

An abstract painting on a textured canvas. The background is a vibrant blue with vertical and horizontal brushstrokes in various shades of blue and green. A horizontal yellow-green stroke is visible near the top, with a paintbrush resting on it. The paintbrush has a wooden handle and a metal ferrule. The overall composition is dynamic and artistic.

Visual Arts

A student's hand is shown drawing on a blue surface with a green marker. The drawing consists of several parallel lines and a large, stylized letter 'M'. In the foreground, there are two pencils, one red and one yellow. In the background, there is a white sheet of paper with some faint drawings and a few other markers.

Visual Arts

The 2008 arts assessment included four sections in visual arts that measured students' ability to respond to and create visual art. Students were given two of the four sections, each of which contained between 7 and 11 multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. Many of the visual arts questions in the assessment contained multiple parts. The amount of time provided for students to complete two visual arts sections ranged from 75 minutes to 104 minutes.

Responding questions asked students to analyze and describe works of art and design, thereby demonstrating their knowledge of media and techniques, visual organization, the cultural contexts of artworks, how works of art convey meaning, and the relationship between form and function in design. Creating questions assessed students' ability to communicate in works of art, think of different solutions to visual problems, and generate ideas for and then create works of art and design. These creating questions represented approximately one-half of the total assessment time in visual arts. Some examples of the different types of visual arts questions are presented later in this section.

Eighty-nine-point score gap between lowest- and highest-performing students in visual arts

The overall average responding score for visual arts was set at 150 in 2008 (figure 7). In addition to the overall average responding score, results are shown for students at selected percentiles on the responding scale. There was an 89-point gap between the scores for students at the 10th and 90th percentiles.

The assessment also included questions that asked students to create works of art and design. Results for these questions are presented as the average creating task score, which is expressed as the average percentage of the maximum possible score ranging from 0 to 100 (see the Technical Notes for an explanation of how the score was calculated). In 2008, the overall average creating task score for grade 8 students was 52 (figure 8).

Responding and creating results related

Because the NAEP arts framework describes the integration among the arts processes, it is useful to explore the relationship between students' results on the responding and creating questions in visual arts. On average, students who performed well on the responding questions also performed well on the creating questions (figure 9). For example, students performing above the 75th percentile on the responding scale also had the highest average creating task score (62). Lower-performing students at or below the 25th percentile on the responding scale had the lowest average creating task score (40).



Figure 7. Average responding scale score and percentile scores in NAEP visual arts at grade 8: 2008

