ANCIENT HISTORY (ANH315117)

This report firstly contains overall observations on candidate responses in the three sections and the common criteria of the exam paper (Criteria 3 and 4) before presenting separate markers’ comments for ancient China, Egypt, Greece and Rome, in that order. Thank you to the marking team for their comprehensive observations about this first exam for the revised course.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE EXAM PAPER

Candidates were required to demonstrate knowledge from the three sections of the course: Investigating the Ancient World, Structure of an Ancient Society and the Nature of Power and Authority in an Ancient Society. Students could select from an expanded range of ancient civilisations that included Assyria, China, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Assyria was not studied by any candidates in 2017, a small number studied ancient China for the first time, Rome was well represented and Greece was the most popular choice.

The exam questions posed some challenges to candidates as they required considerable content knowledge and the use of a range of evidence to support arguments. A stimulus statement was included in the generic question for Sections B and C but the questions did not require candidates to refer to the statement in their responses. Better responses argued a strong case in response to the stimulus, particularly in Section C: “One person can make a difference.” Markers noted an overall improvement since last year in the use of evidence to support points.

Overall, most candidates produced responses that communicated their ideas clearly and addressed the set question in each section. Better responses tended to range from four-five pages and included a number of points that were clearly explained and evaluated. However, answers that contained three pages of concise, targeted analysis of the question could still gain ‘B’ ratings and above. A small but significant number of candidates severely disadvantaged themselves by completing only two of the required three essays, or submitting two satisfactory essays and one markedly short/ incomplete essay. Candidates are advised to use their time wisely to ensure that three complete essays are submitted for assessment. Regardless of how good two of the essays may be the failure to present a response in a section will result in ‘Z’ ratings and the best award that is then possible is a Preliminary Award (PA).

As communication skills and the use of evidence are assessed across the paper it is important that candidates maintain a satisfactory standard in these areas in all three essays. The content criteria (5,6,7) are assessed once in the paper so candidates have only one chance to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. This is another reason for ensuring all the essays are allotted the same amount of time.

CRITERION 3 COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

This common criterion is examined in all sections. It tests a candidate’s ability to compose structured essays that address all elements of the exam question, using clear, logical arguments. Candidates who did not cover all elements in the topic were penalised on this criterion. Better candidates presented their response to the questions in crafted analytical essays that showed evidence of planning and the accurate use of the writing conventions. There was a small but significant number of candidates whose writing was highly articulate, fluent and sophisticated in its use of vocabulary and complex syntax. At the ‘C’ level candidates are expected to compose arguments and not just re-tell events or recount information.

Suggestions for candidates concerning communication and presentation:

- pencil must not be used for exam writing
- do not use second person (you) in an essay
• practise handwriting under pressure so it remains legible
• use past tense rather than present tense when discussing historical events
• ensure that the introduction clearly addresses all components of the exam topic
• write in structured paragraphs rather than page-long blocks of information
• ensure that the correct identifying civilisation letter and question number are written on the front of each answer booklet

Some more direct teaching about what it means to analyse and evaluate in essay responses may help candidates to move from describing and explaining toward the higher order skills of examining and appraising arguments (‘B’ to ‘A’ ratings).

Suggested sentence stems for showing analysis include:
• The main similarity or difference is…
• Close examination shows…..
• Under close scrutiny the evidence suggests…
• The impact of ….. was widespread and long lasting because…….

Suggested sentence stems for showing evaluation include:
• Upon reviewing all the available evidence, it is apparent that…..
• The most significant point is….. because……
• Of most importance is the argument that……
• While there were many contributing factors, the best explanation is that……
• X’s contribution to his/ her society at this time was outstanding as……

CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

This common criterion examines a candidate’s ability to address a question by making arguments based on a selection of appropriate evidence. The requirement for a ‘range’ of evidence to be employed refers to the number and scope of this evidence. For the purposes of the exam a limited range of evidence (‘C’) was interpreted as at least two pieces, range (‘B’) as being three-five pieces and wide range (‘A’) consisting of four or more well-chosen pieces of evidence. It is preferable for candidates to discuss their examples in detail rather than simply listing a large number of examples. This criterion does not require candidates to analyse the reliability or contestability of the evidence, although they may choose to do so. While the use of quotes is not essential for a high rating, better responses often included several appropriate quotes or a paraphrase of a literary key source.

It may be useful for candidates to practise using a range of ways to refer to evidence. Some suggestions include:
• According to the modern historian, Bradley…..
• Caesar’s own writing demonstrates that…..
• The evidence suggests that…
• This evidence may be considered to be reliable because…
• One of the most reputable sources for this period is…… because…..
SECTION A

Overall, this section was answered satisfactorily by most candidates. They were required to describe how knowledge of context may be used to interpret evidence. Most candidates successfully drew upon a range of varied evidence.

This component of the question suited some civilisation case studies more than others, since the time period could range from a single day (Egypt- Kadesh) to over 800 years (Greece- Delphi). Most candidates did locate their chosen event in a geographic context but once again, some case studies, such as Delphi, lent themselves to more detailed discussion of the geographic influence rather than others, such as the Roman Games.

