

2022 ASSESSMENT REPORT

ANH315117 - Ancient History

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the civilisations studied included Greece, Rome, Egypt and China, with Greece remaining the most popular choice. A small number of students chose to respond to Section C by focussing on an individual they had not studied in Section A and B. Section A and Section B included a stimulus statement with Section B, requiring students to reference the included statement. As in 2021, students were able to select one element and at least one feature, whilst Section C directed students to consider the political and social context of individuals in assessing how societies impacted them. Importantly and crucially in terms of Section B teaching and learning, element 2 on C6 was returned to the external assessment specifications for 2022 following teacher feedback to TASC after 2021. However, the 2022 exam did not require students to look at this impact.

As is the case every year, students were required to read the question carefully and respond to all parts of the question. The question for Section A required students to assess the usefulness of sources in providing an understanding of the impact a site, era, event or development had on the nature and historical context of an ancient civilisation. Students had to demonstrate their content knowledge of a specific site, event, development or era available on the list, as well as demonstrate their understanding of the nature of the available evidence. There was no explicit requirement to acknowledge or use the statement for Section A. The question for Section B asked students to refer to a statement about societies developing structures and practices to “maintain continuity”, whilst analysing how elements and at least one feature maintained the structure and practice of the society. In Section C, the question asked students to analyse how the political and social context of a society affected a significant individual. Students were also asked to assess the motivations, impact and significance of a specific historical individual on their society.

As has been a growing trend since 2020, all three exam questions *directed* students to utilise primary and secondary source information to support their arguments, and despite this – a significant number of students did not do this. Teachers should continue to ensure that students understand that they must utilise primary and secondary sources in all of their exam responses, as supporting arguments with evidence is a key historical skill.

As in previous years, it was disappointing to see the number of seemingly pre-prepared responses in 2022 and/or the number of responses that did not directly relate to the question. This remains the main barrier for students to achieve an A across all criteria. Examiners become aware of this issue when students do not refer to the command terms apparent in the question, do not refer to the stimulus from the question (*required for* Section B only in 2022) or introduce evidence and information in the context of what the question is asking. Students need to dedicate time to *applying* their existing knowledge, research and

understanding to the exam question, and to do this consistently in the introduction of their essays, in the topic sentences of main body paragraphs, throughout each paragraph and in the conclusion. If it is detailed, accurate and supported by primary and secondary sources without answering the question, it will generally form the bulk of a satisfactory or good response. Students need to be aware that *it is not the examiner's responsibility to infer the relevancy of information or why it is being included*. The onus is on the student to make historical information relevant to the question. If this is a key focus in a response, students can only then expect their results to move into the excellent or outstanding range.

There was no explicit requirement to *describe* core elements or features in Section B in 2022, and many students seemed to make this the sole purpose of their responses when the 2022 question asked for an analysis. Descriptions are of course essential, yet if there was no link to the question, it gave an impression of a pre-prepared response. The 2022 Section A question did not ask how evidence impacted *our understanding of the ancient past* like the 2021 Section A question, and this seemed to be the focus for a lot of responses. The focus for Section A in 2022 was on how the evidence provided an understanding on the *impact* of the era, site, event on the *nature and historical context* of ancient civilisation. There was a key difference between exam questions.

Past exams are a great resource, but students are asked to look at the question that is in front of them and avoid an “information dump” or pre-prepared response.

It is strongly recommended that teachers provide students with a wide variety of essay questions throughout the year, and learning activities which encourage the application of knowledge and understanding beyond detailed description and into analysis and evaluation. Teachers might consider providing opportunities that allow for students to address *all elements* of C5, C6 and C7 over the course of the year, so that they have many practice opportunities to adapt their knowledge to the question at hand.

As has been stated in previous Assessment Reports, without the specificity and deep analysis *in responding to a question*, students will rarely achieve higher than a C or B rating on criteria 5, 6 and 7. The strongest responses utilised the terms and concepts from the question consistently throughout, especially in the introduction, topic sentences, linking sentences and conclusion of the essay. Students are encouraged to rehearse basic essay structure throughout the year in preparation for the exam.

