

ANCIENT HISTORY

(ANH315117)

FEEDBACK FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

This report begins with overall observations on the common Criteria of the exam paper (Criteria 3 and 4) and candidate responses in the three sections before presenting separate markers' comments for ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and China in that order. The marking tool used by the markers included only the Criteria elements assessed in the exam topics for 2018.

While the topics for all three sections were challenging, candidate responses to the Section B topic varied the most in approach and emphasis, proving the most difficult for markers to assess consistently. This year the number of pre-prepared answers to topics in Sections B and C was very noticeable and they did not rate well. Too many candidates seemed determined to produce a prepared answer, regardless of the requirements of the topic. According to their introduction, several candidates appeared to answer a 2017 topic. To produce an effective historical essay candidates must be able to apply their knowledge to any given topic and must practise developing a response to a wide variety of topics.

Once again Assyria was not studied by any candidate, with the most popular civilisations being Greece, Rome, Egypt and China, in that order. In Section A there were no responses to the Destruction of Troy or the events at Masada. A feature of the 2018 external assessment was the growth in the number of students who chose to study a second civilisation for Section C. This trend saw an increased number of candidates selecting individuals from Rome and Egypt for their Section C response. The inclusion of the prescribed list of historical individuals on the exam paper was a useful reminder for candidates and there were no essays submitted on unauthorised individuals in 2018.

This year none of the topics included a stem statement or stimulus quotation for candidates to respond to which possibly limited their capacity to develop a coherent argument and also to analyse and evaluate as required by the higher ratings. Two of the topics did not mention using primary and secondary sources to support points but most students remembered to include this evidence for Criteria 4.

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Overall this year the standard of communication was quite sound. Most candidates effectively used a structured essay to address the topics with better responses clearly outlining a position and ensuring that all elements of the topic were covered. Several candidates employed a report-style format with headings which is not acceptable according to the exam specifications. It is strongly recommended that candidates take a dictionary into the exam, not to check on spelling but to look up a definition of any terms used in the topics that may be used in an unusual way or may be unfamiliar. For example, the use of 'cultural structures and features' in Section B.

There was some unsophisticated wording in a few introductions: 'This essay will address...'. Less effective responses employed a story telling mode, particularly in Section C, and many of these responses also lacked the formal, academic language and style required in a history response. Candidates should ensure that they consistently use past tense when referring to events and individuals from ancient societies and avoid using second tense: 'you.'

A few candidates underlined their sources in their essays, often in red pen, which was very distracting for markers and counterproductive. Candidates are assured that markers take careful note of the use of all sources; the mere number of sources does not guarantee a high rating on Criteria 4.

Even though the exam topics did not explicitly call for analysis and evaluation, stronger candidates still employed this approach (and achieved high ratings) by using key sentence starters such as: "The most significant point is..."; "A key interpretation is..."; "Two main factors in his success were..."

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

The majority of candidates this year included sources of information for their points which was a positive development. The two main problems with the use of sources were the use of very general references ('a temple'; 'historians suggest'; 'many art works') and a narrow range of sources such as only literary evidence or only archaeological evidence.

For the purposes of exam marking the following guide was used for this Criteria: 'D' - little, none or inappropriate evidence; 'C' - limited range (minimum 2 sources); 'B' - range (3-5 sources); 'A' - wide range of well-chosen sources (4-5). Candidates are advised to identify and discuss 4-6 suitable sources of evidence to achieve 'range' rather than briefly referring to a high number of sources.

Including quotes from reputable ancient and modern writers was not necessary for ratings in the high range but many candidates who did synthesise well chose short quotes of a phrase or more to support their arguments.

SECTION A GENERAL COMMENTS

The topic was quite narrow in scope with candidates being instructed to 'describe' the nature and historical context of the sites and events, the level required for a "C" rating. The second element of the topic required candidates to 'identify and evaluate different representations and interpretations' but it was unclear what they were meant to be evaluating: authenticity, accuracy, validity, popularity or reliability. A third limitation of the topic was the stipulation that 'reliable' primary and secondary sources be used to explain historical context. While better candidates were able to contrast unreliable, biased and disputed evidence with reliable sources to access the full range of available sources, less able candidates either ignored this element or were left with a diminished range of evidence to apply in their responses.

Some prepared answers had candidates wasting time and essay space on detailed explanation of the geographical context which was not required by the topic.

Candidates who discussed the Greece or China options in this section sometimes confused the mythological context with the historical context, spending too much time recounting the ancient myths and thus limiting the time available to fully describe the historical features and any changes over time. Better responses argued that the ancient people considered their mythological accounts to be historical and thus the myths were an important element in the study of interpretations of the site or period.

SECTION B GENERAL COMMENTS

Once again this section proved to be the most challenging part of the paper. The application of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence was also a necessary part of the response, although this was not explicitly part of the topic. Most candidates did not specify a time period for their discussion and few had time to consider any changes.

