

2023 ASSESSMENT REPORT

ANH315117 ANCIENT HISTORY

Introduction

In 2023, the civilisations studied included Greece, Rome, China and Egypt. As in previous years, Greece was the most popular choice, with a very small number of candidates writing on Egypt across Sections A-C. In Section C, a small number of candidates chose to respond to individuals from a different civilisation than the one they studied in Sections A and B. The exam questions for Section A included a stimulus statement; however, it did not require students to respond explicitly to the stimulus. In general, the exam questions were open and accessible, allowing students to utilise their knowledge without restricting them too much. Section A required candidates to describe and assess the evidence for a particular site, event, development or era for the ways in which it has contributed to our interpretation and understanding. As in previous years, the Section B question allowed learners to select at least one core element and one feature. Section C required candidates to make an argument for the nature and scope of the significance of a specific individual, analysing their success through the lens of their historical depictions.

As is always the case in Ancient History Level 3, in 2023 candidates were required to read the questions carefully, responding fully to all parts of the question. As in previous years, all exam questions explicitly requested that students use both primary and secondary sources to provide evidence in support of their historical information and arguments. However, a large proportion of responses included no source material or very general mentions of source material. Teachers are strongly encouraged to explain to students that we should never take historical information at face value, and instead always acknowledge how we know what we know, and where that information comes from. This critical, neutral view is one of the most important skills of an historian and archaeologist.

This year, there were a large number of responses that lacked a cohesive essay structure, including an introduction, conclusion and body paragraphs which all link back to the terminology in the essay question. Learners are encouraged to respond explicitly to the language of the question, particularly in the introduction, topic sentences of body paragraphs, and conclusion. Examiners require evidence of learner knowledge and skill, and therefore students must explicitly respond to the question rather than relying on examiners to interpret or infer from the response. Students are therefore encouraged to know and apply a basic essay structure in every response, and to practise and refine their responses throughout the year by editing their essays and seeking feedback from their teacher.

It is strongly recommended that teachers provide learners with a wide range of essay questions throughout the year, allowing them to explore all aspects of the course in preparation for the exam. This will allow students to consider all possible avenues for a response and will provide an opportunity to adapt and alter their knowledge based upon the question in front of them.

It is worth noting that handwriting was a particular problem this year, resulting in examiners struggling to read and interpret many responses. Teachers are encouraged to allow students to practise the art of handwriting throughout the year to ensure that written papers are legible and so learners can achieve the results they deserve.

Criterion 3 – General Comments

In Ancient History Level 3, students must articulate their historical knowledge and analysis in a clear, coherent manner. Clarity of expression, as always, is of great importance, as it allows the examiners to understand precisely what a learner is trying to say.

Effective responses used an essay structure, paying particular attention to the wording of the question in the introduction, topic sentences, linking sentences and conclusion. Stronger responses did not stray from the essay question and introduced information and evidence directly relevant to the question. The most effective responses identified the points of each of their paragraphs, in order, in the introduction. This aided in essay structure and demonstrated clear, organised communication of the main points the learner has trying to make. These stronger responses also contained few spelling, grammatical or punctuation errors. Where necessary, candidates are encouraged to bring a dictionary into the exam to support accurate spelling and use of terminology.

Some responses included relevant Greek, Latin, Chinese or Egyptian terminology; this is something that should be encouraged when it is relevant to do so. In most cases, these terms were underlined to identify them as specific terms, which continues to be encouraged by the examiners.

In less effective responses, paragraphs were not easily identifiable, or did not contain a clear point of discussion that related to the essay question. These responses often supplied a narrative of events without a clear connection to the essay question.