CRITERION 3 – GENERAL COMMENTS

As is always the case in Ancient History 315 and is regularly highlighted in Assessment Reports, students are required to demonstrate their capacity to communicate historical interpretation and analysis in a logical, coherent and direct way. Clarity of communication is imperative if examiners are to assess the knowledge and understanding of students, the quality of discussion and the relevance of evidence used to support the answer.

The more successful responses in 2022 were clear essays with identifiable introductions, main body paragraphs and conclusions. Successful responses were broken into clearly planned and organised paragraphs, which were all connected to and advanced a *relevant* argument, beginning with a topic sentence which, at the very least, referred to the language of the essay question. Stronger responses also linked information and evidence to the question throughout a paragraph as well as in the conclusion. Stronger responses contained few spelling or grammatical errors and handwriting was also legible. Students without any special provisions need to ensure their responses can be read.

As is the case every year, highly successful responses more often correctly incorporated Greek, Latin, Chinese or Egyptian terms and concepts relevant to the selected civilisation. These terms were italicised or underlined to distinguish them from other more commonly used words and this is a practice that should be encouraged by teachers.

In less successful responses, the purpose of each paragraph was often not clear from the outset. They were descriptions only or simply introduced an event or historical detail without connecting it to the purpose of the question within the first sentence, or in the following sentences. The examiners cannot guess or infer why a student has chosen to include information. The nature of the course allows for a great deal of student agency with regards to how they choose to answer the question. There are many different historical details that can be used to answer the same question. With this student agency comes a responsibility to clearly link the focus of their writing to the question.

Students should not include statements such as “I believe...” or “I think...”. Statements such as “evidence suggests” or “it can be argued that...” are much more appropriate. 2022 students were more successful than previous years in writing with a formal tone. Weaker responses used colloquial language or conversational tone and made emotive or sweeping statements, including irrelevant arguments linking twenty first century attitudes, beliefs or values. Assessment Reports over the years have been very clear that applying contemporary or personal points of view rarely results in accurate or sound historical analysis. For example, each year many students want to argue that women within ancient society “had no rights or say whatsoever”. Teachers should advise their students against employing this approach as it tends to become all-encompassing, pervasive and the only lens through which the element or feature is explored, often leading to reduced opportunity to answer the question or focus on relevant arguments.

CRITERION 4 – GENERAL COMMENTS

Use of evidence to support arguments is arguably one of the most important aspects of the Ancient History course. An important aspect of C4 for all students to acknowledge as they prepare to study in 2023 is that information only becomes evidence if it is *used*. Historical information, quoting or paraphrasing primary and secondary sources is not evidence unless it is clearly applied to the topic or concept that the exam question requires. For example, simply describing the three attempts at power by Peisistratus (regardless of detail) only *becomes*

evidence if a student *introduces it and connects it as evidence* of his *possible motivation* to seize power, or perhaps, argue that he was *influenced by the political or social context of his society* (organised violence, marriage alliances, factional support, wealth and religious authority etc.) Unless the student links historical information to the purpose of their assessment or evaluation, it becomes almost impossible for an examiner to *fairly* determine if it is indeed evidence being used by the student.

Exam papers in recent years have either explicitly directed students or made it a requirement of the question to refer to primary and secondary sources. This requirement will continue and students must be aware that referencing primary and secondary sources will be the minimum requirement for a ‘C’ standard. Evidence for C4 also includes historical details and information. In 2022, to achieve an A for C4 – more than four highly appropriate pieces of evidence (historical events, developments, circumstances etc) was required, as well as (at least) two primary sources and (at least) two secondary sources.

Typically, an ‘A’ standard response for C4 introduces a relevant argument, which is then backed by primary source material and accurate, highly detailed historical information. This includes dates and specific events, developments, or circumstances. Whilst *direct quotes are not required to receive an ‘A’ for C4*, accurately quoting or paraphrasing relevant primary source material is generally rewarded against C4. For ancient literary sources, the author’s name and the text title are required (if there is more than one work to cite). With regards to secondary sources, students should provide the published author’s name and the date of the publication in brackets. If a student chooses to utilise a direct primary or secondary source quote they have memorised *and it is obscure* i.e., one that their own research has discovered and not explored with their teacher – a chapter and verse (for primary) or page number (for secondary) may also be appropriate. Examiners need to be able to verify the authenticity of *unfamiliar* primary and secondary source details, arguments or analysis employed by students.

