every question. When answering, keep in mind the **audience** the designer was targeting. Don't forget, answer all points, but try not go off on a tangent.

18. The design of a book cover should be an extension of the writer's or author's voice by reflecting the subject matter, atmosphere and content of the book. Discuss this statement with reference to the *illustration on the accompanying sheet*. In your answer refer to imagery, layout, typography and colour. **and** Briefly outline your visual concepts for the cover of a book about your local area. *Illustrate your answer.*



## The Restoration/Architecture Question

This question generally focuses on **restoration** and the **value** of preserving old buildings. To be honest, I **wouldn't always rely on this question**, as it can be **tricky to predict**, and doesn't come up every year. Also, it's very easy to go off on a tangent, so **try not to get lost** in the finer details. If, like in the question below, you're asked to name a specific building, I definitely **wouldn't bother learning anything off**, just make up a random name on the day. Don't forget to **cover all the points** asked. I always find it's easier if you say the structure was sound and all the building needed was cosmetic work.

If you think this question could be for you, give the one below a shot (2013 LCHL).

- 18.** Restoration projects demonstrate that architectural interventions in old buildings can be successful and be of great benefit to local communities.  
Discuss this statement with reference to any named restored building. In your answer refer to location/site, materials, original use and new function.  
**and**  
Suggest a suitable building for a renewal project that would enhance your local area. Identify the building by name and briefly outline your ideas for such a project.  
*Illustrate your answer.*

1. Discuss how restoring a building **benefitted** your local community. In this case, I'd pick a building the community will use, e.g. Ballynahanis **Community Hall**
2. **Answer** the points. e.g. Then – Old Church Hall, Now – Community Hall.
3. The "**and**" part – Old theatre hall ... Community performance space for plays, dance etc.

My advice? Get to the point. Keep it **short & sweet**, and you can't go wrong.

## Sources

- <https://www.studyflix.ie/subjects/leaving-certificate/higher/art>