Students should continue to write in a formal tone. Examiners still recommend that students utilise statements such as “evidence suggests...” or “it can be argued that...” instead of statements such as “I believe...” or “I think...”. Candidates were generally successful in doing this in 2023, and the marking team encourages teachers to continue instructing students to write with this formal tone. Weaker responses utilised conversational language and often generalised, including statements such as “historians believe...” without naming any historians specifically. Some papers continued to analyse ancient societal structures by comparing them to modern structures, such as the roles of women in society and how those roles have changed today. Teachers are reminded that this course is not designed to compare the experiences of ancient peoples to those of today. Rather, it is designed to allow us some insight into the people, and their experiences of the events and structures of an ancient society through the lens of the evidence available to us. Our role as historians is not to judge these people and their values or experiences, but to observe and understand them, objectively, as best we can.

Criterion 4 – General Comments

Criterion 4 requires students to utilise evidence, particularly primary and secondary sources, to support historical arguments. This continues to be one of the most important skills required of an historian and

archaeologist. Students must understand that information about an individual, event or society is not, in and of itself, evidence; they must utilise this information to explicitly make an interpretation or an argument. For instance, in response to the Section C exam question in 2023, a description of Peisistratus' rise to power was just information, unless the student went on to explain how this demonstrates his skills of manipulation or his determination which allowed him to be successful later in his career. This student ought also to provide primary source depictions of Peisistratus, including, where possible, the judgements by those sources on his character and actions which in turn demonstrates both his success and his significance as a leader.

Like previous exam papers, this year's exam explicitly directed learners to refer to primary and secondary source material, including historical details and information. This continues to be a minimum requirement for a 'C' standard response. In 2023, in order to achieve an 'A' for Criterion 4, students had to refer to at least four pieces of highly appropriate evidence, including at least two primary and at least two secondary sources. Stronger responses sometimes referred to more sources than this, although the strongest responses were intentional about their selection of sources, rather than attempting to include a large number of sources without discerning which were the most appropriate. A source is appropriate when it aides in responding directly to the question. For instance, in Section A an archaeological source that provided an insight into how Troy may have been destroyed, or how the site of Delphi was utilised by the ancient Greeks, was appropriate. The student should have referred to the specific source, such as the skeleton found in squares A3-4 of the site of Troy from Stratum VIIa, rather than generalising (i.e., 'skeletons were found at the site'). In response to the 2023 exam question for Section A, the student should then interpret this evidence, such as explaining that the skeleton looked as though it was not buried but was left where it fell, and may therefore be interpreted as evidence of violent destruction of the site. They may include a secondary source who interprets the evidence in this way to support their argument. Teachers are encouraged to explicitly teach this level of specificity and analysis when it comes to the inclusion of source material, as it is the cornerstone of strong historical analysis.

In the 2023 responses, a concerningly large number of responses completely omitted source material, or offered only generalisations (i.e., skeletons, arrow heads, jewellery, etc.) in place of detailing a specific primary source. It is imperative that this is a focus of explicit teaching, especially providing exemplars of high-quality essays in order to demonstrate how source material should be used effectively. Students are also encouraged to practise responding to unseen exam questions under timed conditions in order to rehearse how to be selective in the use of source material in responding directly to the essay question.

Greece

Question 1 - Delphi

The exam question for this section required students to explore the primary sources from or about the site, and interpret them in order to provide an understanding of the site, event, development or era. This led most candidates to explore the evidence for religious or political uses of the site, arguing for the importance or significance of the site to the ancient Greeks. Unlike previous exam questions, the 2023 question did not refer to the origin, purpose or context of sources, and most candidates did not include this information. Teachers are also encouraged to avoid teaching the discovery of the site as a narrative of

events, as this lends itself to formulaic essays for this section of the exam. There were many formulaic responses to the Delphi question, and this ought to be a consideration in the planning and delivery of this section of the course in future.

Criterion 4

Candidates writing about Delphi generally provided a basic narrative about the archaeologists and scientists that have analysed the site, such as the excavations by the French School and de Boer, with a particular focus on the analysis of the presence of vapours. Teachers are encouraged to explore the multitude of uses of the site; they are encouraged to teach about the Pythia and the vapours as part of the importance of the site, but to discuss the other aspects of the site as well. This will allow students to more fully understand the significance of the site of Delphi to the ancient Greeks.

