Marking rationale – Example 3

Theme: Start of the day	Mark awarded = 35 out of 100
AO1: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses	**Satisfactory** skill in recording observations from several relevant sources, showing **some** intentions

- **Research** includes a range of sources, relevant to the topic. For example, the candidate has researched their starting point by photographing the sunrise, activities in the street, breakfast ingredients, an unmade bed and a bird in the tree. They have also made painting and drawing studies of some of this subject matter. Research combines observation from both primary and secondary sources.
- References from the **works of others** encourages idea development. The candidate draws upon some understanding of Surrealism, as they explore a playful scenario of the robin having breakfast in bed with egg toast, through collage. The candidate also references Monet's colour palette, attempting to create a calm, peaceful early morning mood and shadow, through their use of colour.
- **The gathering of visual evidence** is connected to the chosen theme and shows paintings and drawings copied from the candidate's own photographs, rather than directly from the source in front of them. This is apparent in the sunrise painting and in the street scene work. Other paintings of breakfasts, and a drawing of breakfast crockery, appear to have been studied directly from the subject.
- The response shows some working from direct **observation** and the recording explores the visual elements of colour, light, depth and composition. This is demonstrated in the subtle mixing and application of colour which creates depth and light in the street scene, and in the composition of the breakfast ingredients observed from above. Photographs show thought given to composition and tone.
- Different **methods** of recording are evidenced through the candidate's photography, paintings and a drawing. The chosen methods are appropriate for the subject matter, but the investigation of sources is not thorough.

Mark awarded = 10 out of 25 marks

AO2: Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes	**Satisfactory** exploration of media, materials, techniques and processes, showing **some** selection of relevant resources

- A range of relevant materials and processes have been **selected** and explored, with thought given to the candidate's choice of subject matter and ideas. For example, they explore the different effects created through paint from brushstrokes and other methods of application, to create texture and surfaces. The manipulated materials reflect the qualities in the subject matter. Some have been applied with sensitivity; others are less

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

refined. This is evident in the thoughtful representation of the trees and sky in the street scene, contrasting the clumsier marks in the sunrise painting.

- **Exploration** and a sense of enquiry have been demonstrated in the response. For example, the candidate explores different coloured backgrounds to create alternative effects when combined with painted colour and brushstrokes. This contrasts the effects of colour on a white background. Collage from the candidate's photographs or painted paper have been included, exploring the breakfast shapes, as well as the concept of the bird in the bed.
- **Different processes** have been experimented with to try out new ideas, but the candidate's ability to refine their skills has not been sufficiently developed to communicate ideas effectively. This is particularly evident in the arrangement of forms seen in the collages, and in the way the candidate combines the collage of photographs over the painted surface.
- The refinement of **technical skill** is not always consistent, but the candidate does show some understanding of the visual elements. This can be seen in the satisfactory use of paint and colour mixing in the explorations of the work of Monet. The candidate is able to mix and place the colours through brushstrokes while applying the paint. This enables them to build depth of colour and tone to create a sense of light. There is also evidence of thoughtful colour mixing in other areas of the work.
- In parts, connections between the **research** and exploration are clear. Some of the earlier experiments with colour are less clear and are not developed further, but the final planning connects with the final outcome, informed by colour observation of the contextual source.

Mark awarded = 9 out of 25 marks

AO3: Develop ideas through investigation, demonstrating critical understanding	**Satisfactory** development of ideas through investigation, demonstrating **some** understanding

- There is some attempt to show **purposeful** development in the work, evident in the candidate's surreal concept of a bird breakfasting on human food, in a human bed. This can be seen in the line sketch of the robin in bed with the breakfast tray, and in collages of the same idea. There is a reference to a painting by Monet which supports the idea of the calm, quiet light at the beginning of the day. The colours in Monet's work have been considered and used to inform this idea.
- The language and vocabulary are relevant and informative, supporting the visual information.
- **Idea** exploration is individual and the recording forms the basis for development. The sunrise and street studies, and photographs, influence ideas for exploring the calm and peaceful early morning light as nature awakens. However, aside from the candidate exploring shape and colour in earlier pieces of work, only one purposeful concept has been explored. Ideas are suggested for trying out scale, as can be seen in the coffee beans. Monet's painting influences the colour palette to be used, seen in the colour squares prior to the development. Few alternative compositions are apparent and only one idea is evident. This shows that critical understanding had not yet been fully developed.
- The **supporting studies** illustrate only two alternative composition arrangements, prior to the final image. For example, the two compositions combine images from the research; such as the robin, breakfast ingredients, street composition, and colour from the contextual reference. While this connects clearly to the final outcome, development of ideas has not been carried out in depth to show other possibilities.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Theme: Start of the day	Mark awarded = 35 out of 100
• There is some evidence of **reflection** and planning to explore alternative images, but this has not been fully explored to move the idea forward. The candidate suggests an idea that they wished to create, and they have explored that one idea only. The final outcome evolves from this composition development and was translated fully into paint, which shows more image coherency. **Mark awarded = 8 out of 25 marks**	
AO4: Present a personal and coherent response that realises intentions and demonstrates an understanding of visual language	**Satisfactory** realisation of intentions, demonstrating **some** understanding of visual language
• The **final outcome** demonstrates a connection to the supporting studies, informed by the initial work, but is not resolved or progressed in any depth from research or development. This is due to the focus on only one idea that began in the early stages of the work, without considering other idea possibilities or composition alternatives. • The **creative journey** is apparent, informed by the initial research and contextual reference. This is evident in the way the arrangement of forms in the compositions connect to the research and lead to an informed outcome. While the candidate's intentions have been realised, they are not fully resolved and do not move far from the initial idea. • There has been an attempt to refine ideas as the work evolved, and the candidate demonstrates some understanding of the **visual elements**. For example, the candidate uses a subtle colour palette to express the calm of the early morning light in the street study. Tone has been used to convey shadow and depth in the background of the developed composition. The candidate's use of light through colour (informed by Monet) is evident in the development and final outcome. However, inconsistencies are apparent in the candidate's ability to express space, scale and perspective within a composition, in the development and final outcome. • The candidate **communicates** their intentions to a satisfactory level, but ideas are inhibited by the candidate's focus on just one possibility. This has prevented them from making effective critical decisions. • Evidence of **analysis, reflection and evaluation** is present but lacks depth of development. **Mark awarded = 8 out of 25 marks**	

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026