The stipulation in the topic this year that candidates discuss the political and cultural structures caught many candidates by surprise. The exam specifications show that any two of the structural elements may be listed in an exam topic so teachers must ensure candidates have knowledge of all four structural elements. Candidates responded in one of three ways to the limitation. The strongest candidates adapted their knowledge of the content to focus on the two prescribed structures and their connections to a feature. Other candidates were quite creative in their interpretation of 'cultural structures and practices' and argued that aspects of the social and even the economic structures could be considered to be aspects of the cultural structures and practices. Quite a few candidates used religion, beliefs and rituals as the main component of their cultural structure discussion which had some merit (and showed some ingenuity). The least successful responses ignored the cultural structure element entirely and ploughed ahead with a prepared essay that missed a third of the topic. It was disappointing to see some very strong writers lacked the flexibility to adapt their knowledge to address the set topic.

Markers considered the challenging requirements of this section and aimed to reward responses that clearly showed links between the feature(s) being discussed in detail and its related structures and

practices. In the time allowed, markers did not expect that students would compose an essay that equally balanced all the topic elements, but they did require the explicit reference to the two named structures and at least one feature. Better candidates made it easy for markers by naming the structures and feature(s) in the introduction and using these key words in topic sentences. Too often markers had to search for implied references to a structure.

In some responses candidates confused their marker by referring to an example of Art and Architecture as a 'feature', making it a feature within a feature. For example: "The agora is a feature related to the cultural life of the ancient Greeks." This made a confusing section even more confusing to mark.

The preferred feature choices were: Art, Architecture and Drama; Weapons and Warfare and Women and Family. Stronger responses for the latter feature briefly included an examination of women and family life for all the classes in an ancient society, contrasting the lives of slaves and common folk with the lives led by those in the higher social orders.

SECTION C GENERAL COMMENTS

In this section political/military leaders were the main choice but there were several strong responses on Cicero and Livia as powerful individuals in their society.

Markers were looking for detailed knowledge about the context in which an individual could have a position of influence: what was the prevailing system of power and authority; how usual was the rise to a position of influence; what were the limits on the authority? Candidates would have benefitted from discussing in some detail the responsibilities and power of the position assumed by the individual, both official and informal. This would then have established a framework from which to discuss the individual's influence and any judgements made about their actions.

The main problem with weaker responses was the use of a narrative rather than analytical style: the use of a story-telling mode to describe the rise of the individual and outcomes of their actions. This choice of mode provided little analysis, insightful discussion or any accounting for influence. It was obvious that there were many prepared essays that had not been adapted to the set exam topic. For example, in weaker responses time was wasted on detailed discussion of the individual's motivation which was not part of the topic. There was also too much time spent detailing early family life that was not explicitly linked to the individual's rise to prominence- story telling mode again. Better responses used the importance of the individual's family background, education and early positions of authority to make a point about this path to power either being typical (Julius Caesar) or atypical (Hatshepsut).

Most responses gave a satisfactory account of the immediate or short term impact of the individual's influence on their society. Better responses also analysed any lasting change and whether this benefited the society in the long term. Weaker responses offered unexamined judgements of the individual's significance and life such as accepting that the Roman Empire was a good thing for all concerned, or that Cleomenes I was obviously insane or Hatshepsut's nephew hated her or Peisistratus was a trust- worthy

fellow. In some better responses there was good use made of modern historical interpretations and contemporary judgements about the nature of the individual's impact.

QUESTION 1: EGYPT: THE BATTLE OF KADESH

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

More able candidates wrote well about the available evidence by analysing the multitude of Egyptian sources compared to the few surviving Hittite sources and also examined the use of propaganda by the Egyptian pharaoh to bolster his status and record of military success. Contrasting early and later interpretations due to the discovery of new evidence was synthesised well in better responses. Strong responses discussed passages from Ramses' own records, *The Poem* and *Bulletin* and linked them to his possible motivations which went beyond mere propaganda. Discussion of the written plus epigraphic evidence was offered, including the desire to legitimise his claim to the throne and there was inclusion of the importance of maintaining ma'at and Ramses' appeal to the gods to support his campaign.

Generally there was good use of both primary and secondary evidence in this section and several responses offered excellent discussion of changing interpretations as new primary evidence was found which added to our understanding of this battle.

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

The topic was in three parts but candidates generally responded well as their essays by covering all three parts of the question. The topic required candidates to 'describe', 'identify' and 'explain' which invited very general discussion and not the analytical approach expected for the higher ratings. Candidates are reminded to be aware of the Criteria elements required for a high result. Weaker responses provided a narrative account of the participants, their weapons and alleged battle strategies. An Egypt-specific topic may have prompted deeper analysis.

Most students were able to describe significant elements of the context of the battle, both historical and also geographical, with better responses discussing the rival empires and the competing needs of both sides. There was also discussion of the pharaoh's desire to emulate the military success of previous pharaohs such as Seti I and Thutmose III. Few candidates fully examined the debate among early and later western scholars about the reliability of the Egyptian accounts of their success and the most commonly accepted conclusion today that the battle was probably a draw.