It was unfortunate that some responses provided quite a lot of historical detail, but completely omitted source support and this meant these could not move beyond the C range. Also, some responses included highly detailed historical information but did not make it relevant to the question. As a result, it was difficult for examiners to *assess this detailed information as evidence*. Students need to remember that if information is not made relevant to the question by them, it is almost impossible to fairly determine if a student has simply reproduced information from memory and “dumped” it, or if they are *applying* their knowledge. In 2022, Section C did not *require* an assessment or evaluation of the sources.

Many students continue to write a “second introduction” evaluating the nature of the evidence for their individual and whilst this can be useful, it should not be at the expense of time spent answering the question, as appeared to be the case for many responses. Examiners in 2022 advise against a “second introduction” being a part of final products (with the possible exception of an internally assessed report for Section C) in 2023. Internally assessed responses for Section C are certainly required to assess how individuals are represented in

the evidence, although not all externally assessed exams will require it. Examiners discussed that this practice of a “second introduction” might be a holdover from the previous course structure which encouraged this approach. The 2021 Assessment Report also advised against this approach which means that there are now two years of external support material that are advising against this for students.

Students are encouraged to utilise primary sources as evidence of facts that support an argument and secondary sources as a way of analysing and interpreting that evidence. For example, it is Suetonius and/or Plutarch who tells us *what* Caesar did, but Suzanne Dixon or Michael Grant who gives us possible explanations for *why* he did it or what long term effect it had. Previous Assessment Reports have also made it clear that simply listing the number of times the Delphic oracle is mentioned in Herodotus and Thucydides is not *evidence* as to why or how the site impacted society. Secondary sources used to support generally well-known information is not really needed or appropriate. For example, “Sparta was a *polis*” or “The Battle of Marathon took place in 490 BCE” and similar - do not require secondary source reference as *evidence* to support this information. Rather, if a secondary source was arguing that Sparta had mechanisms in place to continue the dominance of *homoioi* over *helots* or that the Athenian success at Marathon was a key driver of military culture or highlighted the continuing need for military posts being open for re-election – these points may require secondary support.

As in previous years, the highest quality responses demonstrated critical selection of historical information and source material by ensuring information was *used* as evidence. The relevant arguments and interpretations of secondary source material were also used to support the argument in more successful responses. These secondary sources were identified by name and the date of the publication was in brackets.

Teachers should continue to *encourage students to reference published authors* as their main source for secondary support. Whilst not completely discounted, reference to Wikis, blogs, websites (even reputable ones) will often not be enough to move beyond a C. Educators recognise the ease with which secondary information can be accessed and engaged with via publication online, however, published authors, often highly qualified in the relevant field and with their work peer reviewed before publication, remains the preferred secondary source type in Ancient History.

- GREECE -

CRITERION 3 – GENERAL COMMENTS

Each year the marking tool and the elements of C3 will reward very clear, logical, coherent, evidenced based and historically detailed arguments. These arguments must be relevant to the question, be contained within a traditional essay structure which includes an obvious introduction, main body paragraphs and an obvious conclusion. Students are also rewarded on

C3 if they use formal language, include accurate spelling and punctuation, consistently *apply* the language of the question as well as employ subject and civilisation specific terminology.

In order to more effectively answer questions under exam conditions, students are encouraged to open main body paragraphs (at least within the first two/three sentences) with a point or argument that is relevant to the question rather than *only* open with a sentence that describes an event or historical circumstance. Using the language of the question is always a good place to start. For example, in Section A, rather than beginning with “*Delphi was important and used for religion and city-states put trophies and monuments there*”, instead consider “*Sources concerning Delphi such as the Temple of Apollo and Plutarch are useful in providing an understanding of the religious and competitive nature of Greek civilisation*”. Another example for Section B that was relevant to the question: “*The political structure and practices in Sparta were designed to maintain continuity with regards to the dominance of the citizen males (homoioi) over the Lakonian and Messenian captives (helots)*”. Rather than, “*Spartan citizens were males who had trained and completed the agoge*” or “*Spartan government consisted of the Kings, a council, ephors and an assembly*”. The opening of main body paragraphs should clearly place historical information that the student will write about in the context of the question given that year. If this is absent, students must rapidly link information to the question, otherwise examiners will not know why a student has selected the information.

