



Examiners' Report Lead Examiner Feedback

June 2022

Pearson BTEC Nationals in Art and Design
Unit 2: Critical and Contextual Studies in Art and
Design (31828H)

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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, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external 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 is 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 external assessment 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 assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link: <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

Awarding BTEC qualifications in 2022

Ofqual has [set out their plans](#) for awarding qualifications in 2022 and intend to return to a normal, pre-pandemic, approach to grading standards over by 2023. They have confirmed that 2022 will be a transition year, to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted.

Our guiding principle and approach to awarding BTEC qualification results in 2022 will be to ensure parity in relation to the approach being taken for GCSE and A level learners. BTEC courses have a different structure and design to academic qualifications - BTECs are modular qualifications (with assessments taking place throughout the course) compared to GCSEs and A levels which are linear (assessed and awarded at

the same time at the end of the year), and therefore our approach needs to be different.

In 2022 we will return to the usual method of calculating BTEC qualification results, however adaptations including, U-TAGs and reduced internal assessment, are in place to provide a comprehensive package of support for students.

The basis of our awarding approach to BTECs this year is to ensure it is as fair as possible for all learners. We will use a range of evidence to set grade boundaries for the external units. Part of this evidence will be to closely monitor learner performance in all assessments that contribute to learners' final qualification grade, to ensure parity with A level and GCSEs.

Further information can be found [on our website](#) and via our Social Media channels.

Unit 2: Critical and Contextual Studies in art and Design (31828H)

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	7	15	28	41

Introduction

This Lead Examiner report has been written to support your understanding of how learners performed during this examination series and to help inform on-going delivery of this unit. When reading this report, you should consider the points raised in conjunction with the following materials:

- Unit content - which can be found in the qualification specification.
- The set task - which can be accessed on the qualification pages of the BTEC website.
- The unit marking grid - which can be accessed on the qualification pages of the BTEC website.

The approach for this paper is now well established and requires learners to undertake targeted research prior to sitting a supervised assessment where they are presented with unseen material to respond to. As such the paper is presented in two parts. Part A of the paper is provided approximately 5 working weeks prior to the release of Part B of the paper.

Part A of the paper provides learners with a theme, a scenario, and a list of five practitioners from which they must select one to research. It is expected that learners should spend approximately 15-hours independently researching the theme and the practitioners they have selected from the list given. The last three hours of this preparatory period is undertaken in a monitored session or sessions in which learners must collate the research undertaken and produce up to two sides of A4 summary notes that can be taken into the supervised assessment period.

Part B of the paper provides an image of a specific piece of work by each practitioner listed in Part A of the paper, along with key details such as the title of the work, the date it was produced, the medium and the size of the work where appropriate. In addition, Part B of the paper also introduces an additional practitioner that learners must respond to. For this new practitioner, learners are provided with an image of a specific piece of work, as well as a short body of text that provides contextual information about the unseen practitioner in relation to the work provided. All information within Part B of the paper will be connected to the overarching theme of the paper.

It is important to note that during the three hours of monitored preparation learners are permitted to have access to the internet or other research sources in order to produce their summary notes. However, during the supervised assessment period learners will not have access to any research

sources and therefore will need to rely on the summary notes they have produced in the preparatory period and the information provided in Part B of the paper. Learners then have 3.5 hours to produce a formal written response to the set task in Part B of the paper. It should be noted that learners are no longer required to provide a bibliography or list of sources as part of this task.

Centres should take specific note of centre instructions in both Part A and Part B of the paper, as well as the administrative support guide for unit 2 to ensure that they are adhering to the requirements of this assessment. During this series, it was evident that a number of centres had failed to follow the restrictions in place for this paper and it was clear that some learners had been given access to the internet to do additional research, after seeing the unseen practitioner. Where this inappropriate research activity was evident, the information was forwarded to the investigations team to consider this a potential case of malpractice or maladministration.