SECTION B

This section proved to be the most challenging for candidates to manage as the question required them to select and manage a considerable amount of content. Stronger candidates did show the high level of synthesised analysis and evaluation expected for an ‘A’ rating. Weaker candidates launched into description of all they knew about aspects of the society rather than presenting a structured, connected and coherent argument. Future candidates are advised to be selective in the number of points they discuss and to aim for depth of analysis and evaluation to aim for higher ratings.

Very few candidates made use of the stimulus statement in the question to query what the effective functioning of a society may entail or to argue that certain elements were of more importance than others in their chosen civilisation.

Candidates approached this section in a variety of ways, perhaps reflective of teachers’ differing interpretations of this section. Some candidates led with detailed analysis of the structural elements and used the features as case studies of these practices in action. Others began with detail about the features and then attempted to link them back to the elements. It was obvious that many candidates simply ran out of time attempting to cover all elements of the question resulting in some weaker responses that omitted discussion of either the elements or the features.

The more able candidates defined the main time period that they had chosen to discuss in the essay which enabled them to develop complex points and specific detail. Another effective approach was to briefly include the most significant changes in the selected structural elements over time and their influence on the features such as Women and Families, Art and Architecture or Warfare.

Overall the most frequently discussed elements were, in order; social, political, economic and then cultural while the most popular features were Women and Family; Weapons and Warfare; Art or Architecture.

SECTION C

The majority of candidates had clearly prepared well for this section as they displayed considerable knowledge about the life of their chosen individual. The weaker candidates simply recounted the life and times of the individual rather than making analytical arguments about that person’s influence. These candidates often ran out of time before they were able to examine the individual’s contribution to the society and the lasting legacy of their actions. The more sophisticated responses considered the social and historical context of leadership in a society and how it may have changed over time, and in response to different threats. This led to more contextualised discussion of the individual as part of their society and leader in the society. Often the individual was compared and contrasted to other leaders in the society, but it is expected that the bulk of the response will focus on only one person. Some candidates discussed possible theories about the nature of the power that was exercised which can be useful, however these points must be related back to the set question.

It is useful to place the individual within the context of the political system and ways power could be gained, threatened and lost in a society, perhaps by briefly defining and describing the role of a warlord, pharaoh, archon, tyrant or emperor, as applicable. This will enable candidates to analyse the ways in which the chosen individual used typical or aberrant paths to power and influence.
Concerning an individual’s motivation, less satisfactory responses accepted without question their sources’ opinion of likely motivating factors, even when the leader’s own written evidence was lacking. Better responses considered a wide range of opinions and briefly examined their reliability and validity. Where stronger responses were tentative and questioning, weaker ones were very matter-of-fact and too accepting.

Concerning the selection of the individual to be discussed in this section, it is clear that some individuals’ contributions are more difficult to discuss in depth if they did not exercise power in primarily a military or political leadership role. While individuals such as Thucydides and Livia are valid choices for study from the prescribed list future questions may limit a candidate’s ability to demonstrate achievement on all the exam standards for Criterion 7. A small number of candidates wrote about individuals who were not on the prescribed course list. While they were not penalised this year, candidates are advised that in the future this action will result in a ‘Z’ rating for Criterion 7.

I. CHINA

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, candidates showed a pleasing level of understanding of ancient Chinese history and were able to discuss China’s changing structural elements and leadership in some detail. Responses ranged from one- five pages in length with most candidates managing a minimum of three pages per essay.

OVERALL: CRITERION 3 COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Most candidates submitted structured essays that addressed the question in the introduction and presented an argument. There were some excellent examples of historical writing that made use of sophisticated vocabulary and complex syntax to communicate sophisticated arguments. The average essay length showed that most candidates had plenty to write about in response to the questions. Section C responses tended to be shorter than the other two, suggesting some candidates may not have managed their allotted time efficiently. Generally the spelling of names and places was accurate.

OVERALL: CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Better responses included a range of the most appropriate sources that provided evidence for well thought out arguments. The views of modern historians were drawn upon and more recent archaeological discoveries were discussed as the basis for revised interpretations in Section A. Differences between Chinese and non-Chinese interpretations were included, particularly for Section A, where the modern cultural context was considered in relation to the interpretation of new evidence. Weaker responses relied upon unsubstantiated assertions or used a narrative approach to re-tell events rather than making points, analysing and linking to evidence. This was most evident in Section C, where some candidates merely recounted their selected individual’s actions with little or no reference to supporting evidence.

SECTION A QUESTION 4

CRITERION 5 DESCRIBE AND ASSESS DIFFERING HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE ANCIENT WORLD

Emerging evidence is instrumental in modern historians theorizing about historical contexts for the dynasties which, until quite recently, were largely believed to be mythical. However, most candidates did successfully analyse differing historical interpretations and discuss the nature of the available evidence. Most candidates managed to submit a substantial response with some very good responses drawing upon all three dynasties to establish the historical context of their featured dynasty. Reference to the Xia- Shang- Zhou Chronology Project provided solid evidence for this approach. While all three dynasties were selected by candidates for discussion, the Shang was the most popular, with a focus on breakthroughs in the physical evidence of the carbon dating and interpretation of
oracle bones and turtle shells. Better responses discussed the difficulties of delineating the dynasties and verifying their existence as modern historians attempt to distinguish between myth and fact.