QUESTION 6: EGYPT

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

This Criteria requires an essay with clear paragraphing and a line of argument presenting an answer to all the elements of the topic. Several better candidates wrote particularly strong essays with through lines carried confidently and accurately through the essay. Weaker responses usually did not adequately cover all aspects of the topic. Overall, the spelling of key names and terms was accurate.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Most students offered named primary evidence and/ or reference to named historians. Strong responses used a wide range of named evidence with discussion of its relevance, nature, how historians interpret it, changing views etc. There was good use of secondary evidence and arguments about the validity of evidence including the changing interpretations of the battle's outcome and impact. Weaker responses offered little or no analysis of evidence and made general reference to 'temple inscriptions' and 'temple relief sculpture' rather than identifying specific examples.

CRITERIA 6: DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

The topic caused the most difficulty for candidates – all credit to those candidates who were able to use the broad knowledge they had about all the Egyptian structures and practices to provide comprehensive analysis. The more flexible candidates widely defined 'cultural structures' to include social divisions, education, religion and beliefs and rituals. Some of these answers were very well written in terms of their structure and language that integrated the chosen feature through the discussion of the political and cultural structures and practices.

The most successful responses did attempt to apply the evidence to show the changing nature of a society and showed *ma'at* was a concept which brought cohesion as the basis of political, social and cultural structures. There was good use of key terms of the topic by a number of candidates to make explicit their focus. Many responses in this section used Women and the Family as their feature and this worked well with sound use of the available primary evidence.

QUESTION 7: EGYPT

CRITERIA 7: ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

The question was in three parts and required a description, an account and an analysis of evidence. Still too many papers offered potted biographies of the individual chosen rather than engaging with the key words of the topic. Better candidates made pithy, relevant observations about the individual's family background and early life as they related to their rise to power, but weaker candidates spent far too long

detailing genealogies. Hatshepsut was the most popular individual, followed by Akhenaten and there were very few responses on the other individuals available in this section.

The first part of the topic required description of the role of the individual and a well-structured paragraph or two was needed here. Weaker responses did not offer this which was unfortunate given the study of Egypt does focus on the pharaoh: rights, responsibilities and position as conduit of the gods. Discussion of *ma'at* and the pharaoh's role in maintaining order should have been central to any examination of an Egyptian ruler. The better responses offered some, or a lot, of analysis of the evidence. The very good responses included arguments of interpretation of the evidence and also changing interpretations of the individual over time by modern historians which made for interesting reading. They also included varied discussion of the depictions of individuals, and the attempted erasure of evidence of Hatshepsut's reign. Few made the point that this practice was quite common and not just applied to Hatshepsut's monuments.

Hatshepsut was the pharaoh who was dealt with most successfully since fewer responses offered a mere biography and actually engaged with the topic. Most started with a discussion of the role of a pharaoh and the unusual nature of a female pharaoh - including a discussion of *ma'at* and its significance. These sound responses discussed her ability to fulfil the pharaoh's role according to the accepted 'job description.' Discussion of her influence and impact was generally good covering her successes, building program, trade expedition to Punt and her capacity to fulfil the role as expected by a male ruler. Arguments about evidence of her reign and its erasure, as well as changing interpretations of her legacy, were well presented in better responses. These included the changing nature of modern historians' understanding of her rule as pharaoh in her own right without a male vizier 'pulling the strings.'

Responses on Akhenaten were not as well done generally and many had generic 'historians' rather than named individuals in their evidence. There was only a very basic presentation of his religious reforms including the fact that they were short lived. There is still so much contention about aspects of Akhenaten's motivation, health, artistic style, aims and legacy that candidates writing about his life should have had plenty of interpretations to analyse and evaluate.

QUESTION 2: GREECE - DELPHI

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

The very general nature of the topic made it difficult for candidates to compose an analytical introduction leading into a structured essay response. Most candidates managed to present a series of paragraphs that led to a general conclusion about Delphi's importance and history.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Few candidates considered what made a source 'reliable' or not but concentrated on just using accepted sources to support their points. This may have limited the discussion of different interpretations and the mysteries still yet to be solved about the nature of the site and the operation of the oracle.

Better responses included a variety of types of evidence including (some) archaeological, epigraphic, literary and art/ artefacts, not just written sources. Some excellent discussion of the main architecture and facilities of the site enabled analysis of the similarities and differences between this oracle and other Greek oracular sites. The Serpent Column was rightly identified by many candidates as illustrating an important, though short-lived, example of panhellenism. The development of Greek Art as shown through extant examples from the site was an effective way to show the historical context and changing influences on Greek culture. The contrast between the archaic, static Biton twins and the exquisite naturalism of the triumphant bronze charioteer was effectively analysed by several candidates. Herodotus was the most popular ancient sources with most candidates able to draw upon his work to discuss the nature of the workings of the oracle, the most influential pronouncements and also the possibility of bribery and corruption, such as Cleomenes I's mission to denounce his fellow Spartan king, Demaratus, through the Oracle's words.

