



SAMPLE B

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: ART

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: Street Art: Commercialized Vandalism or
a new era in contemporary art.

Candidate's declaration

If this declaration is not signed by the candidate the extended essay will not be assessed.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: _____

Date: 02/09/09

IB Cardiff use only:

A: 44423 B: _____

Supervisor's report

The supervisor must complete the report below and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator. The supervisor must sign this report; otherwise the extended essay will not be assessed and may be returned to the school.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Comments

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

As a person considering art as an option the question holds significance for me. I feel opinions are heartfelt. She spoke about writing her essay from her experience and personal knowledge as these are current issues.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent 1 1/2 hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: _____

Date: 2/8/09

Street Art: Commercialized vandalism or the beginning of a new era in contemporary art?

May 2009

IBH Visual Art

Word Count: 3,652 ✓

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate Organization.) I certify that this work is not my mini-extended essay or other work reformulated as my extended essay.

Signature: _____



Abstracts are summaries
of completed research and
should therefore, be written in
the present or past tense
— never in the future tense.

1

Abstract:

The following essay is an in-depth analysis on contemporary street art and its influences in society. Street art is considered to be a widely controversial topic and has been argued to be an illegitimate form of art. I ~~will~~ present my own argument as to whether or not street art is simply vandalism, which has been largely commercialized in recent years, or if it is in fact a legitimate movement in contemporary art. A large focus is placed on Jean-Michael Basquiat, who is considered to be one of the first critically acclaimed street artists. As Basquiat was one of the initiators of the cross over from the street to the galleries, there ~~will~~ be a comparison to his life to those who took/are taking a similar direction. There is also mention to the political influences in street art, and how that has led it to receiving more attention from the media. Some artists have used the attention to their advantage, and have taken used their art in a more commercialized direction. Should the artist's motives be what determine its value? Should it be based on aesthetic alone? Or should it all be condemned based on its illegality?

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Bibliography ???



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③
This is actually page 1

Title

~~Essay should be double, not single spaced.~~

Introduction

It is difficult to find a modern city with perfectly clean, untouched buildings around every street corner. Street art, more commonly referred to as 'graffiti', has been known to exist since ancient Rome. The earliest forms of graffiti range from simple engravings into stone walls, to elaborate painted murals. Renaissance artists such as Michael Angelo and Raphael were known to have left markings in the ruins of the Domus Aurea, which was built underneath the architectural structures of Rome. This was an area that was considered somewhat hidden from the public eye, where the style known as 'grottesche' (aka grotesque) emerged. This included images of fantastical sort, such as gargoyles and other strange animal creatures. The style became highly influential in architecture and fashion during the Renaissance. In a modern context, the graffiti found in subways seem to reflect the same actions that took place hundreds of years ago by classically renowned artists. What seems 'grotesque' to many people, and is even considered a crime to society, has now taken the contemporary art world by storm. Now that street art has made its way into mainstream galleries, the artists who came from humble beginnings with a spray can are receiving worldwide attention. The expansion of commercialized street art is bringing in a larger, younger audience and is beginning to change the face of fine art as we've come to know it.

What is the source of this information?

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Although some of it may seem unsightly, among the scribble there exists works of art are a representation the voice of people. The uncensored images on the street are the epitome of the desire for freedom of expression. Graffiti has been an outlet for people both creatively and politically. During World War II, American soldiers left markings with the words "Kilroy was here" accompanied with an illustration that was reminiscent of popular culture at the time. In the 60's and 70's anti-establishment graffiti was common, especially within the punk rock community. Anarchist bands such as Black Flag and Crass, along with their fans would stencil their logos as a means of expanding their recognition. However, the modern style of graffiti is mostly associated with the rise of the Hip-Hop era. The majority of the people involved with this movement were African-Americans living in New York. Having come out of a long struggle of obtaining equal rights, the movement further advocated struggle for freedom of expression through street art. New York was, and still is, well known for being a place that cherishes its artistic freedoms. The generic lettering style of modern graffiti originated in the 1960's, in

Source?