Physical evidence in the form of artefacts such as oracle bones, funerary goods and bronze work was included by most candidates with better responses including very sound discussion of *The Bamboo Annals*, Sima Qian, Confucius and other primary literary sources, as appropriate. In responses that focused on the Zhou dynasty there was some very fine discussion of the significance of the teachings of Confucius and Laozi and the development of the concept of the Mandate of Heaven.

A key point of difference in the use of evidence in this section was that weaker responses tended to rely upon only one type of evidence such as oracle bones, where information was presented with little explanation of their changing interpretation over time. Stronger responses contained more detailed analysis of a small range of carefully selected examples of evidence.

SECTION B QUESTION 6

CRITERION 6 DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT CIVILISATION

Candidates struggled to balance their discussion of the elements and features and to make cogent links between them. Candidates often did not explicitly name in their introduction the elements or features to be discussed and it was left to the marker to try to identify them in the general body of the essay. Frequently candidates did not use the appropriate identifying term such as ‘political structure’ or ‘Weapons and Warfare’. While candidates clearly had knowledge of the workings of ancient Chinese society, the lack of a clear structure and identifying terms in the essays often led to disjointed and fragmented analysis. Rather than discuss one or two features in some depth, too many candidates attempted to include three or even more features resulting in superficial discussion.

The most popular choices of features were Weapons and Warfare, Women and Families and also Beliefs, particularly the influence and impact of Confucianism, Legalism and the Mandate of Heaven. Better responses limited their discussion to a specific period of history which enabled them to delve more deeply into the most significant points and to briefly discuss the significance of changes. There were some very coherent responses that examined the close relationship between political structures, administration and warfare in the time of the Qin and Han dynasties. Others provided excellent detail about the relationship between the new market economy and technological developments and the prosperity that supported the Qin dynasty.

In this section candidates presented some of the weakest examples of evidence, perhaps because they felt the pressure of having to include so much content. Better responses supported arguments with insightful reference to the major written sources, placing them in context, and often quoting the most significant ideas.

SECTION C QUESTION 7

CRITERION 7 ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

Several candidates took advantage of the question not stipulating that historical figures had to be taken from the prescribed list in the syllabus and chose to write about alternative leaders. They were not penalised this year but future candidates are advised they must use the prescribed list or they will be awarded a ‘Z’ rating on this criterion. Very few candidates made any reference to the stimulus statement in the question.

Overall, this section was managed well with candidates writing enthusiastically about their chosen individual. Liu Bei and Cao Cao were the most popular selections and their battles for supremacy were effectively described to illustrate their possible motivation and leadership qualities. Better responses analysed the individual’s personal and political context as he was growing up, linking this to his aspirations and actions as an adult. Less effective responses were mini-biographies that catalogued the known facts about the individual’s family and home life but failed to analyse and assess as required by the question.

Few candidates explored the difficulty of individuals creating a lasting legacy in war-torn ancient China, where successful leaders were quick to establish their own stamp of authority by eliminating their rival’s achievements.
Through their examination of warfare and conquest in the individual’s life most candidates managed to indirectly explain the causes and impacts of internal and external threats as required in the exam specifications.

Literary sources were mainly used in this section with effective responses drawing upon The Records of the Three Kingdoms and Rafe De Crespigny’s analysis of leadership in this period.

2. EGYPT

GENERAL COMMENTS

All three sections contained strong answers that tended towards the ‘B’ range and there was a small number of outstanding responses. Solid knowledge was displayed of the structural elements of Egypt and detailed knowledge of several features. The appropriate use of historical terms was evident in many responses. Most candidates included a range of evidence although weaker candidates tended to name them rather than analyse their impact. Although not necessarily required, stronger responses used secondary evidence to analyse the impact/interpretation of ancient Egyptian evidence. Revisionist historiography was particularly strong when it came to the Battle of Kadesh and the legacy of leaders in Section C.

OVERALL: CRITERION 3 COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

The criterion standards indicate that a satisfactory response should be written as an essay with clear paragraphing and logical arguments. Whilst accuracy is not paramount, there is an expectation that candidates will apply the writing conventions including writing in full sentences. Essay structure was generally satisfactory with coherent introductions, paragraphs and conclusions.

Better responses had confident introductions that addressed all the elements of the question and the assessed criteria. Conclusions tended to come back to the main argument; many included a persuasive piece of evidence/quote to reinforce the importance of their points. These responses generally ran to four or more pages, enabling a more detailed discussion of all the required elements, including making connections between elements. Weaker responses usually contained less than two complete pages of writing. This resulted in very limited analysis and often included points supported by little or no evidence. There were poorly structured essays with either very long paragraphs (up to a page) or many very short paragraphs. Time management issues meant that some students resorted to using dot points.

The structure of the responses to Section B needs to be clearly articulated to students in terms of the need for balance between discussion of elements and features. Some responses only discussed the features in detail with just a cursory reference to society or culture or politics or the economy.

OVERALL: CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

At the most basic level, candidates were required to support their arguments with some form of relevant evidence. Stronger responses used a range of evidence (primary, secondary etc) with more attention given to the analysis and discussion of evidence rather than simply listing evidence with little/no commentary. Most candidates managed this well in response to Section A, with many candidates discussing the evidence of inscriptions, accounts and art works used as propaganda to support the ruler. Better responses used evidence consistently but took the time to make connections and analyse significance. They included highly relevant evidence that provided strong support to the points being made rather than random ‘drop-in’ references. Contrasting pieces of evidence were sometimes provided to illustrate the difficulty of interpretation, particularly in Section C.