Stronger responses were able to synthesise both archaeological and written primary sources to analyse the nature of Delphi's significance. Candidates are reminded to be specific in their use of primary source materials. References to “a statue” or “a king” are too vague to be of much use. Similarly, descriptions of what “writers” or “historians” thought are insufficient for the specific evidence needed for Criterion 4. Students are encouraged to be more specific and name a writer or historian instead of generalising. Students are also cautioned that simply mentioning de Boer or other archaeologists who have worked on the site is not enough to award them an ‘A’ for Criterion 4. For a strong ‘A’ in Criterion 4, examiners are looking for details of their findings, including quotations or paraphrasing of their interpretations of the primary source material, and where possible noting a text title and/or date of publication of this information.

Criterion 5

Stronger responses clearly understood the key concepts of Section A of the course, which is to analyse changing interpretations based upon a detailed analysis of the primary source materials. Candidates who achieved strong results on Criterion 5 were able to place the evidence at the forefront of their analysis and use it as the basis for our understanding of the site of Delphi and Greek society more broadly.

The 2023 exam question did ask candidates to ‘assess’ how the sources have contributed to our understanding, requiring students to consider the reliability of sources. Consequently, better responses framed their discussion more analytically, based around debates or differing interpretations, rather than providing a narrative of events. Responses which drew upon a wide range of primary evidence and then discussed how the primary evidence shaped interpretations were stronger, as were responses which were able to provide historiographical detail about the merits of the differing interpretations of the ancient site of Delphi.

Question 1 - Troy

The exam question for this section required students to explore the primary sources from or about the site of Troy and interpret them in order to provide an understanding of how the site was destroyed. This led many candidates to engage in a narrative about the chronological excavation of the site of Troy, and some engaged in a discussion of the changing interpretations of the archaeologists involved.

Criterion 4

A large number of candidates included the names and findings of the main archaeologists to excavate Troy, including Schliemann, Dorpfeld, Blegen and Korfmann. A much smaller number produced details of the specific primary source materials that they uncovered. For instance, instead of writing that Schliemann uncovered 'jewellery' at the site of Troy, the stronger responses described specific pieces of jewellery Schliemann uncovered, and from which stratum and area of the site. Similarly, instead of noting that there was evidence of burning, students should refer to specific areas of the site where there were scorch marks or other more specific evidence of burning on a scale large enough to interpret as a fire.

Criterion 5

Some candidates wanted to discuss which stratum was the 'real' Troy, while others analysed the evidence for how a select number of strata were destroyed, and used this to compare to the Homeric story of the Trojan War. Section A of the course is centred around the destruction of Troy, so this ought to be the focus. The discussion around which stratum was Homer's Troy can be narrowed down to include those strata which loosely align to the time period in question, and changing interpretations of the destruction must utilise specific primary source material, rather than general statements about categories of sources (i.e., bodies, arrow heads, etc.).

Stronger responses engaged in an historiographical discussion of the evidence presented by archaeologists in their secondary source publications, and an evaluation of which interpretation was likely to be more accurate based upon the methods of excavation and analysis. These responses also acknowledged that ongoing excavations and discoveries at the site are likely to improve our understanding of how Troy was really destroyed, giving an acknowledgement that the scientific method of archaeological excavation and analysis of evidence continues to evolve.

Question 2

The question on Section B of the exam was straightforward and encouraged learners to include information that they had studied throughout the year. The responses to this section were the least thorough of any section of the exam, despite the generously open question provided. The largest proportion of responses focussed on Spartan women and family in this section.

Criterion 3

This was the question from the 2023 exam for which imposing a framework was the most important. Students needed to select at least one core element and at least one key feature to discuss, and to structure their response in an organised, methodical way as the question did not lend itself to a clear essay structure. This is something that teachers should be encouraged to explicitly teach for Section B of the course: ways in which their students might structure a response to an open question like the one presented in the 2023 exam. Students should be wary of engaging in a meandering or unstructured response to the question, instead providing several main points to discuss about how the core element impacted upon the chosen feature, and where relevant vice versa.

