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# Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Art and Design

Unit 1: Visual recording and  
Communication (31827H)





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## Grade Boundaries

### What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Near Pass). The grade awarded for each unit contributes proportionately to the overall qualification grade and each unit should always be viewed in the context of its impact on the whole qualification.

### Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

### Variations in external assessments

Each test we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each test, because then it would not take into account that a test might be slightly easier or more difficult than any other.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link:

[qualifications.pearson.com/gradeboundaries](http://qualifications.pearson.com/gradeboundaries)

### Unit 1: Visual recording & Communication (31827H)

Grade	Unclassified	N	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	7	15	27	40

# Introduction

This lead examiner report is written to help you understand how learners performed this year and to support in future delivery, and should be considered in conjunction with the corresponding set task and marking grid.

This was the first year that this externally assessed unit was made available for delivery as part of the BTEC Art and Design Level 3 qualification which commenced first teaching this academic year.

## Overall Performance of the Unit

### Task

The underlying principle of this unit is the value of visual recording regardless of the chosen specialism. Learners extract information from ideas, objects pertaining to their potential when considering a response to the theme, "Labyrinthine". When this isn't apparent in the learner work presented, it seems to be due to a lack of understanding of this underlying principle. Centres are advised to review the requirements of this unit. Preparing learners for the timed test will help ensure that learners can achieve their potential.

Centres are urged to make good use of the research and preparatory time in allowing learners to practice developing visual recording skills and observational studies into imaginative and innovative responses to the briefs demands and constraints. Without this practice learners may struggle to cope with the demands of this paper. That said the vast majority of learners who took this unit this year did successfully address the requirements of the brief.

Work was seen over the full range of marks. Responses achieving lower marks tended to be drawn towards more predictable responses with mazes becoming a prominent visual characteristic. Responses gaining higher marks developed more exciting and varied responses, and a range of different disciplines were successfully explored.

It was felt that the theme 'Labyrinthine' was generally well received. The theme allowed all learners regardless of subject specialism the chance to explore a wide range of visual recording methods and techniques.

Centres must be commended on their approach; it was evident that the majority of centres had given their learners the opportunity to develop the theme using their own ideology, with a broad range of responses. However, it is recommended that centres encourage their learners to develop and produce appropriate content, as

some learners produced work which had tenuous links to the theme. There was also some use of inappropriate imagery which might not be viewed as suitable for use within an educational setting. Centres should encourage learners to explore healthier lines of enquiry or treat sensitive issues in a more considerate fashion.

The challenge of producing physical or digital submissions was evident in the broad range of submissions. Using only 4 x A2 sheets to demonstrate an understanding of the theme is indeed a difficult task, whilst trying to demonstrate the ability to:

- record from primary and secondary sources
- research and record work by art and design practitioners
- research and record own contextual influences and factors
- produce a fully developed piece of art or design

Assessors saw some truly outstanding and inspirational learner work. Given this is the first year of delivery, in many cases learners had embraced the demands of the paper and tasks, producing a wide range of ideas, responses, material investigations, contextual research and highly personal outcomes. This was evident across all disciplines with a rich array of 3D sculptural outcomes, textiles and fashion, photography, fine art and graphics. Responses that gained higher marks used the theme in creative ways, sourcing relevant art and design practitioners to inform and inspire their creative journey. They would develop their own ideas, making excellent use of contextual research as a seed from which their own ideas and development grew.

Responses gaining less marks would often explore a wide range of contextual sources, but failed to develop their own voice, relying on pastiche copies of others work. This often led to responses that failed to show the learners own creative intent.

It has clearly been a challenge for learners to produce their work along with a written statement. The most successful learners were very articulate in their response to the 800 word reflection. They were found to be self-critical, aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They were positive in identifying solutions and commenting on how the work of others has informed and inspired their own development. Responses gaining lower marks did not acknowledge in the statement much of what was required in assessment objective 4. For example, offering only basic descriptions of ideas and judgements and often failing to reflect on strengths and weaknesses. However, in many cases learners had clearly grasped the importance of this reflection, producing informed statements clearly allowing the viewer chance to understand the learners intended ideology and interpretation of the theme.

# Summary

Based on responses seen in this session, learners are offered the following advice:

- Offer justification of choice of visual stimulus/research for recording.
- Spend more time considering strengths, weaknesses and how work can be improved.
- Take the opportunity to practice visual recording in response to primary sources before this unit paper is delivered.
- Practice developing responses to the theme using primary source as a stimulus before the supervised period.
- Develop individual responses beyond copying the work of others. More imaginative and inspired results come from re-interpreting others work and generating personal, meaningful responses.
- Evaluate ideas as an ongoing process.
- Be more self-critical and analytical.