The unit mark scheme has remained unchanged since the last series and reflects the requirements of the set task. The mark breakdown is:

- AO1: Be able to apply an effective investigation process to inform understanding of creative practitioners. Marks available = 12
- AO2: Demonstrate the ability to visually analyse the work of creative practitioners. Marks available = 20
- AO3: Demonstrate understanding of how contextual factors relate to creative practitioners work. Marks available = 12
- AO4: Communicate independent judgements demonstrating understanding of the work of creative practitioners. Marks available = 16

The total marks available for this paper are 60.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

For June 2022 the theme was 'Cultural Identity'. The response to the paper was very positive with the majority of learners demonstrating a real engagement with the theme including a large number of learners who were able to use their own personal cultural experience to inform their response. Most learners were able to demonstrate a clear understanding of what was meant by the theme and the importance of culture in defining identity.

Part A of the paper provided learners with a diverse range of practitioners. The practitioners included in this assessment were carefully selected to ensure that learners studying on specialist pathways are not disadvantaged and so each paper is designed to feature work from as wide a range of specialisms as are possible. However, it is important to note that there is no requirement for learners to select the practitioner that is most closely related to their own creative practice. Whilst there may be some advantage to learners in having practical knowledge of the materials, techniques and processes used by the practitioners being researched, it is completely plausible for this information to be developed through the learner's own investigation. With regards to the unseen practitioner who is introduced in Part B of the paper, it is clear that this practitioner may only produce work in relation to one area of specialist practice. Therefore, in preparing for this assessment, it is vital that learners are exposed to a wide range of creative practitioners and have the confidence to apply their skills in visual analysis to practitioners across a broad spectrum of disciplines. All practitioners within Part A of the paper have an appropriate international profile to provide learners with ample opportunity to undertake broad research.

There was evidence of learners responding to all of practitioners listed in Part A of the paper. Of the five possible practitioners in this paper Karabo Poppy Moletsane, Naata Nungurrayi and Miyako Ishiuchi were the most popular choices from learners. There was less evidence of learners selecting Isamu Noguchi or Christopher Bailey.

The unseen practitioner El Anatsui appeared to be well received by learners and most learners were able to understand the link to cultural identity in Anatsui's work by reading the text provided.

Set Task

AO1: Be able to apply an effective investigation process to inform understanding of creative practitioners

The underlying principle of this unit is the importance of being able to undertake appropriate research and then be able to apply the research to a given task. Based on the responses to this paper it was clear that the unit content had generally been well taught, and most learners were able to demonstrate appropriate skills in the use of research to provide relevant and well-articulated responses.

Learners should use the 15-hour preparatory period, which includes the 3 hours of monitored preparation, to conduct extensive research into the practitioner selected from the list provided in Part A of the paper. Research can be conducted using a variety of secondary sources including books, journals, video clips and the internet. Although learners should be encouraged to use a variety of different sources, learners are not penalised if their research is predominantly internet based. During the monitored preparation period learners must consolidate their research into summary notes that will support them during the supervised assessment.

Most learners were able to demonstrate they had researched from a range of sources and developed a clear understanding of the work and the context of their chosen practitioner. Centres should continue to ensure that research skills are taught as part of the delivery of this unit and that learners are able to recognise the varying quality of information from different sources.

For responses achieving in the higher mark bands there was evidence that learners had engaged well with the practitioners they had selected to research. This is an extract from a learner's submission that achieved a mark in band 4 for AO1. This is merely an extract example of the standard expected at this level. It must be noted that a holistic approach it taken to marking and there was more evidence found across the whole submission to support the final mark in band 4.

"Naata Nungurrayi, an aboriginal artist from Western Australia, born c. 1932 in the Kumil rockholes into a strongly artistic family. She and her family are from the Pintupi language group and they take pride in their heritage and ancestry, but this was momentarily taken from them as they

were brought against their will into the Papunya settlement for aboriginal people from the central and western deserts in 1962 through fieldwork patrols, commanded by the government of that time. Nungurrayi reminisced her time in the Pintupi country, her heart belonged to it. Until around the 1980's, when the Pintupi people present in Papunya moved West, stablishing their own settlement at Kintore, in the Pintupi country. That is when she joined a group of women called the Haasta Buff collective, and started painting. During that time, she developed her own style and palette of oranges, browns, yellows, purples and whites, and used it to paint sacred women's sites and ceremonies."