Criterion 4

Responses for this section were negatively impacted by a general lack of evidence, including both primary and secondary sources. Some attempted to include evidence, but it was so generalised that it did not add any weight to the arguments being made. For instance, rather than note that grave stela depicted women's role in society, describe a specific stela in detail, analysing that one primary source for what it says about the role of women in that time and place. Students are reminded that historical evidence is a key criterion being assessed and is specifically asked for in the exam question. Stronger responses provided a variety of primary source material as evidence of core elements and features, using secondary source material to support their own interpretations of how the core elements impacted the key features of ancient Greece.

Criterion 6

Stronger responses focused on the impact of the core elements on the key features, as this was the premise of the question, and then acknowledged the circular or symbiotic nature of the influence. The best answers outlined one of the four elements in some detail and then explained its impact on one chosen feature. This choice allowed for detail and depth in the responses.

Weaker responses were less focussed in their discussion, neglected the specificity of the question, or were only descriptive instead of analytical. A large number of candidates concentrated on describing the feature without outlining or even (in some cases) identifying the element they were discussing. A number of responses on the chosen feature of Women and the Family (in Sparta) referred to the social or political structure but did not offer any description of the class structure or the political institutions. This meant that any analysis of power and agency in the society was somewhat superficial.

Question 3

In this question, students were asked to analyse the significance of an historical figure. This included how their actions influenced their society as well as how their legacy is and was represented. This was a departure from previous years and the best responses were able to adapt to the question being asked. Of all of the Greek options, Peisistratus was the favourite choice, followed closely by Solon.

Criterion 3

This question, which required candidates to examine the significance of the individual's influence on their society, seemed to present the most difficulties for students who, perhaps, had concentrated their preparation on the other aspects of the criterion such as the influence of the society on the individual and the specific motivations of the individual. In fact, a number of candidates did not address the question as set until halfway or more through their essay and some not at all. Many responses gave too much time to the individual's rise to power, particularly in the case of Peisistratus, rather than assessing and analysing his impact whilst in office.

Criterion 4

Many responses neglected Criterion 4 in this section of the exam. Learners seemed to forget to explain how we know what a particular individual did – which writer recorded it, whether there is archaeological

evidence and so on. For example, the idea that Peisistratus brought a reliable water supply into Athens is mentioned in Thucydides who tells us that the fountain of nine spouts was placed in the agora by “the old tyrant” and the fountain itself appears on black figure pottery sometime later.

Sadly, some candidates confused Cleomenes I with Cleomenes III, referring to Plutarch’s *Life* of the latter in some detail. This meant that “judgements” of his actions were mistaken, and analysis of his significance was flawed.

There were some secondary source references that examiners were unable to locate or verify. Quotation from these was generally unscholarly. Teachers and students are encouraged to use reliable secondary sources, and to avoid using references to obscure or AI generated sources, as examiners were aware of these throughout the marking process.

The strongest responses offered a range of specific examples of the individual’s actions and prioritised the most significant for detailed analysis. They also considered a variety of primary source judgements of their actions and impact, and utilised secondary source materials to support their interpretations and arguments around the significance of their chosen individual.

Criterion 7

Stronger responses analysed the significance of individuals through their actions, policies and influence on their society. The best responses considered the position that the individual held and how they used the power it afforded to shape their society. They offered a range of specific examples of the individual’s actions and prioritised the most significant for detailed analysis. They unpacked the legacy of their individual with a critical eye to the nature of representations of them.

Weaker responses were unable to adapt to a question focussed on significance, and spent a long time discussing their figure generally, or their motivations and actions, without much reference to the impact of these actions, success of the motivations, or the figure’s influence. Less successful answers, particularly in the case of Peisistratus, explained in narrative detail how he came to power. This question posed particular problems to students who had studied Thucydides since his significance was arguably greater in scope to later societies. Some candidates were able to offer this argument successfully.