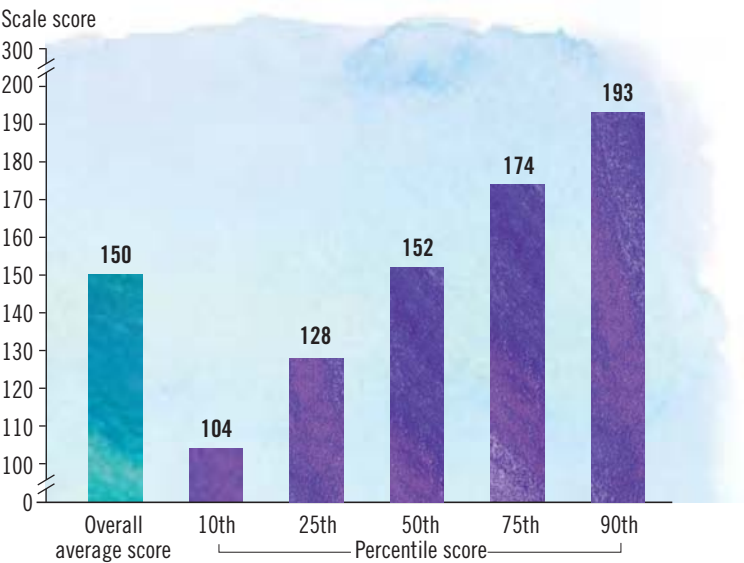


Figure 8. Average creating task score in NAEP visual arts at grade 8: 2008

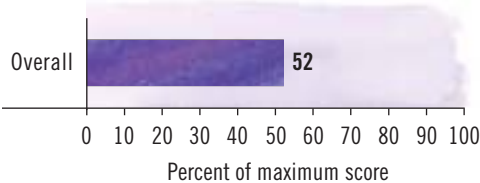
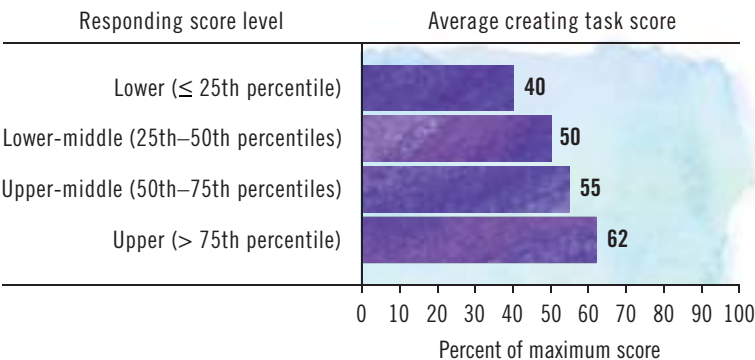


Figure 9. Average creating task score in NAEP visual arts at grade 8, by responding score level: 2008



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2008 Arts Assessment.

Patterns in score gaps by student characteristics similar for responding to and creating visual arts

In general, patterns in score differences based on student characteristics were similar for results in both responding (figure 10) and creating (figure 11).

Race/Ethnicity

In 2008, average responding scores in visual arts were 22 to 31 points higher for White and Asian/Pacific Islander students than for Black and Hispanic students. There were no significant differences between the average responding scores of White and Asian/Pacific Islander students or between the scores of Black and Hispanic students.

Similarly, the average creating task scores of White and Asian/Pacific Islander students were higher than the scores of Black and Hispanic students, but there were no significant differences between the scores of White and Asian/Pacific Islander students or between the scores of Black and Hispanic students.

Gender

On average, female eighth-graders had a higher responding score in visual arts than their male counterparts. There was an 11-point³ gap between the two groups in 2008. The average creating task score for female students was also 5 points higher than the score for male students.

Eligibility for Free/Reduced-Price School Lunch

On average, eighth-graders who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch had a lower responding score in visual arts than those who were not eligible. There was a 29-point gap between the two groups in 2008. Students who were eligible also had an average creating task score that was 9 points lower than the score for students who were not eligible.

³ The score-point gap is based on the difference between the unrounded scores as opposed to the rounded scores shown in the figure.

Figure 10. Average responding scale score in NAEP visual arts at grade 8, by selected student characteristics: 2008

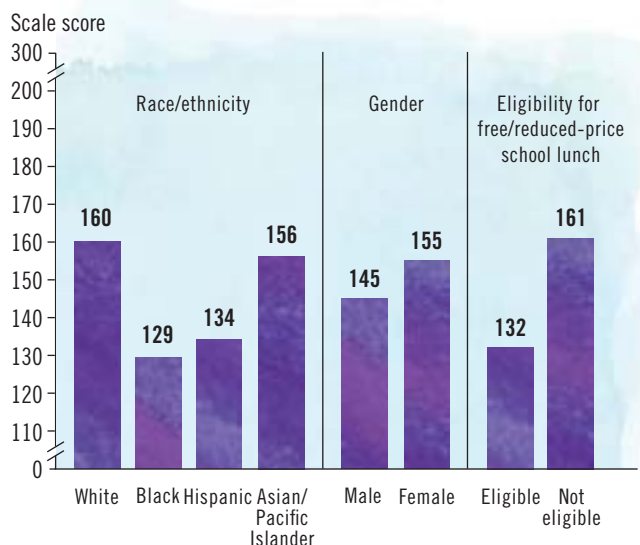
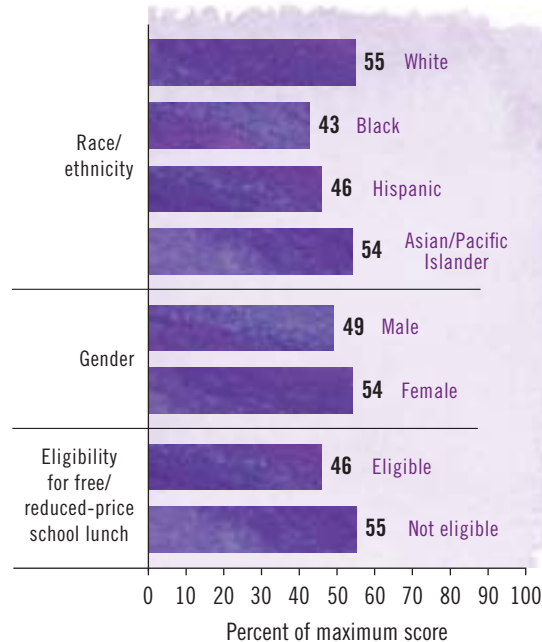