This learner's selection of research is purposeful and demonstrates an understanding of how Nungurrayi's experiences growing up have influenced her work. The learner has applied an effective and consistent use of written communication.

Learners who engaged with a limited number of research sources and simply stated 'facts' about the practitioner's life or work fell into lower mark bands. Below is an extract from a learner's submission that achieved a mark in band 1 for AO1. As before, this is merely an extract from the learners' submission. A holistic approach is taken to marking and there was more evidence found across the whole submission to support the final mark given in band 1.

"Karabo poppy moletsane is a south african illustrator, graphic designer and street artist and has won several awards for these. she studied at open window institute in Pretoria and has a degree in visual communication.

Poppy has done work for many brands and companies such as the Wall street journal, Google, Coca-cola and Nike."

This learner's selection of research is superficial and although it provides information on the practitioners past, there is limited evidence of application in relation to the theme of the paper. The learner has demonstrated some knowledge about Moletsane's career, but it is not clear that the information has supported the learners understanding of the practitioners work.

The structure of work submitted in this series predominantly showed an appropriate and logical structure in line with the expectations of level 3 qualifications. There were varied approaches to structuring the response with some learners choosing to use subheadings and page

breaks whilst others wrote their response as continuous prose. Learner's responses varied greatly in length (word count), with some responses spanning up to 9 pages whereas other responses were far shorter. The task does not provide learners with any specific guidance regarding the length of their response, and the only limitation for learners is the timed nature of the assessment. However, it is important to note that longer responses do not necessarily equate to higher achievement and excessive word counts often lead to repetition. Learners should be encouraged to be concise and succinct in their responses and to leave sufficient time to review and, if necessary, edit, their work.

AO2: Demonstrate the ability to visually analyse the work of creative practitioners

This assessment outcome is focussed on the learner's ability to visually analyse the work identified in the paper. This is the highest weighted outcome in this paper and is worth one third of the total marks available. Learners are expected to provide a visual analysis of the selected work by their chosen practitioner as well as the piece of work provided for the unseen practitioner. As learners are provided with images of both pieces of work to refer to during the supervised assessment learners should be encouraged to provide equal emphasis on the visual analysis of both images. However, it is possible that a particularly strong analysis of one piece can compensate for slightly weaker analysis of the other piece. It is important to note that learners' visual analysis must specifically relate to the pieces of work identified in the paper. As in previous papers, a number of learners based their visual analysis on other work produced by their practitioner or made sweeping statements about the style of work produced by the practitioner, making little or no reference to the work identified in the paper. This unfortunately resulted in these learners achieving lower marks for this assessment outcome.

For most learners there was appropriate evidence of visual analysis of the work of their chosen practitioner. For learners achieving higher marks for this assessment outcome, it was clear that their visual analysis had helped to inform understanding, including thoughtful connections being visual elements, subject matter and meaning being explored. This is an extract from a learner's submission that achieved a mark in band 5 for AO2. This is merely an extract of the submission to demonstrate the standard expected at this level. It must be noted that a holistic approach

it taken to marking and there was more in the whole submission that supported the final mark awarded for AO2.

"In the untitled art wall created by Karabo Poppy Moletsane we are exposed to 4 characters, all of which feature drastic, bright colours and exaggerated features that are key aspects within Moletsanes style. The figures are all painted in a lineless style with the exception of curved thin-hair strands that detail the face with wrinkles and bring texture to the hair and clothing. The colours range from bright oranges and reds to dark blues and vivid greens that are all common pigments within traditional african artworks. Moletsane exaggerates areas of the faces, such as the eye bags, eyelids and noses, with saturated pigments to make them stand out from the rest of the face.