Rome

Question 1

Criterion 3

In the case of this year’s question, the focus was specifically on interpreting the evidence and how it shapes our understanding. The focal point had shifted from several previous years which more explicitly looked at the nature, purpose and validity of evidence. Perhaps with these previous questions in mind, some students ignored the focus of the question and provided pre-written paragraphs detailing the strengths and weaknesses of a source, but then made little or no comment about how we have used that material to shape an understanding of the ancient world. In some cases, examiners noted that essays were worryingly similar to one another – paragraph by paragraph, quote by quote – which suggested students may have

been following some sort of pre-prepared essay. This is not recommended. Students should prepare all their information, but not their actual essay, as this leads to writing essays which simply do not answer the question and are marked accordingly.

Many of the Roman papers for this section showed a clear essay structure and a solid attempt at formal writing. A couple used phrasing that was too conversational and peppered with rhetorical questions. Introductions in the stronger papers referred to the ideas in the question; many simply introduced the Roman Games as a topic, however, maybe briefly alluding to the idea of examining the evidence and interpretations. It is important that students respond to the question in front of them and avoid pre-prepared answers.

Criterion 4

Some responses provided no evidence – either primary or secondary – at all in this section. Students should be aware that explaining events in detail or giving specific examples (rather than providing specific sources of evidence) is not counted as evidence under Criterion 4. Details and examples do not allow candidates to explore the nature of the evidence and its strengths and weaknesses, as this section of the course requires. They are encouraged, therefore, to provide specific primary and secondary sources of information, as well as the details surrounding them, to address this criterion.

Stronger papers included both primary and secondary sources, putting those sources in some kind of historical context and explaining why that made them more or less reliable, before contrasting them with another source (e.g., Nicolaus of Damascus contrasted with Tertullian). Less successful papers simply described what we can learn from a source, perhaps also noting that there may be bias somewhere along the line.

Criterion 5

This criterion requires students to interpret evidence, explaining how it helps us to understand the ancient world and assessing its nature, reliability and accuracy. It allows students to show that certain evidence is more conclusive and a richer source of information than other evidence. This can only be done by actually looking at evidence. As with Criterion 4, some students failed this criterion due to lack of any evidence at all. Perhaps it was because of the wording of the question, but students did not commonly write much about the nature of the sources and their transmission, or how preservation has been an important factor in creating our modern understanding of the Roman Games. Still fewer said anything about how ancient writers were at times in the same position we as modern historians are, of trying to make sense of fragmentary sources they had inherited.

In the case of the Roman Games, there was a lot of colourful information and many entertaining stories. Students should be careful in the construction of their essays, considering whether these engaging anecdotes actually help us to understand the games. In some cases, they certainly do, but students should analyse the evidence we have for these stories, not just relay the stories themselves.

Question 2

Criterion 3

The focus of this section of the course is quite a factual one, requiring students to provide information that shows they know about different aspects of the ancient world: its economy, society, culture and politics. It also requires students to show how these underlying elements shaped various facets of the society, such as the experience of women, the development of the military or religious beliefs.

This year's question specifically asked the learner to explain how the element influenced the feature. Although the question was relatively straightforward, many students did not answer the question, neglecting to focus on how their chosen element influenced and shaped their chosen feature. Many responses were very descriptive of elements and features without answering the question. Weaker responses also sometimes got lost in detail and failed to relate them back to a broader argument. Quite often examiners had to go back and remind themselves of which element and feature they were reading about, and how the relationship between them was being framed, because so many responses were weak at signposting their arguments in the overall essay structure.

Teachers are encouraged to provide students with a variety of essay questions for Section B throughout the year, allowing students multiple opportunities to respond directly and explicitly to an essay question for this section rather than simply sharing information on their chosen element and/or feature. Learners should seek feedback from their teachers by drafting and editing their work throughout the year, and reading and acting upon teacher feedback, to ensure that they can confidently answer questions on Section B of the course.