Some candidates discussed the problematic nature of evidence from ancient times both in terms of its bias and modern commentators’ efforts to contextualize the evidence such as our understanding of ancient Egyptian Women and Families in Section B. Weaker responses tended to list evidence rather than analyse its significance.
Some candidates did not use any evidence at all or only made generalised references to ‘temples’ or ‘tombs’ rather than naming specific examples.

SECTION A QUESTION 1 THE BATTLE OF KADESH

CRITERION 5 DESCRIBE AND ASSESS DIFFERING HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE ANCIENT WORLD

Candidates were required to discuss the significance of the Battle of Kadesh and then to assess the various interpretations of this event. Since candidates were only required to discuss a single event, detailed analysis of the Egyptian, Hittite and modern revisionist viewpoints should have formed the basis of their response.

Efforts to contextualise the influence of geography and the time period were generally strong. The best responses discussed the nature of Egyptian propaganda as it pertained to Ramses and demonstrated a wider understanding of the significance of the Battle compared to weaker responses. These responses were characterised by the lack of analysis of alternative interpretations, especially revisionist history based on recent discoveries and discussion. Too much time was given to a description of the Battle itself including names of the Egyptian divisions, blow-by-blow accounts of the battle and details of chariots and strategies. Candidates should aim to provide more balance in their discussion between analysis of the different interpretations and information about the Battle.

SECTION B QUESTION 6

CRITERION 6 DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT CIVILISATION

Candidates were required to discuss at least two elements and one feature of Egyptian society. They needed to demonstrate an understanding of the exact nature and key structures of this civilisation. The main challenge was to identify the best points to include in some detail, rather than attempting to include everything a candidate knew about the society.

The characteristics of better responses were the use of a well-structured introduction that clearly articulated the elements and features to be discussed which led to a balanced response where the elements and feature were discussed in sufficient detail. The best responses dealt with two elements and one feature, thus allowing for more depth of discussion and relevant supporting evidence. Weapons and Warfare was a popular choice of feature, as was Women and Families. Some strong responses effectively linked advances in technology and engineering to the development of successful political and economic structures.

Weaker responses attempted to explain more than two elements or features which resulted in superficial discussion. Some candidates offered a “project-like” response in an attempt to discuss all elements of Egyptian structures and ran out of time to discuss a linked feature.

SECTION C QUESTION 7

CRITERION 7 ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

Having studied one significant leader of Ancient Egypt, it was expected that candidates would be able to articulate the nature of power and authority of this person with particular reference to ‘human agency’ (the impact of society on the individual and, in turn, their legacy). All five significant individuals listed in the syllabus were discussed by candidates with Hatshepsut and Akhenaten being the most popular. Better responses placed individual leaders into their political and historical context, comparing and contrasting their actions with previous leaders and clearly articulating their impact, whether lasting or transitory. There was some very strong discussion of the theories surrounding Akhenaten’s attempts to establish a monotheistic religion based on competing evidence. The first female pharaoh, Hatshepsut, also inspired very good analytical writing with candidates outlining the expectations of the traditional male ruler and then describing her efforts to establish her mandate to rule through her deeds.
The main characteristics of weaker responses were too much background story-telling, particularly details about family connections, and lack of discussion about their lasting or transitory legacy. These essays also lacked analysis of what might have motivated the individual based on evidence and contextual knowledge about ancient Egypt.

3. GREECE

SECTION A QUESTION 2- DELPHI

No candidate wrote on the destruction of Troy, probably because teachers found that the study of Delphi offered a better introduction to ancient Greece in the periods covered by Sections B and C of the course.

CRITERION 3 COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

This criterion examines the quality of the communication techniques used to respond to the topic. Stronger responses addressed all elements of the question in some detail. Several of the very best argued that the question’s emphasis on contextual understanding influencing understanding of evidence was inappropriate or erroneous and provided ongoing evidence to this effect. They used sophisticated expression, integrating terms from the question in the development of their argument.

Weaker responses often did not address all elements of the question, or failed to adequately integrate the geographic context element. A significant proportion of candidates simply provided a narrative of events or just listed features of Delphi (or events taking place there), without addressing the question or engaging in the development of historical argument. This narrative approach was usually a clear attempt at establishing why Delphi was a site of significance in ancient Greek society, but generally these responses failed to move from using the evidence contained in their descriptive approach to establishing an historical argument.

CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

There is a wealth of rich sources of evidence for interpreting the importance of Delphi so the challenge faced by candidates was in selecting the best examples to discuss in some detail. The temptation was to try to pack the essay with multiple examples of architectural, artistic, epigraphic, literary and geological evidence which often resulted in a list of examples rather than discussion. The better responses included the contribution of the major ancient secondary sources such as Herodotus, Plutarch and Pausanias. Dr Michael Scott’s work (book and film) was generally used well as a modern interpretation of the site. Particularly strong responses integrated modern analytical sources into their analysis of ancient literary sources; some strong responses included overviews of the impact of the transmission of ancient Greek literary sources via Roman interpretations and Classical Western education.