The use of modern sources such as historians Dr Michael Scott and Prof Paul Cartledge was effective when used to support a particular interpretation of Delphi's history and significance.

Finding the right balance between including some sources and too many is still key to success in this Criteria. Drawing upon 4-5 significant sources to support key points, and discussing them in some detail, is what is required for higher ratings. A 'scattergun' approach of just listing many sources is not effective.

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

Overall, this topic was answered well with most candidates displaying a pleasing amount of knowledge about the site of Delphi and its significance in the ancient Greek world. Many candidates effectively argued that Delphi's purpose as a religious centre was its most significant interpretation and representation according to primary source material. Better responses showed how religion permeated every aspect of Greek life including its rituals, politics, warfare, art, architecture, sport, the Arts and the spirit of competition that drove its people to pursue *arête* (excellence). All of these aspects of devotion were illustrated at Delphi and most candidates were able to discuss them in some detail.

Another effective interpretation was to show the apparent contradictions of Delphi as the site contained evidence of intense rivalry between the poleis but also some examples of Panhellenic cooperation and the budding awareness of Greek identity. Few candidates considered Delphi's violent history as the focus of several Sacred Wars between key poleis or the political nature of the Amphictyonic League.

Better responses focused on the discussion of several key artefacts or pieces of architecture as a way to highlight Delphi's showcasing of the development of artistic styles and techniques over time, Greece's links to trading and cultural partners and evidence of poleis success in warfare. Thus effective links were made by these candidates to Delphi's historical context.

In the absence of any major disputes over the site's interpretation, some candidates chose to focus on the various attempts to test the validity of ancient claims that the Pythia inhaled intoxicating fumes arising from the earth as a way to connect to Apollo. While some discussion of this quest was valid, some candidates made it the most significant point in their response, sometimes spending more than two pages on its issues. This approach severely limited their capacity to discuss a range of interpretations and also limited their selection of sources.

Delphi's historical context is vast, spanning over 1000 years of continuous use which made it a challenge for candidates to describe in any detail. A successful approach was for candidates to specify several key periods in Delphi's extensive history for close examination rather than attempting to cover all of its long history. Some strong responses explained the role of the oracle in ancient Greek society and considered interpretations as to why Delphi emerged as the most famous, popular and revered oracle in the region. Discussion of its early Mycenaean occupation, and the discovery of votive objects and divination aids in the nearby Corcyran caves, enabled candidates to discuss the practices of lower status people in contrast to the better known high status use of the temple site.

Some candidates were determined to discuss Delphi's geographical context in considerable detail, despite this aspect not being part of the topic this year. This suggested that prepared answers were in play. The more successful responses which discussed the physical geography considered such things as the importance of Delphi's position on early trade routes, its regular destruction of architecture due to earthquakes and the significance of its location in the centre of the mainland Greece. These responses effectively linked the geographical feature to an aspect of Delphi's history or development.

Some candidates appeared to confuse mythological context with historical context and they spent too much time explaining the early myths surrounding the founding of Delphi. Better responses linked discussion of these origin myths to the interpretation that belief in the site's divine origin was a key part of Delphi's popularity as it made it a point of pilgrimage for all the Greeks.

QUESTION 6: GREECE

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

The topic was quite straight forward on the surface but it required the candidates to describe two prescribed structures and practices which many were obviously not prepared to do. They were also required to "evaluate" how evidence from at least one feature furthers our understanding of the changing nature of those structures and practices. Few candidates successfully managed to cover all of these elements in their introduction and the ensuing essay often omitted at least one element from the

topic. The lack of explicit identification of specific structures and practices in topic sentences worked against some candidates.

The literacy displayed was generally sound, although sometimes the register was too casual and conversational for an historical essay.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

This Criteria requires candidates to offer specific evidence to support their assertions. They are not required in this section to analyse the reliability or contestability of the evidence although they may, of course, comment on these issues as they offer the evidence. Unfortunately in far too many essays no (or very little) evidence from sources was offered in support of claims.

Candidates needed to name specific sources; they were rewarded if they named and paraphrased a source or correctly quoted from a source. The best responses skilfully wove the evidence from primary sources into their paragraphs, 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 a range of primary sources including the most relevant example for the feature or element being explained. The better responses on Sparta mentioned the lack of Spartan primary sources and the need for care to be taken when relying upon the accounts of 'foreign' observers and historians.

CRITERIA 6: DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

The majority of candidates wrote on Athens but there were some very good analyses of Sparta's development after the subjugation of the Messenians. Candidates who attempted to discuss both Athens and Sparta were not able to provide sufficient depth of discussion and this approach is not recommended.

Weaker responses looked at each aspect of the topic in isolation and failed to make any meaningful connections between them or looked mainly at one aspect with little or no reference to the others. Some responses explained the reforms or actions of an individual, such as Peisistratus or Solon, without explicitly relating them to two structural elements and one feature.