Criterion 4

As with the responses for other civilisations, the responses for Rome in Section B often neglected to provide sources, despite the question explicitly asking for them. Many of these responses provided detailed information, but teachers and learners are reminded that Criterion 4 is assessed in each section of the exam, and it is a requirement of Section B that students provide both primary and secondary sources to achieve a satisfactory result for this criterion.

Criterion 6

Pleasingly, most students knew quite a bit about their element and about their feature. The most common issue was that students did not relate the element to the feature at all. They presented a detailed description of the element (for example, Republican Rome's political structures) then they discussed the feature (Rome's religious beliefs) but did not explain how their political system shaped their religious beliefs. This was, however, clearly the brief of the question. Previous years have sometimes asked students to explain the values and beliefs that shaped the element, and many students spent a lot of time doing just that this year, when no such explanation was required by the question. Any such details should only have been explained to show how they shaped the feature, but many students wrote pages about the *cursus honorum*, then never referred to it again when investigating their feature.

Possible links for Rome could have included such things as how the hierarchical nature of offices in Roman politics and the need to build one's *auctoritas* and profile shaped the development of the different colleges of Roman priesthoods, which were clearly held for political gain. Or, how social structures, such as the family unit and the power of the *paterfamilias*, shaped domestic religious practices, ancestor worship and funerary practices.

Some learners wrote about how the feature influenced the element, rather than the other way around, as the question asked them to do (e.g., writing about how women affected the economy). Sometimes, they provided good arguments, and it was easy to see why they had chosen to do this. For example, the development of Roman technology did affect its economy. In such a case, the student should explicitly point out that the relationship between the two was reciprocal and spend some time looking at how the element affected the feature before discussing how the feature affected the element.

The best responses did exactly what the question asked for by discussing in detail some of the ways in which an element impacted on the development or practice of a feature. They had detailed discussion but did not get lost in facts.

Question 3

Criterion 3

This section of the course investigates the influence of individuals on their society and how that society shapes an individual. Previous exams have shown that the question can be quite specific, focusing on one particular aspect of this situation, so students need to read the question very carefully when planning their answer. This year's question contained two main elements: the nature and scope of the figure's significance (i.e., in what way they were significant and just how significant they were) and the evidence we have for their success (or lack of success) including how they have been depicted historically.

This was a clear question and asked for a specific treatment of the individual. Quite a few responses successfully addressed the first half the question but many rushed or overlooked the element of why they were successful and how this has been depicted. Learners are encouraged to always read the exam question carefully and respond to the question in front of them. Teachers should provide a variety of essay questions on this topic throughout the year, allowing students ample opportunity to explore a variety of potential questions and answers prior to sitting the exam. This way, they will be more prepared to respond to the question in front of them rather than producing a pre-prepared essay in the exam room.

Criterion 4

Predictably, stronger responses also had a good selection of sources and used them carefully. The poorer essays had only a couple of sources, but examiners were pleased to note that no one cited Wikipedia this year. *(Please see general comments on Criterion 4 for more details).*

Criterion 7

As with every year since the course began, a significant number of responses simply related the story of the individual's life. It has been repeatedly pointed out that this is not the way to answer this question and

teachers are advised to instruct their students clearly and firmly on this point. We do need facts and anecdotes, but their purpose is to illustrate the figure's significance. It is very easy to simply provide a narrative instead of an essay in this section of the course. Most responses discussed their chosen individual's achievements and representation. The stronger ones did more of this, with historical evidence to demonstrate the points they were making.

Students who choose to write about Livia are encouraged to focus not just on getting the details of her life correct but also on analysing the ways in which she was able to wield power through others.

Finally, examiners noted that the number of factual errors in this section was concerning. Students should know the basic facts, such as what the figure's name was and how it is spelled, and when the person lived – dates were occasionally hundreds of years out. Teachers are encouraged to guide students in their exam revision, providing several weeks, where possible, to ensure that students have time to revise their learning and memorise these kinds of facts which will allow them to succeed in the external exam.