Figure 11. Average creating task score in NAEP visual arts at grade 8, by selected student characteristics: 2008



NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Sample sizes were insufficient to permit reliable estimates for students whose race/ethnicity was American Indian/Alaska Native or unclassified. For the eligibility for free/reduced-price school lunch category, results are not shown for students whose eligibility status was not available. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2008 Arts Assessment.

No significant difference in responding scores between public and private school students

While the general patterns in results for responding to and creating visual arts by selected school characteristics were similar (figures 12 and 13),

not all the apparent differences were found to be statistically significant.

Type of School

The apparent difference in 2008 between the average responding scores in visual arts for eighth-graders in public and private schools was not found to be statistically significant. However, the average creating task score was lower for public school students than for private school students.

School Location

Students attending suburban schools in 2008 had a higher average responding score in visual arts than students in city schools. There were no significant differences in the average responding scores between students from suburban schools and town or rural schools.

In the creating process of visual arts, students attending suburban schools had a higher average creating task score than students in both city and town schools. The average creating task score of students in suburban schools was not significantly different from the score of students in rural schools.

Because responding results are presented as scale scores and creating results are presented as average percentages, it is not possible to compare the magnitude of differences between these scores. For example, an 11-point difference on the 0–300 responding scale between students attending schools in city and suburban locations is not necessarily greater than a 5-point difference between the same two groups on the 0–100 creating task scale.

Figure 12. Average responding scale score in NAEP visual arts at grade 8, by selected school characteristics: 2008

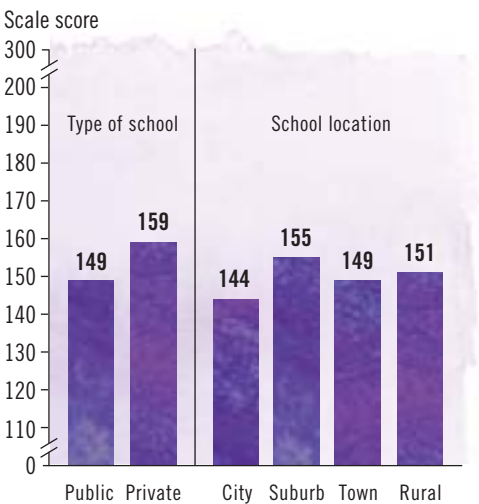
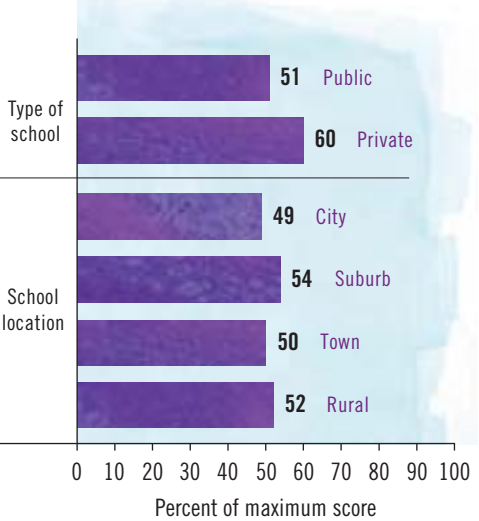


Figure 13. Average creating task score in NAEP visual arts at grade 8, by selected school characteristics: 2008



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2008 Arts Assessment.