The best responses addressed the relationship between the structures and the feature and considered how historical events or political reforms influenced change in all three. It was very clear that many candidates had prepared a response that included the political and social structures and were unnerved by the inclusion of cultural structures and practices in the topic. The more able candidates successfully defined cultural practices in a very broad way that enabled them to include discussion of different social classes in the society. Weaker candidates forged ahead with their prepared points about social

structures. Students who had prepared two features in some detail had the advantage of being able to draw upon this knowledge in order to provide evidence for both prescribed structures.

This section was approached in a wide variety of ways which probably reflects the very broad nature of the course content in this module and the problem of organising a lucid essay. Most candidates appeared to have been prepared to discuss two structures of their own choice, including the social element, and were perplexed by the topic's prescriptions. A sizeable number of candidates discussed two features in order to provide evidence for both prescribed structures. Only a few candidates discussed the feature of Beliefs, Rituals and Funerary Practices, possibly because many candidates used religion and beliefs as part of their definition of cultural practices.

Candidates often used the evidence from the Women and the Family feature to highlight the cultural element but had difficulty connecting this feature to the political element. Many candidates used Warfare and Weapons as a second feature to illustrate the links between changing military practices and political developments. Candidates who discussed Sparta outlined how the implementation of the militaristic ideology impacted upon all the structures of that society including the political and cultural practices. Successful essays that focused upon Athens showed the connections between the rise of the hoplite and rowers of the triremes and the drive toward more democratic political and legal practices.

The topic did not require discussion of the geographical context of a society but some candidates spent far too much time on this aspect as though determined to include their knowledge of this content.

QUESTION 7: GREECE

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

This was a straightforward topic with the wording inviting description and relating rather than analysis and evaluation. Candidates and their teachers should also be conversant with the Criteria elements for each award. Overall paragraphs were measured and relevant to the topic. The main weakness was the use of a narrative mode rather than an analytical, historical style to present points and evidence. In extreme cases responses appeared to be a hagiography as candidates were overtaken by their admiration of their selected individual.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Most responses contained examples of both primary and secondary evidence and used them in a satisfactory way, even though this was not explicitly called for in the topic. However, some candidates were so enthusiastic about their selected individual that they simply recounted all they knew about them, neglecting to draw upon the most significant sources of information.

Better responses presented contrasting judgements and accounts of the individual to expose the bias and omissions that impacted upon evaluation of their actions and impact. This was particularly the case with Themistocles as the reasons for his downfall were disputed as his enemies sought to downplay his

contribution to Persia's defeat. There was some very strong analysis of the accounts of Plutarch and Thucydides in their contrasting representations of the Athenian leader.

CRITERIA 7: ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

The most popular individuals were Peisistratus, Themistocles, Solon and then Cleomenes I, with very few candidates selecting Thucydides. The stronger responses very clearly provided context for the individual and his rise to a position of power. They described the roles and positions of influence that were open to citizens at the featured time, including checks and balances to the exercise of power. This gave them a sound foundation from which to analyse the influence and impact of their individual within this context. Weaker responses launched into a description of the individual's early life and actions, frequently using an ineffective narrative mode.

Stronger responses showed deep understanding of the expectations of leaders in either Athens or Sparta and were able to make judgements of the individual based on how well they fulfilled these beliefs and values. There were several impressive discussions of the circumstances that led to Solon's reforms, his restructuring program and the turmoil he left behind with his work unfinished. The contradictions in Peisistratus' character, actions and impact on Athens' political and cultural development were highlighted in the strongest responses. The best analysis of Cleomenes' actions showed how his career punched holes in Sparta's propaganda that they were invincible in the field, mainly inward-looking in policy making and always had a stable and unified system of government. Themistocles was in many ways, a typical politician and leader of his time. While many candidates effectively discussed his contribution in repelling the Persians in both invasions, the more successful responses also examined the importance of his civic reforms including his development of Port Piraeus and the fortified walls around Athens and the port. Candidates also needed to account for the downturn in his popularity and exile.

QUESTION 3: ROME - THE ROMAN GAMES

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Most students presented fairly coherent and logically structured work. However, there was also a frustrating trend for students to reproduce pre-learned essays, regardless of the topic. Many of the essays followed an identical paragraph by paragraph structure which was clearly a response to last year's question, not this year's. Some students spent several pages discussing the geographical context of the games, when this wasn't mentioned in this year's topic. This would appear to be the result of classes looking as a whole at how to answer a particular question. While this is excellent practice for exam writing, students need to be reminded that they must answer the question, the whole question and *nothing but the question*.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

The most common weakness was that candidates didn't clearly explain how particular sources of information have given rise to particular interpretations of historical context of the games. Too often the explanation of historical context and the examples of evidence lay side by side in the essay but were not explicitly linked.