impoverished urban communities, by local artists and political activists who supported racial equality. The style commonly consisted of large, colorful, interwoven fonts of signatures or 'tags'. The more widespread and plentiful a specific tag was, the more well known the artist would become. One of the first graffiti artists to gain media attention through this method was known as TAKI 183. Working as a foot messenger he was able to leave his tag on subway cars, or wherever else he felt so inclined to leave his mark. The New York Times wrote an article on him in 1971 called "TAKI 183' Spawns Pen Pals". Soon after hundreds of similar graffiti artists began to compete in the race to cover the most ground. Tags began to be more elaborate and larger to attract more attention. Street gangs began to adopt the method, which added to the negativity already surrounding the art because of vandalism complaints. The line between the competition and art for the sake of art began to blur. By the mid-80's Hip-Hop and graffiti had officially made its way into the mainstream.

Sources?

*Research question has not been stated.
Little attempt has been made to set the research question into context.*

Jean-Michel Basquiat

However, one particular artist with the tag SAMO broadened the horizon of street art beyond its roots in Hip-Hop, and officially made a stance in the art world. Jean-Michel Basquiat started off his art career by creating the tag SAMO ("Same Old Shit"), consequently becoming a major part of the graffiti movement in NY, and around the world. He was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Being of both Haitian and Puerto Rican decent, Basquiat was fluent in Spanish, French, and English. His linguistic ability allowed him to indulge in music and poetry from around the world. This was hugely influential in his art as he combined visual art with writing. Being brought up in New York City also gave him the opportunity to spend a lot of time at museums, and began to grow a great appreciation for fine art. From a young age, Basquiat began to draw what seemed like an endless amount of sketches. His creations as a child may have only seemed simplistic in terms of meaning compared to his later pieces, as they were commonly interpreted as 'child-like'. However, this would definitely add to his success, as his imagination never seemed to have dulled with age. As a teenager, he attended the "City as a School" high school and became friends with Al Diaz, who introduced him to the graffiti scene.

FROM WHERE DOES ALL THIS INFORMATION COME?

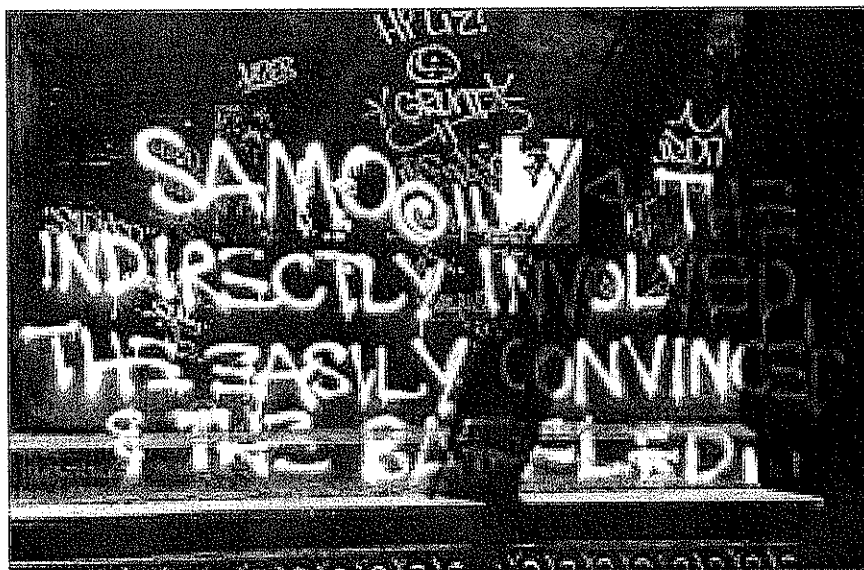
Basquiat began to develop his SAMO tag and created a specific type of lettering that would begin to become clearly identifiable as his. He would use black spray paint to create capitalized letters that would spell out fragments of his own poetic creations. His trademark was the way he drew his E's with three horizontal

Sources of information have not been listed/acknowledged throughout the essay.

