

MAH AAC CET Design & Composition

Sample Paper – 5 | 2026

Duration: 90 Minutes | Maximum Marks: 50

Instructions

- This paper contains **1 practical question** modelled on the MAH AAC CET Design & Composition pattern.
- Total marks: **50**. There is **no negative marking**.
- Render the design in **POSTER COLOUR** or **WATERCOLOUR** on a drawing sheet of approximately **14" × 19"**.
- Use a pencil for the initial layout; **pencil lines must not be visible** in the final submission — erase or cover them fully.
- All work must be **freehand**. Stencils and pre-cut shape templates are not permitted.
- Write your **seat number and name** clearly on the front of the sheet before beginning work.
- **Mobile phones, calculators, and all electronic gadgets** are strictly prohibited in the examination hall.

Design & Composition Question



Question (50 Marks):

Create an **abstract colour composition** on a rectangular sheet (14" × 19", landscape or portrait) using **ONLY organic, biomorphic shapes** — curved forms derived from natural objects such as leaf profiles, seed pods, water droplets, petal outlines, cloud forms, or smooth river pebbles. **No straight edges or rigidly geometric shapes** (rectangles, triangles, or regular polygons) are permitted anywhere in the composition.

Your composition must demonstrate:

- (a) **Tonal Gradation:** a deliberate progression from light to dark (or dark to light) across the composition — not a sudden contrast, but a gradual tonal shift achieved through mixed tints, tones, and shades of your chosen colour family;
- (b) **Layering and Depth:** shapes must overlap so that at least **three distinct spatial layers** — foreground, mid-ground, and background — are clearly differentiated by tone, scale, and edge sharpness;
- (c) **Purposeful Negative Space:** the lightest or unpainted areas must themselves be carefully shaped so they actively contribute to the composition's balance and visual rhythm.

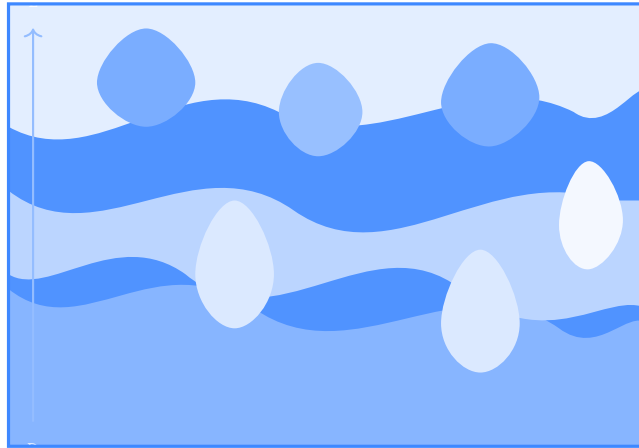
Use a **monochromatic or closely analogous colour scheme** (one dominant hue family — e.g. all blues from pale sky to deep navy, or all greens from mint to forest). A single neutral or near-complementary tone may be introduced in the background layer only.

Work on a 14" × 19" drawing sheet in landscape or portrait orientation. Use poster colours or watercolours.

Suggested Composition Layout (Thumbnail)

The thumbnail below suggests one possible arrangement. Candidates are encouraged to develop their own original composition.





Thumbnail: Organic Biomorphic Composition — Monochromatic Tonal Gradation

Evaluation Rubric (50 Marks)



Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptors	Marks
Organic Shape Quality	Confident, fluent curves with no mechanical aids; forms convincingly derived from natural sources (leaf, seed, droplet, petal, cloud)	12
Tonal Gradation	Smooth, controlled progression from light to dark (or dark to light); at least four distinguishable tonal steps; tones well mixed and evenly applied	12
Layering and Depth	At least three distinct spatial layers are clearly readable; overlapping and tonal recession create a convincing illusion of depth	10
Negative Space	Unpainted or lightest-tone areas are intentionally shaped and compositionally active; negative space contributes to rhythm and balance	8
Technical Execution	Clean edges; even, controlled colour application; no visible pencil underwork; correct sheet labelling; neat overall presentation	8
Total		50

Preparation Guidance

- **Organic line quality:** practise drawing continuous, slow, controlled curves by tracing the outlines of leaves, pebbles, feathers, and water droplets. Train your hand to move fluidly without lifting the brush or pencil.
- **Monochromatic mixing:** lay out a value scale of at least six steps (white → tint → base → tone → shade → deepest shade) before beginning. Mix white for tints, grey or a touch of complementary for tones, and black for shades.
- **Layering technique:** work from background to foreground — apply the darkest (background) layer first and allow it to dry before adding the progressively lighter mid-ground



and foreground layers. This keeps edges crisp.

- **Negative space planning:** in your thumbnail, sketch the lightest (unpainted) zones as positive shapes in their own right. If the negative shapes appear arbitrary, redesign the surrounding positive shapes before transferring to the final sheet.
- **Shape variety:** include organic forms of at least three different sizes within each tonal layer to create visual interest and avoid monotony.
- **Time management:** approximately 10 min for thumbnail explorations, 15 min for pencil layout on the final sheet, 50 min for colour application (background → mid-ground → foreground), 15 min for finishing and corrections.