Many students struggled to adapt to the change in the nature of the questions in 2022 in the section on Greece. Whereas the 2021 Section B exam question required students to (among other things) *describe* an element of society, this was not essential in 2022. Weaker responses *focussed only* on describing elements and features in 2022. Students can only avoid the impression of a pre-prepared response by explicitly addressing the question throughout their response. Only the responses that do this consistently from beginning to end will receive an A for C3.

Colloquial or conversational tone is not appropriate for an essay in a Level 3 course. Students should also avoid emotive, sweeping, hyperbolic statements that are not made relevant to the question if they are wanting to achieve above a C for C3. To argue that “*Women had no rights in ancient Greece and were treated like second-class citizens*” is persuasive, engaging language indicative of a student who is engaged and feels strongly about the experiences of women. However, the first point is not factually correct, and the second point must be placed in context by the student. Women were not a homogenous group in the ancient world. It is true that citizen women were not granted active participation in political life *when compared to* citizen males however, it can be argued that *metic* women and slave women moved relatively freely about the *polis* as did older citizen wives. Unless points about access to rights and inequality amongst the sexes are *actively and consistently* linked to the question (in the case of 2022 the idea of *maintaining continuity*) the information will not be considered relevant.

Assessment Reports in recent years have been consistent in the advice to teachers and students exploring the feature of women and the family particularly – although these emotive, sweeping, often inaccurate statements were not limited to this feature alone in 2022.

CRITERION 4

See Introduction.

CRITERION 5

Stronger responses were able to introduce and explore information in the context of evidence being useful, although at times incomplete and imperfect. Better responses were also able to link either Delphi or the fall of Troy as having impacted the nature and historical context of Greek civilisation. This was the question in 2022. Evidence concerning the origins of Delphi and how *poleis* would later insert different gods, peoples or themselves into the origin stories – demonstrated the impact Delphi had on the civilisation as well as the imperfect and incomplete nature of the sources. Evidence from Herodotus, Plutarch, The Temple of Apollo, results from the French Archaeological School, De Boer and Hale and the prolific M. Scott – were primary and secondary sources used to explore the impact oracular consultation had on Greek civilisation as well as the incomplete and imperfect nature of the evidence. The question in 2022 required a complex mixture of source analysis, as well as evaluation of the impact of Delphi or the fall of Troy on Greek society. This was not easy, particularly the need to establish that either of these sites *and the study of them* – reveal the impact they had on society.

Weaker responses either misread the question or provided a pre-prepared response. Many were focussed on reviewing the evidence and how it increased our understanding of the ancient past. This was the 2021 question and many responses did not adapt. Students who intend to look at Troy need to ensure they are focussed on evidence concerning the *destruction* and/or decline of Troy. The influence and significance of a still functioning and influential Troy might have been made relevant in 2022 had students then linked the absence of Troy as an impact on society. Not many did this.

CRITERION 6

If an exam question has a stimulus statement and the question requires it be referred to or addressed, it must be addressed. Students who did not refer to the statement directly or the concepts articulated in the statement, rarely achieved above a C for C6. Teachers and students are encouraged to ensure that statements (if included) are explicitly used for analysis and evaluation in an exam response.

Stronger responses in 2022 were able to explicitly support, challenge or and/or deny the main premise of the statement. Stronger responses provided detailed historical information about Spartan or Athenian political, economic and social Core Elements or the Key Features of society. These responses also explored if these maintained structures and practices, promoted

and fostered change or responded to the historical context of the time. Highlights in 2022 included but were not limited to:

- the Spartan political system, *agoge* and creation of the Peloponnesian League maintaining the dominance of non-citizens and neighbouring *poleis* over a century or more supporting the concept of continuity
- weapons and warfare and the hoplite revolution challenging continuity of structure and practices
- the adoption of coinage as a practice that challenged the concept of continuity outlined in the statement
- the Key Feature of the family in Athens and Sparta maintaining the continuity of experience, roles and expectations of citizen women
- warfare and the political and social Core Elements adapting and changing during the Persian Wars
- social values and beliefs, economic circumstances and factional politics driving change during the time of Solon, Cleisthenes and Pericles.