Stronger responses were able to explain that most evidence can be traced to a particular time and place and that this helps us understand what role the games may have been playing in Roman society at that point in its history. Weaker responses often didn't provide any insight into the sources at all, at worst just listing them in the introduction, linked to no particular point, as though they had addressed Criteria 4 and could now get on with writing the essay.

There are also many archaeological sites, and objects retrieved from them, which could be mentioned to support argument in this section. Many candidates mentioned the role of the Colosseum (variously spelled) but few gave any detail about how this particular amphitheatre, its position, its size or its features, help in the interpretation of the role of the games in late first and second century Rome. A few candidates also mentioned the amphitheatre at Pompeii but again, just mentioning facts is not enough.

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

Most candidates demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the Roman Games and the various interpretations of their purpose and change over time. However, too many responses felt very prepared and did not explicitly address the set elements of the topic. They rarely achieved more than a "C" rating.

Candidates needed to demonstrate that the role of the games in Roman society is open to interpretation and that understanding the historical context to the games helps historians to provide valid interpretations of the evidence we have for the games. Most candidates had a fair to very good grasp of the factual material in this section and could write in some detail about the historical context of the games, largely by examining the role they played in Roman society at different points in time, be that as a religious rite, reputation builder, political weapon, social control mechanism or simply an expression of cultural identity.

Juvenal's famous comment about *bread and circuses* was used by many candidates. Stronger responses to the topic pointed out that this is part of a satirical work and that satire flourishes in times of perceived political or social laxity or corruption. This allowed for a much stronger explanation of how the games were used in the first two centuries of imperial rule as a distraction from the lack of actual political power the people had after the collapse of genuine Republican government.

Likewise, the Zliten mosaic, was often mentioned as evidence of the range of animals used in games but better responses described it as a very high status artwork in a house which clearly belonged to a very

wealthy individual. This afforded the opportunity to discuss how this suggests that staging games was thus associated with wealth and social reputation. Making these crucial links between evidence and interpretation explicit was a feature of responses that gained high ratings.

QUESTION 6: ROME

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Essay structure was well handled by the great majority of candidates this year, with an impressive number of candidates writing lengthy essays with some depth of analysis. More successful candidates signposted to the marker explicit connections between the structures and the feature(s). It was necessary to return to the specific wording of the topic to avoid the temptation to 'waffle' too much which reduced the quality of the analysis. On the whole introductions were very well done, making reference to the key wording of the topic. However, less successful candidates failed to discuss all the elements outlined in their introduction, perhaps reverting to a prepared answer.

A distressing amount of essays were little more than a 1 ½ page 'mind-dump' of everything the student could remember about a feature, with no structure and no purpose. These type of essays simply couldn't pass on any of the Criteria.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Good essays used a variety of sources. Primary written, archaeological or epigraphic sources and secondary written sources are three distinct types of information that could all be used in an essay on this sort of topic. While many of the art and architecture essays used very site- specific evidence, referring to individual Pompeian houses (which was excellent) the use of secondary source commentary was very thin, which was disappointing. In the features of Religion and Woman and the Family, too many students seemed to confuse information with evidence. So an essay on the religious feature may have gone into considerable detail about what happened during a sacrifice, but at no time provided evidence for how this is known. These detailed descriptions are not evidence and a secondary source historian at least should be cited here. Better still, there are excellent relief carvings of sacrifices taking place, or descriptions in poets such as Horace and Virgil, or accounts in historians such as Plutarch as part of his retelling of the life of an individual. These are the kind of sources that need to be presented as evidence.

Many candidates provided a pleasing range of scholarly secondary sources for the feature of Art & Architecture. These candidates were able to describe characteristics of Pompeian art and architecture but many again failed to establish an effective link to political or cultural structures and practices. Using this feature was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate understanding of what life was like for all classes of Romans. Candidates could refer to architectural and numismatic evidence, graffiti, mosaics, wall paintings, insula, warehouses, temples to find primary evidence of the cultural life of the Romans.

Some capable candidates referred to the important evidence about political practices that can be deduced from buildings located within the civil Forum of Pompeii such as the Basilica, however,

candidates needed to extend their arguments just a little further to establish this connection more explicitly.

CRITERIA 6: DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

Successful candidates for this topic were able to demonstrate competence by addressing the entirety of the topic, despite its challenge. Many capable candidates, however, failed to refer to historical context and made no reference to any changes over time. It appeared that many candidates had been prepared to write about the social structures and found it difficult to adapt their discussion of the feature to reflect on the nature of the two prescribed structures. The three most widely chosen features were Art and Architecture, Women and the Family, and Beliefs and Rituals.

Students who got carried away with details of the feature which they felt safe with, but who failed to show how this feature shed light on the structural elements, did not do well. For example, an exhaustive description of the layout of a house in Pompeii did not, in itself, address the topic. However, it did provide opportunities to look at the basis of Roman social interaction by discussing 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 so on, which could have allowed the student to address the cultural/social and 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.