CRITERION 5 DESCRIBE AND ASSESS DIFFERING HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE ANCIENT WORLD

Stronger responses provided detailed source analysis as this was one of the three standards assessed by this criterion. This took the form of several dedicated paragraphs or a ‘second introduction’ or it was integrated throughout the essay. All these approaches had the potential to be successful.

Delphi is a difficult topic to cover in response to the set question for a variety of reasons but most candidates showed solid knowledge of the purposes of the site over time. Because the site was entwined with so many aspects of ancient Greek society, covering the significance of the site over time is a highly complex task. Most candidates selected a particular period of time to examine in some detail since the question did not specify a time period. This enabled them to examine a range of interpretations and supporting evidence in detail. Students who attempted to cover the entire history of the site typically presented shallow and disjointed description rather than discussion and analysis.
Some candidates seemed to be under the impression that the ‘historical debate’ relevant to this question was whether the Pythia was really speaking prophetically, or could really communicate with Apollo. Candidates should note that ‘historical debate’ does not consist of proving / disproving the veracity of the ancient Greek worldview or prophetic utterance.

SECTION B QUESTION 6

This section was approached in a wide variety of ways which reflected the very broad nature of the course content in this section and differing teaching approaches. Candidates were able to specify a particular time period to be discussed with most choosing to focus on fifth century Greece, or Athens under Solon or Pericles. About 25% of candidates discussed Sparta, about 40% only discussed Athens and about 35% discussed both. Considering the amount of aspects to be discussed in this section of the exam it is recommended that candidates only discuss one ancient Greek society in detail and do not attempt to do a comparison. This was more appropriate to the previous course. Very few candidates considered what constituted the ‘effective functioning’ of a society, as stated in the stimulus statement, and there really wasn’t time to adequately consider this concept.

Most candidates looked at the political and social structures of Ancient Greece although there was some very strong discussion of the economic structure and its connection to Women and the Family, the Arts or Technology and Engineering. The Women and the Family feature was most popular, followed by Weapons and Warfare and then Art, Architecture or Drama. A very small number of candidates attempted to discuss two or more features and they often failed to link them back to two structural elements.

CRITERION 3 COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

The question required the candidates to describe and explain the structures and practices of at least two core elements (political, social, economic and cultural). They were also required to analyse how evidence from at least one feature furthers our understanding of these structures and practices.

Most candidates approached this in one of three ways:

- Described the political system and institutions; described the social system and institutions; analysed (often described) the feature
- Analysed the feature and explained how it related to the politico/legal institutions and the social system and institutions
- Described how the political and social systems and institutions changed with successive political reformers and the impact of these changes on the feature.

All of these approaches were regarded as valid although the second probably offered the most satisfying essay in terms of structure and evidence. Weaker answers examined each aspect of the question in isolation and failed to make any connections between them, or looked mainly at one aspect with little or no reference to the others. Some explained the reforms or actions of an individual (such as Pisistratus) without adequately relating them to two elements and one feature.

The literacy displayed was generally sound, although sometimes the register was too casual and conversational for an historical essay. This complex question provided some difficulties for the composition of a lucid introduction.

CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

This criterion requires candidates to offer specific evidence from primary and secondary sources to support their assertions. They are not required to analyse the reliability or contestability of the evidence although they could, of course, comment on these issues as they offered the evidence. Unfortunately, in far too many essays little or no evidence from sources was offered in support of claims. The twin requirements of historical study: What do we know? How do we know it? were only addressed in part.
Candidates were rewarded if they named a source; if they named and paraphrased a source; if they named and quoted from a source. The best responses skilfully wove the evidence from primary sources into their paragraphs, quoting when appropriate and indicating the historical period to which the source referred. They used secondary sources to offer pithy summaries or divergent opinions from the prevailing orthodoxies. They also offered references to epigraphical or archaeological sources to back up the written sources or to suggest a differing view. They offered an interesting range of primary sources including the most relevant for the feature or element being discussed.

It is not necessary to offer a point of common knowledge about Ancient Greece and then put the name of a secondary source in brackets after it.

CRITERION 6 DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

As outlined above, the complexities of this section make a fully integrated response that addresses all parts equally very difficult. Synthesis is a higher order skill and some candidates struggled with it. Teachers have obviously adopted a wide range of approaches to assist their students in making effective connections between the core elements and the features.

The best responses addressed the relationship between the elements and the feature and considered how historical events or political reforms influenced change in all three.

Weaker responses made unsupported assertions and sweeping generalisations particularly with regard to the roles and status of women such as: “If a girl wasn’t married by 15 she would become a prostitute.” Candidates need to remember that our understandings about Ancient Greece are pieced together, often from very scanty information, so that definitive conclusions are problematic.

SECTION C QUESTION 7

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall the quality of responses varied widely with Athenian individuals being more popular selections than the Spartan choice. There was no explicit requirement for the stimulus statement to be included in response to the question although many candidates did attempt to make reference to it. Not all individuals on the prescribed list were easily discussed in relation to the elements to be assessed or the nature of Section C in the course.

CRITERION 3 COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Better responses were accurate, although not flawless, in the use of writing conventions and presented an argument in an accepted essay format. Better responses provided a clear introduction that addressed the question and proceeded to include clear topic sentences or thesis statements that were relevant to the motives, impact and legacy of the chosen individual. Information provided was explicitly linked to these aspects of the question.