China

Question 1

Criterion 3

There were only a small number of respondents for the civilisation of China this year. Pleasingly, most students seemed to have understood what was required from the question this year. Candidates were able to provide evidence in the form of primary and secondary sources and examine how this evidence allowed us to interpret and understand the periods they were looking at. It should be noted, however, that if students want to use the terms from Section A of the course, such as reliability, contestability, etc., they need to ensure that they clearly understand what is meant by such terms. It is recommended that students bring a dictionary into the exam to support this understanding.

Criterion 4

See notes below for Criterion 5, as well as general comments for Criterion 4 at the beginning of this report.

Criterion 5

For China, students were able to select from several options. This year more students opted for the question on the Xia Dynasty than previously, with only a few selecting the Shang. There were no responses that covered the Zhou period.

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

- Discussion of the historical context, dated from 2050 BCE- approximately 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 centralisation 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. Is it Xia or Shang?
- 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 Dynasties 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 Dynasty for Section A 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, (Scapulamacy)
- some discussion on ancestor worship and burial practice
- 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, regarding their usefulness. Better responses 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 discussion with little or no reference to primary and secondary sources.

Question 2

Criterion 6

Once again for China, the features mainly selected were Beliefs and Religious Practices. 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 to socio-political frameworks. Several students were able to identify the interplay and reciprocity of features and structure.

Better responses were able show the intricate connection that exists between structures and practices and the selected feature/s and apply that to the concept of continuity.

For China, better responses were able to show the impact of change over time to 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 standardisation of these processes occurred and were continued and elaborated on by the Western Han.

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 students 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 key features in detail. Similarly, their arguments lacked depth and their coverage of structures and practices was superficial.

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 the Section A question. Candidates need to be explicit when writing about structures and avoid fragmented analysis.

Question 3

Criterion 7

Only a small number of students selected individuals from China. For this civilisation, there was equal emphasis on Lui Bei, Zhuge Liang and Cao Cao. 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. As well, they were able to articulate the degree of influence these individuals wielded and how this influence manifested itself. For example, those who examined Zhuge Liang 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. 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.

Weaker responses provided a generalised narrative of the individual's life with little reference to the political and social context of the time and the nature and scope of power. Moreover, weaker responses provided little discussion of the individual's motivations and acquisition of power and how they used that power.

If students opt to study an individual from a civilisation other than the one studied in Section A and 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.

Egypt

Questions 1 and 2

There was only one candidate who wrote on Egypt for Sections A and B of the exam in 2023.

Question 3

Criterion 7

There were several responses to Section C based upon Egyptian individuals. Most responses focussed on Hatshepsut and Akhenaten. A limited number of students examined Rameses II.

Still too many papers offered chronological biographies of the individual chosen rather than engaging with the key words of the topic. 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 candidates to evaluate the nature and scope of the individual in shaping an ancient society. 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 analysis of the evidence and included arguments of interpretation of the evidence, as well as changing interpretations of the individual over time by modern historians. They also included varied discussion of the depictions of individual.

Once again Hatshepsut was the pharaoh who was dealt with most successfully since fewer responses (as in previous years) offered a mere biography, engaging successfully with the essay 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 generally not as well constructed, and many selected generic 'historians' rather than named experts 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.

ANCIENT HISTORY (ANH315117)