Context for Arts Education in Visual Arts

To provide the context in which arts learning takes place, results are presented here based on school administrators' responses related to the availability

and nature of visual arts education in their schools and students' responses about their participation in visual arts activities.

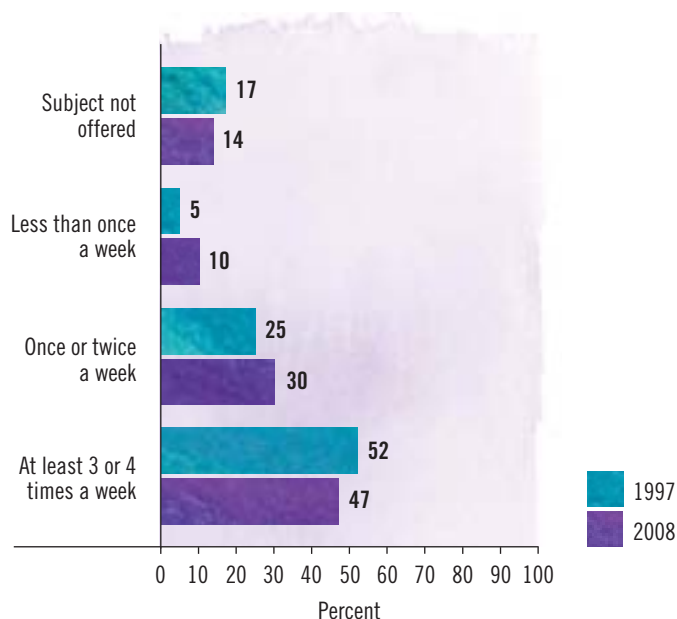
Frequency of visual arts instruction remains steady

School administrators were asked how often eighth-graders attending their schools might receive instruction in visual arts. Forty-seven percent of eighth-graders attended schools where students could possibly receive visual arts instruction at least three or four times a week in 2008 (figure 14). This was higher than the percentages of students attending schools where visual arts were offered less frequently or not at all.

Although the data are not shown here, access to visual arts instruction did not differ significantly by race/ethnicity, gender, or eligibility for free/reduced-price school lunch. For example, the percentage of students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch attending schools where visual arts were offered once or twice a week was not significantly different from the percentage of students who were not eligible.

The same question was asked of school administrators in 1997, making it possible to look for changes in the instruction patterns over time. The results showed no significant changes between 1997 and 2008 in the percentages of students who attended schools where visual arts were available at least three or four times a week, once or twice a week, less than once a week, or not at all.

Figure 14. Percentage of students at grade 8, by school-reported frequency with which instruction in visual arts is available: 1997 and 2008



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 and 2008 Arts Assessments.

77 percent of eighth-graders attended schools where administrators reported that visual arts were taught by a full-time specialist.

69 percent of students attended schools that followed a state or district curriculum in visual arts.

More students writing about their artwork

Students responded to a series of questions about how often they did certain activities in visual arts class. For each activity listed in figure 15, students indicated if their teacher had them do it every day, once a week, once a month, or never or hardly ever. The results summarized here show the combined percentages for students who reported that they did various art-related activities at least once a month.

The percentage of students who reported that their teacher had them write about their artwork increased from 21 percent in 1997 to 27 percent in 2008. However, the percentage of students whose teacher had them choose their own art project decreased from 47 percent in 1997 to 39 percent in 2008. There were no significant changes between 1997 and 2008 in the percentages of students who reported that their teachers had them paint or draw; make things out of clay or other materials; work in a pair or group on an art project; talk with others about their own or others' artwork; or look at videotapes, filmstrips, slides, or television programs about art.