A main issue was that some candidates did not discuss all components of the essay topic. Whilst written conventions may have been largely accurate, and a student may have presented a response fitting the conventions of an essay, they may not have explicitly discussed the motivation of an individual, their impact or their legacy. Instead, weaker candidates provided a narrative of an individual’s rise to power or the political and social context in which they rose to power - with no mention of their potential motivations or the impact they had on ancient Greek society. Some candidates discussed the nature of the power exercised and how power was acquired, which contributed to their Criterion 7 results, but it sometimes took time away from the other components.

Candidates are expected to answer the question in front of them. Many candidates appeared to come in with prepared responses hoping to explore sociological theories about the nature of power acquisition or provide a chronological narrative of events concerning the chosen individual. Neither of these approaches allowed them to demonstrate a high standard against this criterion.
CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

This criterion examined the candidate’s ability to address the question, based on appropriate evidence. Evidence could have taken the form of references to primary, secondary or tertiary sources. Candidates might have referred to types of evidence to address the question such as archaeological, epigraphic, numismatic or literary.

Better responses used a variety of sources (primary and secondary) and a range of four or more explicit, separate, relevant evidence to support the candidate’s analysis of the motives of an individual, their impact and their legacy. These responses directly quoted or paraphrased relevant sources and linked them explicitly to the question. Some candidates included a summary of the nature of the evidence following their introductions which is not required in the exam. Weaker responses offered a cursory summary of the available evidence and did not use it to analyse the motivation, impact or legacy of the individual. The origin, purpose, method and value of source material should only be evaluated in the context of the question.

CRITERION 7 ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

This criterion examined a student’s ability to show understanding of a significant individual’s contribution to their society within the context of the nature of power, authority and leadership in that society.

Better responses firmly located the individual within the context of their society and explored the way the individual exercised his power. Better responses also explicitly used detailed arguments to explore the possible motivations of individuals for their actions. An example for Peisistratus would be using his repeated attempts at gaining power as evidence of a possible motivation to seize power and maintain it. Also, the methods he used to gain power might have been used to demonstrate an awareness of the importance of force, factional politics, alliances between the nobility or the growing need to address the demands of poorer citizens in the society in which he lived.

Weaker responses provided a narrative of events including early life and childhood activities with little demonstrated awareness of the broader political, economic, social or historical context and how these factors might have impacted an individual and his motivations. Some responses relied exclusively on sociological theories which categorised leadership and governance and placed individuals such as Themistocles within a category identified in the 19th century. Utilising these theories is not discouraged (indeed, some better responses were able to explicitly link these theories to political conditions in Athens during the time of Themistocles) and can form the basis of a reasonable approach - although not if it was the only method by which power and leadership were analysed.

4. ROME

SECTION A QUESTION 3 THE ROMAN GAMES

All candidates who selected Rome for this section wrote about the Roman Games; Masada was not featured in any responses. In the main this part of the paper was answered well. In this section students needed to explain that the role of the games in Roman society is still open to interpretation (Criterion 5) and that understanding the historical background to the Games helps us to provide valid interpretations of the evidence we have for them.

CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

This part of the paper called predominantly for a critical examination of sources in relation to the Roman Games. Candidates who were able to synthesise a particular selection of these sources were few and far between. A few more able candidates, however, were outstanding with their demonstrated ability in this area, drawing on Tacitus, Strabo and Cicero with confidence. Some of the strongest candidates recognised that there are some pitfalls when using primary source material and were able to take advantage of the suggestions, criticisms, and interpretations which have been made by later historians.
The best answers provided a range of evidence to back up their claims, and supported those claims by providing historical or geographical detail which helped to interpret that evidence. Concerning the origin of the games, most candidates acknowledged the role of the Etruscans but few mentioned the evidence from Capua. The written primary sources for the origins of gladiatorial combat and its first appearance in Roman culture are few, but they are clearly identified by many secondary writers. It was surprising that very few students seemed to be able to cite sources such as Livy and Valerius Maximus given that so many students discussed these origins.

Even discussion of the later politicisation of the Games by the ambitious families of demagogues such as Pompey and Caesar tended just to give details of these men’s games but not to mention the source of this information: Cassius Dio, Pliny the Elder, Suetonius, Plutarch.

Cicero was often rightly cited as a good source of ancient opinion in this area as were Seneca and Tertullian. The better responses cited primary sources for firsthand information and secondary ones for comments on how these facts might be interpreted.

There were also many archaeological sites, or objects retrieved from them, which were mentioned to support argument in this section. Many candidates mentioned the role of the amphitheatre but few gave any detail about how a particular amphitheatre—its position, its size or its features—helps to interpret the role of the games in late first and second century Rome.

**CRITERION 5 DESCRIBE AND ASSESS DIFFERING HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE ANCIENT WORLD**

Candidates had obviously enjoyed studying this topic and most wrote at some length about the games. Weaker responses listed in great detail less relevant information such as the range of types of gladiators rather than concentrating on factors such as the religious origins, the political nature of the games, and what such entertainment suggests about what the Romans were like. There could have been greater focus on the broader nature of the games as a whole, including the *ludi scaenae* and *ludi circenses*. Most candidates placed the games’ original purposes in a religious context but failed to identify the continuation of the religious elements as they became more of a cultural phenomenon. Most responses successfully discussed the connection between the games as entertainment and as a means to keep the masses placated.