As highlighted in the introduction of this Assessment Report and in previous reports, weaker responses described Core Elements or Key Features and did not introduce, connect or link information to the statement or the question.

CRITERION 7

Requiring an assessment of how political and social context influenced or impacted an individual certainly suited Greek personalities. This question was quite straightforward except for the requirement that political context be included and should have been well-suited to student preparation. Many students were able to link the power and authority exercised by an individual to the context of the society in which they lived. Many students were then able to look at the ways individuals such as Peisistratus or Themistocles impacted society, either in the short, medium or long term. Cleomenes responses did not always have the depth of information as those of Solon, Peisistratus or Themistocles. Students and teachers should consider which individuals are the most appropriate and supported by primary and secondary sources when making their decision about who to study. Whilst it is not completely discouraged, students who chose an individual different from the civilisation they responded to in Section A and B, lacked the nuance and depth of those responses that were writing about a society they were familiar with. Examiners of C7 in 2022 would not strongly recommend students tackle a Greek individual – if not studying Greece in Section A and Section B.

-ROME -

CRITERION 3 – GENERAL COMMENTS

Examiners recommend that students learn the spelling of Latin terms that are likely to be useful (*auctoritas, cursus honorum, mos maiorum, aedile, imperium* etc) and also the general social or political terms which are likely to be used (oligarchy, patriarchal, hierarchy etc).

They also recommend that in 2023, students are encouraged to start their essay response with an introduction which introduces the exam question, links information and sources to the question throughout, and concludes with the answer. The introduction should let examiners know where students are about to go. Many weaker responses dive straight into their subject's life in the first paragraph with details such as where and when they were born. This is rarely what the student will be asked to write about and this was not the case in 2022. The introduction in 2022 should open with raising the idea that a leader's actions are often shaped by the political and social context of their times, since this is what the question was about. Likewise, students should avoid introductions or conclusions which include generalised exaggeration about the leader being "one of the greatest and most memorable leaders who ever lived in the history of the world". These are sweeping statements that are not relevant and do not add weight, credibility or academic rigour to their analysis unless the "greatness" is then explained with details that are linked to the question.

CRITERION 4 – GENERAL COMMENTS

Many responses for the study of Rome did not mention a source, including those that were quite lengthy and detailed. In 2023 and beyond, learners will get the best results if they use *primary sources as evidence of factual information which supports their argument* and use *secondary sources to back up interpretation of those facts*.

The very best use of a secondary source is when it supports a particular point of view or interpretation. While students do not have to actually quote, the impact of an accurate and well-placed quoted phrase, sometimes of only a few words, should not be underestimated. Conversely, secondary sources used to support a point of information so generic and well-known that it is not needed, can give the impression that a student is ticking the "sources box" and has not understood why and how secondary sources are used in historical analysis. Teachers and students need to read the introduction of this Assessment Report carefully for more information on how students can best demonstrate C4 skills and understanding.

Only a few responses for Cicero made use of the rich primary sources available, given all of Cicero's own writing and Plutarch's substantial *Life of Cicero*.

CRITERION 5

The strongest responses here were those that were able to respond effectively to the question, placing this aspect of their understanding at the centre of their response. Evidence for the Roman Games is relatively abundant in comparison to Masada. Therefore, students should have been able to build their answer around the specific question and not spend too much time generalising or describing various events, types of gladiators and forms of the games. Stronger students showed their familiarity with the significance of the wealth of material from the venues themselves as well as mosaics, graffiti and other epigraphic evidence from across the expanse of the Roman Empire.

More successful responses were able to indicate an awareness of a range of important literary accounts related to the attitudes about the events of the games, the events themselves and geographic and historical context, even if the latter was not asked in 2022. Literary sources such as Seneca, Juvenal, Cicero and Tacitus were mentioned in stronger responses, in addition to mentioning the wealth of archaeological evidence from Pompeii and Herculaneum. Some interesting essays were also able to conclude with some discussion on the changing and evolving nature of evidence as new discoveries are made.