Most candidates who were less successful concentrated too much of their argument on a key feature such as Pompeian Art & Architecture with the resultant essay lacking a strong connection to the political structure, in particular. Discussion of the details of this *feature* was particularly well done, but often lacked reference to any primary sources. Vitruvius was a glaring omission here and also Pliny the Younger and Tacitus. Candidates needed to include a statement about the limited nature of primary literary evidence, and then indicate that by referring to the key feature of art and architecture they were using *archaeological* evidence.

QUESTION 7: ROME

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Expression varied widely, though many students managed to maintain a reasonable level of academic language and style. While the use of slang was not wide-spread unsuitable informality was quite common. It's not appropriate to say that Caesar was "the brains and glue of the group" or that he "eventually got too big for the Senate to handle" or to refer to Lepidus as "another bloke" because his name can't be recalled.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Candidates provided lots of potentially good evidence, but it was often not well *used*. This was disappointing, as often the candidate is close to supporting an answer well, but then just doesn't make the clear link explaining what the evidence shows.

Loose paraphrases of primary sources presented as actual quotes aren't recommended, particularly if the student can't muster a tone which would be appropriate to a reputable English translation. Of course there are often many different translations available, which is why most fairly accurate and clear versions are acceptable. However, if the expression is so bad that it is clearly NOT from a professionally translated version of a source but has been simply thrown together as a rough gist of what Plutarch said about Cicero, it would be better just to present it as a paraphrase of the author's statement and not try to pass it off as a quote. While it is not essential, students are encouraged to be able to provide more than the author's name for a primary source quote. They should at least be able to attribute it to a particular work. Occasionally, "quotes" were flagrantly invented and were ludicrously expressed or quite wrong and clearly NOT by an ancient author. This does the candidate no favours and casts doubt then on all their other legitimate quotes.

Students are encouraged, when using modern secondary sources, to keep them for specific opinions or interpretations. Citing Bradley or Mary Beard as the source of a very generalised or bland comment that anyone could have said doesn't really achieve much and is not what using secondary sources is about. It is also of little use to quote just a single word unless it is a particularly telling one. There's little use in saying that Beard believed Roman society was "violent", as though her use of that particularly word is especially insightful or original. It might make more sense to quote her if she said it was "permeated by violence", or "addicted to violence" because of the specific connotations of these words.

Overall, using 4-5 very well chosen and used sources was preferable to a flood of names and quotes of just a couple of words, none of which was examined in any real depth. Some essays crammed in 15 or more examples and/or quotes, but made little use of any of them. Candidates would have been better off using half this number to build a more insightful argument.

CRITERIA 7: ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

For ancient Rome, all five figures were selected for discussion, although the majority of students wrote on Julius Caesar or Augustus. Caesar (please learn to spell this correctly) often attracted enthusiastically glowing, but very general summaries, of how amazingly influential and powerful he was without much solid detail. Candidates tended to focus on the more colourful aspects of his achievements rather than the really important things such as how he enshrined the new paradigm of political power in Rome, the shift from traditional Republican pathways of *mos maiorum* and the *cursus honorum* to a more open acknowledgement of the role of military power and demagoguery.

The smaller number of students who chose Sulla, Cicero and Livia often had much better understandings of the way they interacted with their society and its power structures and seemed less bedazzled by the character's popular reputation.

Predictably, weaker candidates overlooked the specifics of the question and simply provided a biography of their chosen figure, thus not addressing Criteria 7 at all. Others addressed the topic (or at least reproduced its key words) in the introduction or conclusion, but still only provided an overview of the figure's life or personality in the body of the essay.

Stronger responses paid particular attention to exactly what the topic required, rather than simply assuming that they should discuss motivations, how the society affected the figure and how the figure affected society. While these are key aspects of this unit, they are not automatically what the topic is about. The more successful essays took time to really investigate the *role* and *position* of the figure, looking at whether their figures held officially defined political and military positions, or had created their own position or were simply influential in a more informal way (e.g. Livia). This addressed the first part of the topic, which was often overlooked in weaker answers.

Overall, candidates dealt reasonably well with the impact of their figure on society. Stronger answers understood that this often meant looking at how that figure questioned, or even reshaped, acceptable ideas of leadership, rather than simply listing slightly random things they left behind them, such the fact that Caesar added new months to the calendar.

QUESTION 4: CHINA: XIA, SHANG OR ZHOU DYNASTIES

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

The marker was looking for a clear and coherent essay that addressed all elements of the topic and most candidates were able to provide this response. Overall, the spelling of Chinese place names and individuals' names was correct.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

The prescription in the topic that candidates refer to 'reliable' sources limited discussion of the first two dynasties as so much of the available evidence is contested and open to interpretation. The more adaptable candidates managed to include analysis of the reliability of primary sources as part of their response which was appropriate.

Candidates who examined the Xia Dynasty had to weigh the interpretation of the dynasty being legendary against the evidence of some modern discoveries of bronze working implements and remains of palaces dating to the Xia period. Effective use was made of archaeological evidence from the ruins of Yin, tombs, palaces and ritual sites to support points about the existence and dating of the Shang Dynasty. Many candidates accurately described the significance of divination based on the oracle bones, the earliest form of writing, and used evidence from precious jade, bronze and stone artefacts to illustrate aspects of the society.