John

lines. He then began to put copyright symbols next to his SAMO tag.¹ His intention to add irony to his markings is what may have ignited his popularity. His graffiti had more depth to it than what people had grown accustomed to. The way the words would pop out at a pedestrian made them take a moment to read. Sayings such as "SAMO as an end to mindwash religion, nowhere politics and bogus philosophy" and "SAMO as an alternative 2 playing art with the 'radical chic' sect on Daddy's \$ funds". It seems as though Basquiat portrayed his cynical thoughts on the street for anyone to read and interpret in their own way. The copyright symbol in itself was a way of demonstrating how the art world was becoming more and more commercialized as time progressed.

Basquiat gained recognition from the New York art community when he teamed up with Andy Warhol. This created a bridge between being simply a graffiti writer into a world where his art would be compared to some of the greatest artists of the pop art era. Although his fame reached a massive scale, and his art became much more developed, he never lost sight of symbols and motifs from his original work on the street. One of his most commonly used symbols was a crown. A crown is usually interpreted as a symbol of royalty or nobility. Crowns tend to be elaborate ornaments, which are usually encrusted in precious stones. Basquiat's version of a crown, which would also become one of his most recognized trademarks, was extremely simple. It consisted of angular lines, which formed three pointed shapes going upward. The simplicity of it allowed him to use it freely and sporadically. However, the crown was used as homage to the personas he painted. Many of these people included his friends and other influential artists.



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Source?

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Here is an example of a typical painting Basquiat produced in his state of growing fame.² A variety of themes are depicted in what seems to be a mess of incoherent words and sketches. The piece is sectioned off into three elongated pieces. Although it may not seem so at a first glance, cohesion does exist within both the words he had written as well as his choice of color. The contrast between the off white and blue creates a basis for the accents of warmer colors such as brown and orange. The use of paint sticks allowed him to easily produce solid lines. The lines are reminiscent of the effects of a crayon or a marker, which are typical for children to use. This adds an element of innocence to his work, but underneath lays the interpretations of his depictions. For example on the bottom left the words "Most young kings get their head cut off". The word young is emphasized by being circled and crossed out. This was probably intentional being as the 'kings' he's referring to are the artists he admired, many of which died at a young age. Ironically, this would happen to Basquiat himself. The clearest notation on this piece is the name "Thor" with the crown above it, as it is boxed off and free of any eccentricities. On the opposite side the word "Cherokee" is also boxed off, but involves more detail and blue accents. Whether or not there is an explicit relation between these two items is not of much relevance. It's more important to understand that there is a consistency of a certain style and technique that creates the fluidity of the piece itself.



2

Acrylic and oil paint stick on canvas.

Charles the First Charles the First 1982.

Save?



Signature

The recreation of Leonardo Da Vinci's most recognized work, the Mona Lisa, is one of many.³ However, Basquiat's style is clearly represented through his interpretation. His use of color many consists of yellow and black, with accents of bolder or softer colors. The use of 'etched' lines, as opposed to the flawless paint strokes of the original, emphasizes both his style and the satirical element of this piece. The composition of the face is another element in this sense because it is so grotesquely composed. The 'Mona Lisa Smile' has been exaggerated to such an extent that Basquiat practically created a beard in order to further emphasize the contrast between the white teeth and pale skin. Circled above her head the words "Federal Reserve Note" indicate that he wanted to make his interpretation as though it were a form of currency, which may very well be the most striking element of this piece. Underneath those circled word the quote "This note is legal tender for all debts public + private", followed by another one of his commonly used symbols, the copyright. The quote could be interpreted in a variety of different ways. However, it is clear that Basquiat was making a gesture that art was beginning to be seen simply as a means of making profit. Perhaps even being used as a pawn in the capitalist lifestyle. The piece in its entirety is Basquiat's interpretation of what 'art's currency' would look like.

The idea was not to create something beautiful, rather, his work focused around shocking images that were meant to ignite ideas in the viewer. He created a style that brought an audience that were interested in the visual aesthetic, but even more so in the controversial ideas he was representing. The way in which he removed himself from the norm into a more daring form of expression both brought attention to his work, as well as influencing many artists to come. The way in which Basquiat became such an exceptional artist heavily lies in the way pursued exposure; though street art. Through each mark he left on a wall, he knowingly exerted a part of himself to the public. Regardless of how temporary, or insignificant that mark may have been, it was still a form of expression. The freedom, regardless of its illegality, to give a piece of his own thoughts and creativity to the public eye provided him with a spontaneous mindset that would become the epitome of his



3

Mona Lisa 1983. Mixed media.

source ?