CRITERION 6

Many otherwise strong responses were not awarded an A as they did not address the whole question. The course document clearly states that the Core Elements of an ancient society should be the focus of the study of this unit, with information and evidence concerning a Key Feature being used to enhance an understanding of the Core Elements. Some competent responses began by referring to the selected Key Feature as the direction and focus of their essay. This is not advisable as the course clearly directs students and teachers to focus on Elements first – as did the 2022 question.

This aspect was particularly apparent when the chosen element was political or economic. Some weaker responses showed a lack of understanding of the difference between social, political and economic structures. Marriage and women's roles were incorrectly referred to in some essays as simply "structures". Marriage and the roles of women form part of the Key Feature and are therefore practices that might form part of political, economic or social structures. Many otherwise sound essays lacked any real description or understanding of political offices or key legal structures, and failed to use any relevant terminology which might have enhanced a response. Economic structures were briefly alluded to with trading activity but little else. Social structures were generally well understood, with the class system often explained well and in detail. Changes over time were noted in the context of the statement and the patron - client relationship was explored.

Explanations of the cultural Core Element tended to be included in strong responses but were often one dimensional, making only brief reference to religious beliefs and practices; for example, before continuing with lengthy discussions of the architecture of Pompeii. More

successful responses were able to discuss the relationship between the structure and the feature and describe changes over time or not, in relation to the statement.

CRITERION 7

Many of the responses on Cicero were generally well done. Students mostly linked Cicero to the revolutionary times in which he lived and his conservative role. Responses for Livia were also generally well done. However, students tended to attribute Livia's power to her own remarkable personal qualities alone. These responses neglected to outline that she was able to do what she did because of the radical change from the collective public government of the Republic to the Principate. The latter being essentially coordinated and run largely from Augustus' household. Therefore, the traditional influence of a woman as *domina* of a household gave Livia a chance to influence Roman politics, both under Augustus and Tiberius. This was not clearly stated in any response and should be a focus for students and teachers alike who focus on the role of Livia.

Unfortunately, in 2022, responses focussing on Julius Caesar rarely achieved a satisfactory standard. These responses were mostly narrative descriptions which included colourful moments but did not address the question. Caesar as a focus of study may be particularly prone to this as his political context, motivations and his impact are complex and extensive and require considerable explanation and exploration. Whilst his life is full of temptingly memorable stories that are easily remembered and reproduced under exam conditions, it is imperative that teachers and students locate, and explore together, appropriate secondary source material which analyses as well as describes. Resources and learning experiences that place the life of Julius Caesar within the conceptual framework of Section C, are highly recommended.

The strongest responses to the question and those that demonstrated skills and understanding against the criteria were those that focussed on Augustus. He was particularly suitable for this question and many students managed to talk about how and why Augustus oversaw the transition from one system of government to another.

Many responses did not address what was a relatively straightforward question in 2022. The advice and guidance in Assessment Reports has been “Do not simply recount a life”, “avoid a narrative of events” and this advice is still relevant. Instead, select from the events of a person's life to illustrate **your answer to the actual question**. Some otherwise quite strong answers were weakened by one or more sections of the question being entirely overlooked. In this case, an answer should have considered the political and social context of the time, looked at possible motivations, and discussed the leader's impact on their society. A number of students looked very well at the context of the world their leader found themselves in, but failed to explicitly point out how this context may explain their motivations. Examiners should not be left to infer why information is included. The responsibility is on the learner to demonstrate why information is being included in their response.

In other cases, the motivation and impact were discussed but these responses did not follow through and properly support these arguments with an explanation of what it was about the political and social context of the times. Successful students did both. The strongest answers gave plain, sensible accounts of all four of those elements (one by one), supported by specific examples. These examples were attributed to primary sources. Their significance was then explained by the student and linked to a secondary source which supported their argument.

Whilst it is not completely discouraged – students who chose an individual different from the civilisation they responded to in Section A and B – lacked the nuance and depth of those responses that were writing about a society they were intimately familiar with. Examiners of C7 in 2022 would advise against choosing a Roman individual if you did not study Rome during the year.