Candidates who selected the Zhou Dynasty had perhaps the largest body of primary sources to draw upon including archaeological and literary, in particular, as writing became wide-spread in the area.

Close examination of a range of sources (4-5) and their significance usually enabled more the successful synthesis of evidence and argument. These responses often included references to the ideas of modern historians and recently discovered evidence to challenge or confirm an interpretation.

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

The topic required candidates to write on only one of the three dynasties from Section A of the course. Despite this restriction, most students succeeded in composing detailed responses. Many candidates chose to focus on the Shang Dynasty which gave them the opportunity to also include the Xia Dynasty in their discussion of the early historical context and to extend their analysis of the variety of interpretations of all the three dynasties. Candidates who chose to discuss the later periods had the advantage of being able to examine the rulers' representations of their predecessors' actions and achievements.

The marker was looking for cogent arguments about the nature of the selected dynasty and its relationship to closely related periods. The majority of responses described the nature of the selected period in detail, referring to the warring times and the move toward unity that characterised this early

history of China. There was strong discussion of the development of Legalist and Confucian philosophies and ways of acting and their influence on politics and culture. Detailed discussion about the development of environmental controls, technology and the Arts was a feature of better responses.

It was pleasing to see strong analysis of the different ancient and modern interpretations of the significance of the dynasties, including the contribution of modern Chinese and western scholars. Better responses used considered arguments, supported by evidence, to evaluate these competing views.

QUESTION 6: CHINA

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Most candidates applied a satisfactory essay structure to express their points. Weaker responses were characterised by weak sentence structures and grammatical errors. Better responses provided a clear introduction to the essay followed by detailed analysis of the structural practices as well as depth of discussion of the feature(s). This topic was the most difficult to structure as a cogent argument.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Weaker responses were limited in the use of source material and did not present a synthesised argument. Effective responses integrated a wide range and scope of evidence and source material.

CRITERIA 6: DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

By focusing on the political and cultural structures the topic tested the candidates' ability to adapt their knowledge to discuss these structures through the lens of their selected feature. Many candidates struggled with the requirements of the topic and submitted responses that lacked detailed knowledge of one or both of the structures. Candidates need to be explicit about the structures and feature(s) to be discussed and to avoid fragmented analysis. Markers should not have to search for evidence of the structures in the response.

Better responses were explicit in their discussion of the structures although interpretation of "cultural structures" varied widely and a broad spectrum of understanding was evident. The two features selected most often for discussion were Art and Architecture and Beliefs, particularly those who discussed the Qin period. Here they were able to examine how the shift from Confucianism to Legalist ideology impacted on the political and cultural practices of the period. Those who extended their discourse in to the Han period were able to discuss the re-shifting of ideological focus and the effect that had in the latter period.

QUESTION 7: CHINA

CRITERIA 3: COMMUNICATE HISTORICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION

The topic offered a way to structure a response and most candidates wrote confidently about their selected individual. Despite most candidates tackling this topic last in the exam most essays were at least three pages in length which enabled writers to adequately address all elements of the set topic.

CRITERIA 4: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Predictably, less effective responses merely narrated the leader's life story and neglected to include discussion of key primary and other sources to support their points. Cao Cao, in particular, has been represented in a variety of ways, as a cunning and deceitful man (*Chinese Opera* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) and more recently in the twentieth century as a worthy Legalist leader. In contrast, Liu Bei has most often been depicted as a benevolent Confucian scholar in the *Romance* and other works. In addition, there are numerous art works that provide views of the leaders that could have been used as evidence.

CRITERIA 7: ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HUMAN AGENCY ON AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

Zhuge Liang was the most popular individual selected for discussion followed by Cao Cao and then Liu Bei. Overall, this was the weakest section completed in the exam for this civilisation. The marker expected to read discussion of the system of power within which the three political leaders operated and, in particular, the ways in which the chaotic political situation enabled capable military leaders to rise to positions of authority. The impact of the Yellow Turban rebellion and its lingering aftermath of uprisings was referred to by stronger candidates.

The weaker responses presented a timeline of the individual's life and significant events with little attempt to analyse the factors behind his influence on his society. This was where better responses provided historical context that showed how bold military tacticians and minor aristocrats could curry favour and gain a position of power. In addition to their account of military successes, more capable candidates discussed their individual's civic endeavours which benefitted the society, including such things as technology that increased agricultural output and a more just legal system.

All three individuals are subject to differing representations of their prowess and aims, with modern discoveries including such things as Cao Cao's possible tomb providing plenty of interpretations of an individual's lasting impact. In the better responses candidates analysed and evaluated the merit of a number of such representations, synthesising a range of sources to back their points. Weaker responses were characterised by uncritical description of the leader's actions and influence.