'fine art'. The main difference between what was being presented on the street and what was displayed in a gallery was a price tag.

Mass Communication, Political Agendas, and Commercialized Art

Since its initiation in the 80's, street art has progressed into a largely recognized form of visual expression. Although media attention has been primarily focused on 'gang graffiti', a more positive outlook on the art has arisen in recent years. Galleries all over the world exhibit street artist's work, some of which are dedicated exclusively to the genre. Many artists have followed in Basquiat's footsteps; or rather have taken the same means of gaining recognition. The quality of a street artist's work will be judged by the public opinion, and will therefore determine whether or not it deserves recognition. One of the intents of street art is to be critiqued by the masses, and not just to those in the profession. The way mass communication has evolved has also played a huge part in the rising success of street art. The Internet has become a vital tool for contemporary artists to receive exposure on their own basis, without a middleman. However, this does not mean the middleman will find himself out of the picture. In the case of street art, works that are found to be most striking and/or controversial will be more likely to be posted on the Internet for public critique. The growing network of street art online magazines and blogs has created new means of establishing new artists on the scene.

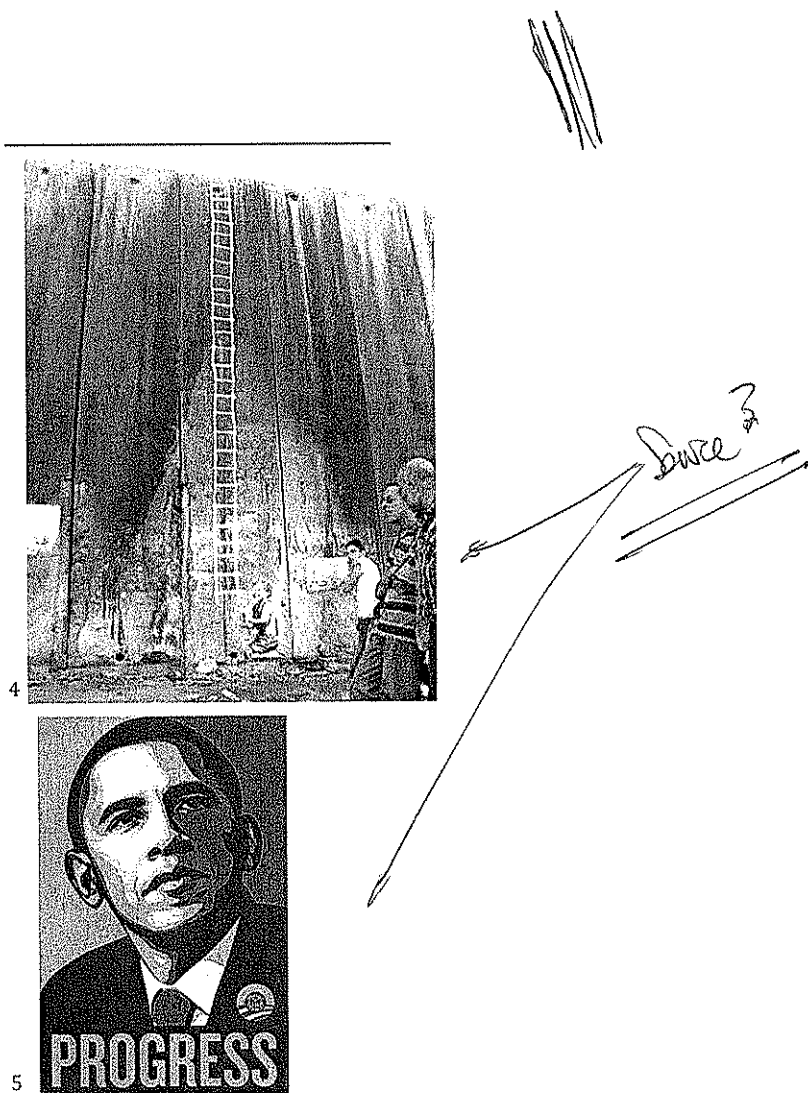
An artist who goes by the alias 'Banksy' has become one of the most well known street artists today. His success had largely to do with the amount of attention his images were receiving, as many of them are of a controversial nature. As a London based street artist, the metropolitan setting was ideal for his motives. The streets of London served as a platform for his work. Pedestrians who have admired his work are known to take snapshots and post it up on the web, and consequentially creating a way for his work to become more circulated (this method also applies to the success of various other street artists). With the combination of an effort to put up as much work as possible on the street, clear striking images, and an overwhelming response from the public, Banksy has become a legend. Just as Basquiat had specific symbols and certain style, which made his graffiti identifiable, Banksy uses images and techniques that are also pertinent to an identifiable style of his own devise. His technique consists of using stencils, which is one of the most common techniques in street art. Through this technique, he can create very detailed images in a matter of seconds. Time is an essential aspect of street art. The longer the artist spends performing the act of 'vandalism', the more risk they put themselves in to getting caught.