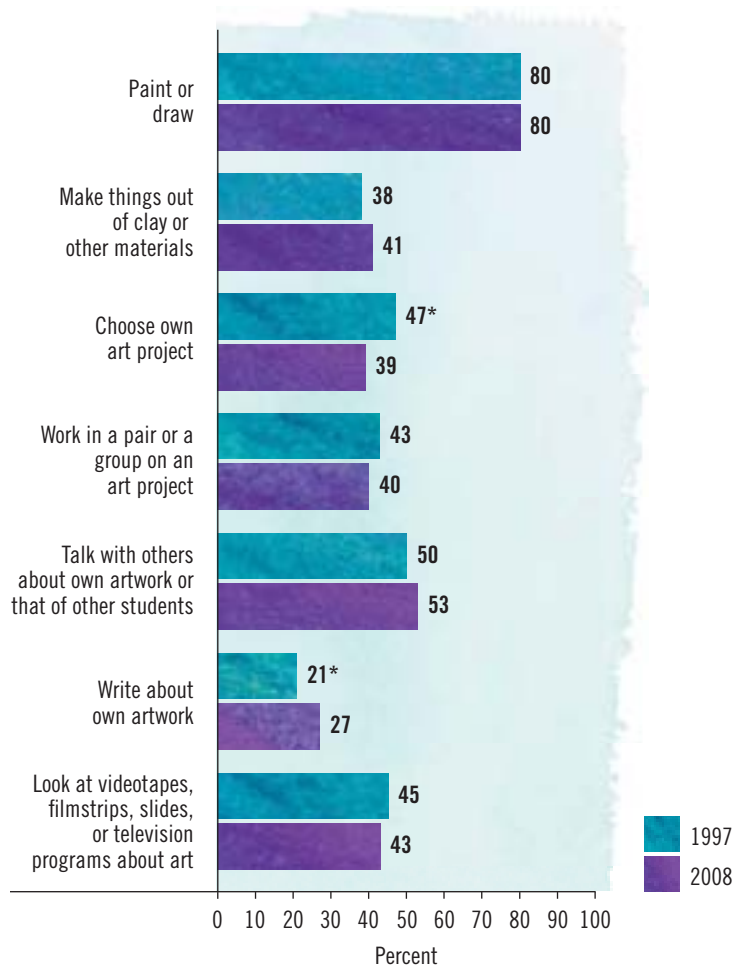
Fewer students visit art museums with class in 2008

Exposure to art museums and exhibits outside of school may help students learn about and engage in visual arts. Sixteen percent of students in 2008 reported that they had gone with their class to an art museum, gallery, or exhibit at least once in the last year, which was smaller than the 22 percent in 1997 (figure 16).

About half of students save artwork in a portfolio

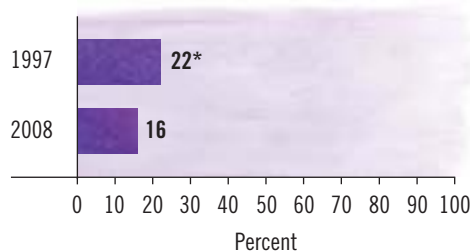
Although not presented here graphically, 54 percent of eighth-graders reported that they or their teacher saved their artwork in a portfolio in 2008, which was not significantly different from the 50 percent in 1997.

Figure 15. Percentage of students at grade 8, by student-reported in-school activities their teachers have them do in art at least once a month: 1997 and 2008



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2008.

Figure 16. Percentage of students at grade 8 who reported visiting an art museum, gallery, or exhibit with their class at least once a year: 1997 and 2008



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2008.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1997 and 2008 Arts Assessments.