Weaker responses tended to just give a description of the events of a day at the games, or provided a narrative of the development of the games over time. In both cases, the candidates ignored the basis of the question, and the section of this course, which was interpretation. This is more than simply stating “this is what happened and this is what it meant”. Candidates are encouraged to say “this is what happened, and by looking at this evidence in the light of this historical and geographical information, this is what it MAY have meant.” The best responses explained what the nature and order of events at a day at the games suggests about the role they served in Roman life. They discussed the changes in the way gladiatorial combat was incorporated into Roman life (funerary practice, status symbol, mass entertainment) and their impact on the role of the games.

There could have been greater commentary on whether the gladiatorial sport was the blood bath which was generally promulgated in Christian accounts. This interpretation could have been challenged more by considering the investment cost of training and then maintaining the gladiators.

**SECTION B QUESTION 6**

Some very muddled and disorganised responses suggested that this question was a difficult ask for many candidates. Candidate responses were widely varied in content and structure. Candidates should be careful to consider the specific wording of the question and avoid ‘dumping’ too much pre-prepared material into their responses.
CRITERION 3 COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Too many essays were little more than a page and a half summary of everything the student could remember about a feature, with no structure and no argument. This type of limited essay cannot meet the requirements of the standards.

CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Candidates should be reminded to use their knowledge of concepts and terminology and course content together with an integrated range of primary and secondary sources to add depth of analysis to their response. In Section B the great majority of candidates presented a very limited range of evidence, and unfortunately in many instances failed to account for even one form of primary source.

Good essays used a variety of sources. Candidates should consider primary literary, archaeological or epigraphic sources and secondary written sources as distinct types of source that could all appear in an essay on this sort of topic. While many of the Art and Architecture essays used very site specific evidence, such as referring to specific Pompeian houses, the use of secondary source commentary was scarce. In the topics of Beliefs and Woman and the Family, too many candidates seemed to confuse evidence with information. Thus, an essay on beliefs may have gone into considerable detail about what happened during a sacrifice, but at no time provided any source evidence to support this information. Better responses discussed relief carvings of sacrifices taking place, or descriptions in poets such as Horace and Virgil, or accounts in histories such as Plutarch as part of his retelling of the life of an individual.

Weaker responses contained very generalised, and often dubious, statements such as: “women had few rights in ancient Rome.” These claims were then attributed to modern historians such as Bradley, as evidence of their veracity. Bradley, or any other secondary source, should either be cited as holding a specific view or providing a specific piece of information.

CRITERION 6 DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

The three most widely chosen features were Art or Architecture, Women and the Family and Beliefs and Rituals suggesting that candidates were most familiar with these areas. However, the majority of candidates were only able to offer a very superficial account of these features. The better responses discussed the selected features and then used the salient points from these features to illustrate how they impacted on Rome’s political, social, economic and cultural structures and practices.

Many candidates struggled to structure the essay. Those who tried to give an overall outline of two core elements such as politics and economics, and then to link this to a feature, such as Women and Families, were often unsuccessful. The weaker answers which used this approach ended up just discussing politics, then economics, then women, as three fairly discrete areas, rather than building in the feature from the beginning and allowing it to be the main basis of discussion and source of examples for the two elements. Some candidates did, however, provide fairly successful thumbnail overviews of the two elements, then revisited them in the light of the feature.

Perhaps a better option was to spend most of the essay discussing the feature but making sure that at all times it was being used to address the two chosen elements. For example, after explaining the role of paterfamilias and his patria potestas a candidate could then refer to the nature of patriarchal society as part of the discussion of Women and Family. An exhaustive description of the layout of a house in Pompeii did not, in itself, address the question. However, it could provide opportunities to look at the basis of Roman social interaction as part of discussion of the way the public/private nature of certain rooms reflected the process of the morning salutatio, the client/patron relationship, the display of wealth and culture as a political stepping stone and other cultural/social or political elements. This movement from just listing lots of facts about a feature, to using these facts to shed light on the selected elements tended to dictate how well this question was answered.

The subject matter of the strongest responses was distinguished by its specificity and insight while weaker responses made do with general discussion, which was sometimes incorrect. The lives of elite Roman women may have centred largely on the house, but it is not sufficient to say they “had to stay at home and bring up the children
and do the cleaning”. No Roman matrona would have engaged in “doing the cleaning” as that’s what slaves were for. Stronger responses explained just what aspects of child rearing were a mother’s responsibility and how looking after a house involved running a household, choosing and controlling slaves, provisioning, entertaining and so on.

SECTION C QUESTION 7

The vast majority of candidates discussed Augustus or Julius Caesar with fewer responses discussing Cicero and Sulla. Many candidates, however, were less able to respond well in a structured and analytical essay format. Many candidates appeared to run out of time and resorted to dot points by the end of the essay.