Banksy has received worldwide attention for the graffiti he put up on the West Bank Barrier, the wall that divides Israel and Pakistan. The images suggest themes of escapism, both in a literal and metaphoric sense. In one piece, he depicts a



boy painting a ladder leading over the wall.⁴ This is very typical of his style, in that he used stencil work to create the detail of the boy's features, with the combination of more simplistic, bolder lines for the ladder. The mischievous child painting on the wall is clearly a reference to himself, or perhaps to the act of graffiti in general. The place and time of this piece is what truly makes it a striking image. The inspiration that came from both having a huge wall as a blank canvas, as well as the political controversy around it, created something that would have not happened otherwise. He described the wall as "the ultimate holiday destination for graffiti writers", however did not fail to mention his opposition to separation of the two nations.

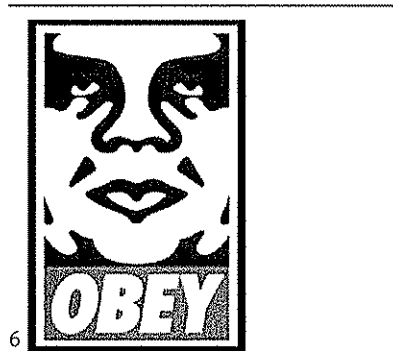
Another street artist who has become hugely popular through political affairs is Sheppard Fairey, creator of the Obey Propaganda campaign. One of Fairey's most acknowledged pieces is his iconic portrait of Barack Obama.⁵ The image was used as a symbol for Obama's presidential campaign, as well as a symbol of hope for his supporters. The direction of his work was based off a stencil he created when he first became a street artist. The stencil is an image of "Andre the Giant", a face



[Handwritten signature]

created with emphasis on shadow, yet simplistic enough to be recreated easily.⁶ The sinister quality of this image combined with the word 'Obey' was bound to bring out a reaction, and a desire for more information perhaps. His style resembles that of Banksy in terms of technique, but Fairy utilizes the use symmetry and patterns far more. The face has become an iconic display of how contemporary graffiti has grown into a global phenomenon. The aura of mystery behind the face intrigued people, and thus fulfilled Fairy's original intent. He believes that art should be something people should be involved in, and street art creates a bridge between the artist and the public in its 'purest' form. The image was replicated countless times, and can be found in cities all over the world.