- EGYPT -

CRITERION 5

No responses.

CRITERION 6

No responses.

CRITERION 7

The 2022 question gave students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the era. There were a small number of responses about Ramses, which shouldn't be done if students have studied Egypt in SA or SB, but this was not the case in 2022. The majority of responses concerned Hatshepsut and Akhenaten.

Stronger responses utilised clear topic sentences which addressed the elements of the question. These responses also had clear introductions which introduced the main points which would be explored and how they applied to the question. Primary and secondary sources were blended into the arguments present in stronger responses rather than just inserted. Students should read the introduction of this report for information about C4. Stronger responses also addressed *all aspects of the question* with equal balance, provided context and analysis of the leader and their actions rather than a narrative of their life.

Less successful responses lacked a structure and did not address all aspects of the question: motivation, impact, significance and needed more discussion on the context (social, political influences, when they ruled). Responses that provided a biographical description, where topic sentences tended towards the “then this happened” or simply described aspects of the individual's life, could rarely move beyond the C range. In some cases, weaker responses only included primary sources which were also not fully explained. Examiners hypothesised that

time management may have been an issue for some students. This is because some Section C responses for Egypt were quite short or moved rapidly into dot points rather than finishing with a clear conclusion.

Whilst it is not completely discouraged – students who chose an individual different from the civilisation they responded to in Section A and B – lacked the nuance and depth of those responses that were writing about a society they were familiar with. Examiners of C7 in 2022 would advise against choosing an Egyptian individual if you did not study Egypt.

- CHINA -

CRITERION 3 – GENERAL COMMENTS

Most responses were communicated clearly using structured essay format. Spelling was generally at an acceptable level, and taking a dictionary into the exam should be encouraged. Better responses clearly articulated logical, succinct and coherent arguments that demonstrated a clear understanding of what the question entailed.

Use and spelling of Chinese place names, individuals and terms was good, in most instances. However, a few responses were poorly structured and written and displayed both grammatical and syntactical errors. Those who were able to structure a well-argued response and had well-organised introductions and conclusions, were rewarded as were those who integrated stimulus into their response (Section B). It was clear that some students had pre-prepared answers and therefore had difficulty in responding effectively to the questions. They should tailor their response to the question being asked.

CRITERION 4 – GENERAL COMMENTS

Better responses were able to use and integrate a wide range of evidence and primary/secondary source material into their arguments. Less successful responses were limited in their use of source material and did not synthesize evidence.

SECTION A - CRITERION 5 – Xia OR Shang OR Zhou Dynasties

In this section, students were able to select from a number of options and there was an even divide between examination of the Xia and Shang Dynasties.

For the Xia, students focussed on examining the validity of the Xia's existence. Discourse included:

- Discussion of the historical context, dated from 2050 BCE- approx. 1650BCE.
- Discussion on origins and early development (Traditional accounts from Sima Qian et al). e.g. Three sovereigns and five emperors. The emergence of Dynastic lineage starting with Gun's (father of Yu the Great) attempt to stop floods and the application

of the Dynastic renewal and decline theory (Mandate of Heaven). To the eventual overthrow of Jie by Tang (first king of the Shang).

- Political centralization and the emergence of city states e.g., Erlitou (Henan Province)
- The lack of written evidence from the period and why.
- The nature and interpretation of major archaeological (including possible bronze artefacts and implements) and geological discoveries (such as evidence of flooding etc) and referral to major sites such as Erlitou and Erligang/ radiocarbon dating to the period etc.
- The disagreement between scholars as to whether this culture existed as a separate entity from the earliest Shang or was a political fiction created by the Zhou Dynasty leaders to cement their control.

The **main classical texts** mentioned of the **Xia** and **Shang** are the [Bamboo Annals](#), the [Classic of History](#) and the [Records of the Grand Historian](#) (*Shiji* (Sima Qian))* . Particularly in respect to the historical narrative. Secondary source texts included the following: Li Feng (2013), Patricia Ebrey(2010), Robert Eno (2010), Kwang-Chih Chang (2010).