Focusing on the background of the pieces, we can bring our attention to the halo-like shapes that frame the figures in front. The artist has been known to paint her portraitures with halos behind their heads in reference to Byzanite artists who would do the same to honour the saints, heroes or sacred figures in their icons. Moletsane has confirmed she does the same to honour those within her culture as the sacred figures of the african aesthetic."

Here is an additional extract from a different learner's submission that achieved a mark in band 5 for AO2. However, this extract focuses on the learner's visual analysis of the unseen practitioner. Again, it must be noted that a holistic approach it taken to marking and there was more in the whole submission that supported the final mark awarded for AO2.

"On another note, El Anatsui's "Ink Splash II" brings with it calmness, contrasting from Nungurrayi's painting. The sculpture depicts an ink splash on what looks like a piece of fabric, but when focusing your attention, you notice that that piece of fabric is really thousands of little aluminium squares, brought together by copper wire and unifying the strenght of both metals. What is supposedly an ink splash reminds me of a body of water, a river or a lake, travelling across the sculpture, seeking its way through in hopes of finding the nearest ocean. The texture and the way the sculpture reflects the light remind me of disco balls present at night clubs, but the shape and scale are more similar to a curtain, blocking the light from the outside and reflecting it back to our Sun. The coolness of the blue and the silver calm me down, working alongside the comfort of Nungurrayi's painting. The almost unnoticeable yellow blends in with the grey; gold and silver, found inside mines or in river banks, alchemically transformed from the aluminium and copper."

Both learners have demonstrated a sophisticated approach to analysing visual elements, demonstrating assured understanding. They have included a variety of pertinent and insightful references and used their research, or the information provided to demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the visual and aesthetic choices made by the practitioner.

Learners achieved lower marks for this assessment outcome when they took a more descriptive approach to visual analysis. By simply listing visual elements in the work the learners were only able to demonstrate limited understanding. Below is an extract from a learner's submission that achieved a mark in band 1 for AO2. As before, this is merely an extract from the learners submission and a holistic approach is taken to marking and there was more in the whole submission that supported the mark awarded for AO2.

"Isamu noguchi is the artist is selected and I'm going to talk about my opinion of his work the Akari 7AD I haven't seen this work before but I can tell you it's unique, it's a jack o lantern that has been made into a TV it doesn't like it works but he made it to look like it does to the best of his ability and there is a black screen fitting the shape of the TV and there is a cable coming from the bottom that probably goes nowhere, it also has a handle like the top of a jack o lantern this is a really cool idea as when you think japan or that area you will think of jack o lanterns and there architecture. The main materials for this is handmade washi paper, bamboo ribbing, metal frame."

This learner has identified some visual elements but has demonstrated limited ability to analyse these visual components and have demonstrated limited understanding.

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of how contextual factors influence creative practitioners work

For this assessment outcome learners must draw on the research undertaken in the preparatory period as well as the text provided in Part B of the paper. During the preparatory investigation it is important that learners research into the wider context in relation to their selected practitioner as well as developing their understanding of the theme and how this impacts on the interpretation of the selected work.

For a high proportion of learners, contextualisation in relation to the theme of this paper showed a clear understanding of the theme and there was evidence of a number of learners drawing from personal experience of how their own cultural identity impacted on their creative endeavours.

This is an extract from a learner's submission, which achieved a mark in band 4 for AO3. This is merely an extract example of the standard expected at this level. It must be noted that a holistic approach it taken to marking and there was more in the whole submission that supported mark awarded for AO3:

"As an elder from her language group, she was one of the few women allowed to paint these Dreamings – Dreamings are an explanation for the creation of Aboriginal land, but contrary to the Western belief that spiritual and physical realms exist separately, they live together, unified, unchanging and at harmony. Her cultural identity is deeply rooted in the land she was born in, the orange tint of the soil, the rituals she performed with the other women, her ancestors who looked at her from above, guiding her through life. That is explicit in her paintings, which depict the Pintupi country, the lines and circles mirroring bodies of water, rocks, paths and all that surrounded the sites that the women would use for their rituals. She took pride in showing her beautiful culture, which was threatened by those in power, who wished to erase it."