Fairy, however did take advantage of his popularity to create a line of merchandise based on his art. Many of his t-shirts are clearly promoting street art with depictions of spray cans and wheat pasting (another technique that is commonly used in street art). The line becomes blurred as to whether the merchandise is breaking new ground for street artists, or if goes against the basic principles of street art (free art for all). Will the success of artists who are moving towards this direction influence other artists to do the same? The tangle between business and art is an issue that, of course, is not limited only to street art, but impacts all artists in the modern age. As globalization becomes more and more of a pressing issue, the threat to culture and art follows. For example, take the product

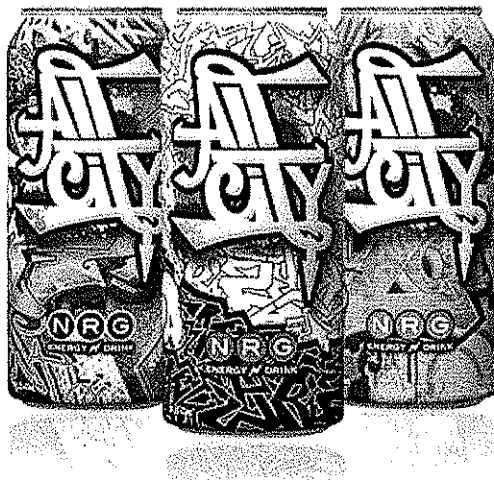


"All City".⁷ The design is clearly based on graffiti art, and exploits it as a means of targeting a younger generation. It is possible to say that society has become more accustomed to this style of art, regardless of its notorious roots, because its becoming more integrated into our daily lives (through advertisement for example). This integration may allow street art to become more accepted and respected. On the other hand, street art may lose its credibility in the art world, and may become what many predict, just a fad.

Conclusion

Street art remains an illegal form of expression and is viewed by many as a form of vandalism and nothing more. It can be obscene, vulgar and can even be considered detrimental to society. However it cannot be denied that it has begun to receive worldwide attention, as well as praise. It seems as though the categorization of good art and what is bad art will forever be subjective. The fact of the matter is that street art is coming on strong in the contemporary art world, regardless of how the majority of people feel about it. Street artists are following in the footsteps of artists who were commended for breaking the rules and creating new, exciting frontiers for the art world. The rebellion that exists within the street artist's mentality is vital to the expansion of new ideas. If everyone always followed the rules of society, how would change ever come to be? If the art were ever to become fully legitimized in society's eyes, the shift in what we've accustomed ourselves to seeing everyday would be immense. The likely hood of dedicated, talented artists who would be willing to create for the good of the city would be greater than that of vandals who would want to destroy it, simply because the element of rebellion would be removed.

For now, the transition of artists from the street to galleries has reached a constant. Contemporary art is beginning to be shaped by street art in such a way



that has never happened before. As Basquiat made a name for him through street art, and is considered to be one of the most influential artists of his time, many more are following in the same direction. Although the exploitation of some artists through commercialization has begun to occur, hopefully the effect of integration will have more of an impact than the exploitation itself. It is important for artists to have the right ethics in terms of how far they're willing to sell themselves in order to make a living.

In conclusion, street art has absolutely begun to shape itself into a new movement in contemporary art, and shows no sign of slowing down. The freedoms expressed through street art have given artists a fountain of inspiration. Forms of mass communication such as the Internet have given street artists the opportunity to further advocate their artwork. The basic principle of street art is that art should have no boundaries, not limits, and no framework, that it should be available to the masses and never confined. Although the ideal has not yet been met, it should be up to the people to decipher when that time will come.


Where is the bibliography?
 (Criterion I is there)

The candidate has signed a Declaration on the front cover of this essay which states, in part, "I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual".
 In fact, no acknowledgement has been given ~ no bibliography has been included, either. These serious deficiencies affect several criteria, not the least being I, K, C, D, E & F.



20.3.09

The candidate's supervisor provided a brief comment on her performance. Needs to show awareness of an academic context. Candidate may have spoken about writing her essay "from personal knowledge," but this knowledge has to come from somewhere & must be acknowledged



Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number	0	0	
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Assessment criteria		Achievement level		
		First examiner	maximum	Second examiner
A	research question	0	2	1
B	introduction	0	2	0
C	investigation	1	4	0
D	knowledge and understanding	1	4	1
E	reasoned argument	2	4	2
F	analysis and evaluation	2	4	2
G	use of subject language	1	4	1
H	conclusion	1	2	1
I	formal presentation	0	4	0
J	abstract	1	2	1
K	holistic judgment	1	4	1
Total out of 36		10		10

Name of first examiner: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

Name of second examiner: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____