Those exploring the Shang for their Section A focus outlined the blurred lines of transition between the legendary Xia and Shang and the emergence of writing. Primary source material included:

- Oracle Bones (Oxen Shoulder blades or turtle shells) and their purpose, divination, (Scapulimancy).
- Some discussion on ancestor worship and burial practise.
- The use of slaves. Human Sacrifice.
- Bronze Technology (tools and weapons). Chariots, currency (shells etc), significant archaeological finds, bronze artefact inscriptions, oracle bone inscriptions and the later writings by Confucius, Sima Qian et al.

The **key archaeological sites** discussed by students were sites such as Erlitou and Erligang (early Shang) and YIN XU (Anyang site) late Shang period, including the tomb of Lady Fu Hao.

In stronger responses, students were able to identify differing and competing interpretations and evaluate their merit, in regard to their usefulness for the purpose of the question. Better responses also included a wide range of relevant evidence and were supported by carefully selected primary and secondary sources.

Weaker responses confined their arguments to mainly narrative or a description with little or no reference to primary and secondary sources.

SECTION B - CRITERION 6 – China

Beliefs and Religious Practices was the main feature selected. A small number of students examined Weapons and Warfare and Technology. Political and Social structures were the key

practices discussed. Some students extended their discussions to include the economic consequences of changes etc. to socio-political frameworks.

Better responses were able to show the intricate connection that exists between structures and practices, and the selected feature/s and apply that to the concept of continuity. These responses were able to integrate the stimulus statement into their response and develop cogent arguments. Better responses were also able to *challenge the statement* to show the impact of change over time on the structures and practices, and how these were reflected in the features. For example, as the state of Qin began to assert political ascendancy at the end of the Warring States period in response to the Legalist reforms of Shang Yang, changes in both weapons and strategies of war emerged, mainly as a result of the aggressive policies of Ying Zheng. Under his leadership, the standardization of these processes occurred and were continued and elaborated on by the Western Han. Similarly, those students who examined the Qin period were able to discuss how the shift from Confucianist to Legalist ideology impacted on the socio-political and cultural practices of the period. Better responses were able to extend this examination of the shifting political and cultural practices between the Qin and Han periods and explain how and why the morphed Legalist/Confucianist belief system of Emperor Wu Di came about.

Weaker responses struggled to discuss in detail any key features. Similarly, their arguments lacked depth and their coverage of structures and practices was superficial. Additionally, weaker responses were unable to integrate the stimulus question into their response, and where they did, it was only a passing reference to it in the introduction.

Students need to be very clear as to the requirements of each section of the course, as some students responded to the Section B question with reference to events and periods covered in Section A, and this is not often encouraged for China or indeed across the civilisations.

SECTION C - CRITERION 7 – China and/or Assyria

Only a small number of students selected individuals from China and Assyria. For China, students focused on Liu Bei, and for Assyria, Ashurbanipal.

Better responses here were able to not only analyse and evaluate the requirements of the question, but were also able to manipulate their discussion in creative ways. These responses were able to articulate the degree of influence these individuals wielded and how this influence manifested itself. For example, those who examined Liu Bei were able to articulate how the competing rivalry for the 'Mandate of Heaven' that occurred during the chaotic end of the Han dynasty was a key driver. They were also able to argue analytically as to the merit of different representations of the period and biases contained in later works, such as Chen Shou's *Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi)* and Sanand Luo Guanzhong's 14th century novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. This was not a requirement of the question, although the context of the evidence is important for these individuals. Additionally, better responses were able to analyse and account for the importance of the political and social drivers that

led to the tumultuous end of the Han period, as well as provide accurate and solid chronologies of the individual and key events (as well as motivations) that enabled their rise to power and/or prominence.

For Assyria, Ashurbanipal was the focus and here, and better responses were able to clearly identify the individual's motivations and legacy and provide examples of how he was able to use his royal position to expand militarily, economically and culturally.

Weaker responses provided a generalised narrative of the individual's life with little reference to the political and social context of the time, motives or impact.

Finally, if students opt to study an individual from a civilization other than the one studied in Section A & B of the course, they should ensure a thorough understanding of the political, social and historical context in which the individual lived and their impact.