CRITERION 3 COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

This section seemed to divide candidates into two groups: those who did know what they were discussing and backed it up well, and those who really had little idea and were struggling to respond. Too often, the essays were simply very general and simplified biographies with earnest and gushy introductions and conclusions about what enormous legacies these individuals had left and how much they had influenced their societies. In too many cases, students didn’t explain what these legacies were beyond the claim that they were “the most famous man in history.”

The strongest responses simply did what the fairly straightforward question asked them to do, explaining what the selected individual had done, what probably influenced and motivated him/ her and what the short and long term effects were. The stimulus statement about one person making a difference was too general to be very useful and students who kept trying to build it into their response by simply repeating it, but not demonstrating it, were not successful.

CRITERION 4 USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Candidates were expected to address the question and provide evidence for their assertions. This was an area where both primary and secondary evidence were required for a comprehensive response. Better responses selected the most appropriate sources of information about the individual. A candidate who wrote about Caesar as an influential figure but didn’t mention any one of Plutarch, Suetonius, Cicero or Caesar himself as a source for the material struggled to satisfy this criterion. Likewise, the better Augustus essays included at least one, and preferably more, of Suetonius, Cassius Dio and the Res Gestae. In weaker responses sources were listed at the beginning but infrequently referred to later in the essay to support argument.

CRITERION 7 ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

The stimulus statement in the question did not elicit any very perceptive discussion. Julius Caesar was the most popular individual selected for discussion and was a logical selection for Rome candidates. Overall, the question was well answered with many candidates displaying a satisfactory level of preparation and, in particular, their ability to recall important forms of historical evidence to use in relation to the historical figure’s leadership role and also the nature and scope of power held by him/ her. A good standard was expected in this section as candidates had considerable time to research and practise analysing the significance of the individual in relation to their society.

Better responses used a wide range of specific terms and concepts in their analysis of the possible motivations and aspirations of leaders. These students also were selective in their use of secondary sources and referred to reputable modern historians such as Pamela Bradley and David Taylor. Weaker responses showed that candidates had failed to consider key, often disputed, events during the life and times of their chosen individual and struggled to see the person as a product of their society. An assessment of their impact on their society and their legacy was therefore compromised.

Some capable candidates drew upon the works of Caesar himself as evidence for discussion. These candidates were also able to explain that interpretations are coloured by the period of history when they are written. In weaker responses critical periods of time were rarely defined or referred to “as the time just before Caesar’s birth” and “just after his death.”
## CRITERION 6:

**DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT CIVILISATION**

### SECTION B

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<th>D+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discusses none or only 1 core structure. Does not discuss a key feature in any detail. Does not implicitly or explicitly refer to the chronological or geographical context of the society.</td>
<td>Outlines the organisation of 2 core structures of an ancient society. Discusses how at least 1 key feature illustrates a society's historical context, values and beliefs. May outline the effect of the chronological and geographical contexts on a society.</td>
<td>Discusses the organisation of 2 core structures of an ancient society. Describes how at least 1 key feature illustrates a society's historical context, values and beliefs. May describe the effect of the chronological and geographical contexts on a society.</td>
<td>Analyses the organisation of 2 core structures of an ancient society. Analyses how at least 1 key feature illustrates a society's historical context, values and beliefs. May explain in some detail the effect of the chronological and geographical contexts on a society.</td>
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This criterion examines the student's ability to show understanding of the nature and workings of two (2) structures of their chosen society and a key feature and how they may have changed over time. Students may discuss the impact of the society's environment and development over time. Discussion of a key feature provides evidence of understanding of the society's values, beliefs and practices. There needs to be a balance of structures and a feature. Responses of less than 2 pages will rarely provide enough content to gain a C rating.

Better answers will provide a coherent, analytical discussion that shows depth of understanding about the structural elements and how they were applied in the people's lives (features). Students may or may not make reference to the opening statement in the topic.
CRITERION 7:
ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

SECTION C

| D- | D | D+ | C- | C | C+ | B- | B | B+ | A | A+ |
|----|---|----|----|---|---|----|---|---|---|----|----|
| Describes more than one individual in detail OR very generalised discussion of leadership in general in a society Discusses mainly family background and events with limited or no comment on the nature of power and authority Generalised speculation about the individual’s motivations Lack of discussion of the significance of the individual in their society | Describes the social and historical context of ONE individual Outlines the leadership roles/ power and authority of the individual Uses some evidence to explore possible motivations for actions Assesses the extent of the individual’s impact on the society and the effectiveness of the individual’s response to threats | Explains the social and historical context of ONE individual Explains the leadership roles/ power and authority of the individual Uses logical arguments and evidence to explore possible motivations for actions Analyses the extent of the individual’s impact on the society the effectiveness of the individual’s response to threats | Analyses the social and historical context of ONE individual Analyses the leadership roles/ power and authority of the individual Uses detailed arguments and evidence to explore possible motivations for actions Analyses and evaluates the extent of the individual’s impact on the society and the effectiveness of the individual’s response to threats |

This criterion examines a student’s ability to show understanding of a significant individual’s contribution to their society within the context of the nature of power, authority and leadership in that society. Discussion will consider the extent to which the individual was a product of their society and how the society was impacted by their actions when faced by threats to stability. Students may compare and contrast more than one individual’s leadership but the focus must be on a detailed study of ONE individual. Better responses will firmly locate the individual within the context of their society and the way power is exercised. Students may or may not make reference to the opening statement in the topic.