This demonstrates the learner's ability to relate wider contextual factors to the themes and ideas being represented in the work being discussed.

However, there were still a number of learners who took a very literal approach to interpreting the theme and contextual factors. These learners had a tendency to rely on extracting detail from a practitioner's biography with little or no analysis. It was unclear if these superficial responses were the result of poor research or a lack of understanding regarding the nature of contextual information and how it informs an understanding of visual work. Below is an extract from a learner's submission that achieved a mark in band 1 for AO3. As before, this is merely an extract from the learners submission and a holistic approach is taken to marking and there was more in the whole submission that supported the mark awarded for AO3.

"In this specific piece of artwork, Karabo has painted large images on a wall using latex paint and has used a very unusual colour pallet. She has

painted four people, what appears to be two male and two females. Her people have bright yellow skin, green around the eyes and different colour necks.

I think perhaps what she is trying to portray in this piece is that it is okay to be different and not look the same as everybody else. Karabo Poppy Moletsane was born very shortly after the Apartheid had ended and so there was probably still a lot of racism going on around this time and as Karabo is a black female she may have experienced racism herself and is using different people with different skin colour to portray that everyone is human and the same despite the colour of their skin."

Although the learner has identified a historic event that could have impacted the practitioners work and would certainly have played a role in informing her identity, the learner has not demonstrated their understanding of this.

AO4: Communicate independent judgements demonstrating understanding of the work of creative practitioners

For this AO learners must communicate independent judgements and demonstrate their understanding of the work of both creative practitioners. For the majority of learners this AO was addressed towards the end of their written submission through a summary of their findings and ideas regarding both practitioners, comparing their respective work. However, it is noted that for the strongest submissions, there is evidence of this justification being woven throughout the submission rather than leaving this simply as a final paragraph. Learners are required to indicate which of the two practitioners they have considered (El Anatsui and the practitioner they selected from art A of the paper) best represented the theme 'Cultural Identity'. This is not something that has a right or wrong answer, but it is important that learners do make a clear decision and justify that decision. There was evidence that most learners were able to reach a conclusion and identify which practitioner they felt best represented the theme, but unfortunately for several learners the justification of their decision was weak or superficial. Often resorting to statement about which piece of work they 'liked' the most. However, for some learners this assessment objective was met through some well-articulated and insightful responses.

This is an extract from a learner's submission that achieved a mark in band 4 for this AO. This is merely an extract example of the standard expected at this level. It must be noted that a holistic approach it taken to marking and there was more in the whole submission that supported mark awarded for AO4:

"Both artists have a beautiful and inspiring way in how they are representing their culture and ethnic identity in their artwork however i think Molesane's untitled mural most relates to the theme of 'Cultural Identity'. Moletsane's peice is a love letter to the African community and her true African heritage representing black identity and portraying authentically the African aesthetic, a pleasing and intriguing peice for people to look upon this composed African inspired fascination. Her use of abstracted colours give such a connected feel to the artwork. Anatsui's peice is subtle and gives meaning but Moletsane's peice to me is so diversed and proud, the allure of the peice is undeniable as anyone with a viewing eye can be instantly attracted to such a interesting peice of work.

It shows how much Moletsane is inspired by her culture and heritage in her work, the details of the clothing, the hair, the eyebrows and the little patterns that sneak their way in there is all in homage to her cultural identity. I love the eyes in this artwork and they definetely show the meaning shes trying to convey, black coloured eyes comforted in an almond shape simply staring at the viewer with no other expression needed, that in itself is powerful."

Summary

- Learners should be encouraged to analyse research sources being used to ensure that they are of appropriate quality, especially when researching using the Internet.
- Ensure research activity covers the full range of work produced by the practitioner as the actual piece included in the paper will not be known until the release of Part B of the paper.
- Visual analysis of the work of both practitioners should include thoughtful analysis and avoid simple descriptions of the work.
- Learners should be encouraged to develop a wider understanding of the impact that social, political, religious, and environmental issues have of the creation of work to support understanding of context.



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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