What Eighth-Graders Know and Can Do in Visual Arts

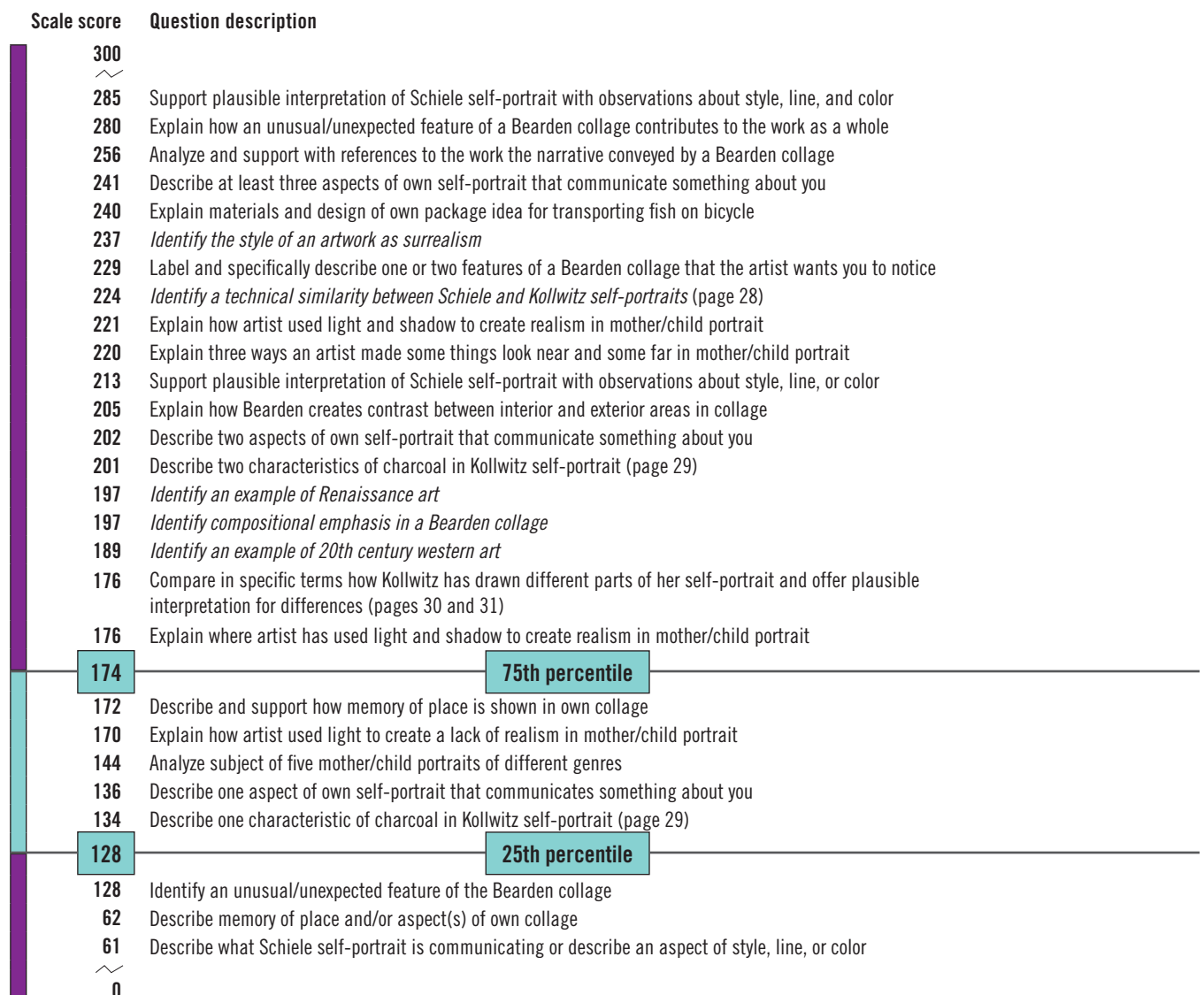
The item map below is useful for understanding students' performance at different points on the responding scale. The scale scores on the left represent the average scores for students who were likely to get the questions correct or partially correct. Scores for the 25th and 75th percentiles are also noted. The descriptions of selected assessment questions are listed on the right.

For example, the map shows that higher-performing eighth-graders in the upper range of the scale with an average score of 237 were likely to be able

to identify the style of an artwork as surrealism. Middle-performing students with an average score of 144 were likely to be able to analyze the subject of five mother/child portraits of different genres.

Constructed-response questions for which students could earn partial credit may appear on the map multiple times, once for each level of credit. For example, a question asking students to describe two characteristics of charcoal in a self-portrait appears at the score of 201 for responses receiving full credit and at 134 for responses receiving partial credit.

Grade 8 NAEP Visual Arts Responding Item Map



NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question. The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of obtaining credit at a specific level of a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2008 Arts Assessment.