

How to be successful in AP Art History and manage the workload

AP Art History is a humanities elective taught by Mrs. Jackson that covers the course of art history from prehistoric to the present day. With so much information given in such a short amount of time, it's crucial that you have strategies to stay on top of work in order to be successful.

1. Take notes diligently.
 - a. Yes, it's cliché, but paying attention in class and taking notes is probably the easiest way to gain the information you need to do well on tests and the AP exam. It's much simpler to put energy into notes the first time information is presented to you, rather than having to scramble to fill in the blanks later.
2. Work on style sheets consistently.
 - a. Style sheets are pretty much the only homework in APAH other than studying. Since they're due so infrequently, it can be easy to neglect them. Don't. It's not worth it to have to complete five style sheets the night before a binder check because then you'll be focused on just Getting It Done rather than creating a helpful tool. Work on style sheets progressively as you gain more information on each art movement, and put extra effort into them because they are incredibly useful for studying for tests.
3. Prepare Q-cards ahead of time
 - a. If you prefer to make physical q-cards, writing out the letters for Name, Date, Period/Style, Artist, etc on many note cards before class will make it slightly easier to fill in information about pieces of art in a timely manner in class.
4. Study every day--there is always time to!

- a. The nice thing about having to make a notecard for every piece of art is that it makes it very convenient to study. Even if you're really busy with extracurriculars, work, or other classes, there's always a little bit of time somewhere in your day to pull out your q-cards and memorize art pieces. Studying daily is crucial to having success in this class because seeing the same pieces every day will make it much easier to learn them and prepare for tests.
5. If you have trouble remembering information, make rhymes or associations
 - a. When artists have really weird (or even overly-common) names, it can be hard to remember who created which piece. Making associations or rhymes can help cement those harder pieces into your memory. For example, I will never forget that "Grave Stele of Hegeso" was made by Kallimachos, because the artist's name sounds like that one scene in "Indiana Jones: Temple of Doom" where they're sacrificing some guy and start yelling "Kali ma shakti de!". I know it's really weird and specific, but it works!
6. Do readings outside of class
 - a. It's much easier to understand art history concepts when you already have background knowledge, so reading books on the subject outside of class can be really helpful. One book that pairs well with the APAH curriculum is *The Annotated Mona Lisa* by Carol Strickland.
7. Get an AP Exam review book
 - a. Whether you decide to take the AP Exam or not, a review book is an excellent resource because it can offer extra information for creating style sheets, q-cards,

and when studying for tests. I recommend the Barron's AP Art History book because it has specific information for each piece of art, style, and practice exams.

8. Focus on your weaknesses, content-wise

- a. AP Art History has to do with both art and history, so it's really important to be well-versed in both when moving through the course. When I took APAH, I was a sophomore whose only world history knowledge came from my 7th grade education. Needless to say, I struggled a bit with the historical context behind art movements. If you're not very familiar with world history like I was, pay extra attention to historical context given in lectures or do extra studying outside of class. If you're not familiar with the meaning of artistic terms (such as "composition" and "intuitive perspective") and their effects on art, study those! You'll be much more successful and better at analyzing pieces if you have a strong understanding of the visual aspects of art and the history behind them.