2023 MARKING TOOL

CRITERION 3: communicate historical ideas and information			Assessed in Sections A, B and C								
D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is very little evidence of an attempt to present clear and logical interpretations and historical arguments in a structured way. There are very few complete sentences and paragraphs. There is no clear essay structure. There is no clear introduction and conclusion. Basic ideas, arguments and points of view of own and others contain consistent and frequent errors. These include numerous basic errors of grammatical convention, spelling and punctuation, and meaning is difficult to discern on occasions. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence of a consistent attempt to present clear and logical interpretations and historical arguments in a structured way. This includes an attempt to write full sentence paragraphs as part of an essay which includes a clear introduction and conclusion. Basic ideas, arguments and points of view of their own and others contain errors. These include basic errors of grammatical convention, spelling and punctuation, although meaning is still understood. There may be some dot points present although these should be in full sentences and some effort is made to include terminology relevant to the question (including synonyms). 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence of a sound, clear, logical, coherent and evidence-based historical argument using an obvious essay structure. This includes many full sentence paragraphs and the written response includes a clear introduction and a conclusion. The learner has clearly communicated ideas and arguments. The points of view of their own and others are presented using accurate grammatical conventions, spelling and punctuation. There are errors although meaning is clearly understood. The response often includes reference to question specific terminology (including synonyms). There is sound evidence that the candidate understands this terminology. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence of a very clear, logical, coherent, evidenced-based and detailed historical argument using a highly developed and highly analytical essay structure. This consists of full sentence paragraphs and the written response includes a clear introduction and a conclusion. The learner has clearly and accurately communicated ideas, arguments and the points of view of their own and others using complex grammatical conventions, consistently accurate spelling and punctuation. There are very few errors and meaning is readily apparent. The response often includes reference to sophisticated vocabulary and frequently incorporates question-specific terminology (including synonyms). Consistent and comprehensive evidence that the learner understands this terminology. 		

This criterion examines the ability of the learner to provide evidence of **quality communication techniques relevant to the discipline** and the question.

A student who makes **NO** written response or less than a paragraph to the exam topic will get a 'Z' on this criterion.

An essay of less than 1 page will likely get a D rating.

'A' responses will be accurate overall in the use of the writing conventions and present an argument in an essay format with a completed introduction, main body paragraphs and a conclusion.

While the use of historical terms is not directly assessed in this criterion, the 'A' responses should correctly and consistently employ sophisticated vocabulary and terminology (particularly terminology present in the question) to analyse the ideas and concepts present in the question.

CRITERION 4: use evidence to support historical interpretations and arguments			Assessed in Sections A, B and C								
D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little, none or inappropriate evidence used to support points. • One or no reference to primary or secondary sources. • Very general and/or few historical details included with no or very little effort made to link evidence to the argument/answer. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a limited range (2) of appropriate pieces of evidence to analyse historical interpretations (particularly Q1) and support own interpretations (particularly Q2 and Q3). • Learner attempts to present a position which answers the question using a limited range of evidence. • The relevance of the evidence is not always clear and may occasionally be inferred by the marker. • Inclusion of dates, events and developments is generally accurate. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range (3-5) of appropriate pieces of evidence to analyse historical interpretations (particularly Q1) and to support own interpretations (particularly Q2 and Q3). • At least one primary source is referred to and at least one secondary source. • Learner presents a clear position which answers the question based on a synthesis of evidence from sources and the inclusion of historical details (dates, events, developments). These are largely accurate. • A direct and obvious link is made between the evidence and the argument of the learner although this is not always consistent. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range (more than 4) of highly appropriate evidence to critically analyse historical interpretations (particularly Q1) and to support own interpretations (particularly Q2 and Q3). • At least two primary sources should be referred to and at least two secondary sources. • Historical details (including dates, events, developments) are included, highly accurate and are made directly relevant to the argument or historical interpretation of the learner. • Develops an analytical and coherent position where sources and details are made consistently and obviously relevant to the question. 		

This criterion examines the learner’s ability to **use appropriate evidence to support their arguments and/or the interpretations of others**.

Evidence should include resources such as **primary and secondary sources** with ‘A’ responses requiring both primary and secondary sources.

Evidence will also include information such as **historical details and developments** with ‘B’ and ‘A’ responses requiring consistency in terms of accuracy.

Better answers will coherently synthesise a variety of evidence (historical details, primary and secondary sources) of evidence to illustrate an analytical argument.

Students may choose to refer to, paraphrase or directly quote from authors. Direct quotes are NOT required for an “A” or “B” rating.

CRITERION 5: describe and assess differing historical interpretations on issues affecting the ancient world			Section A only								
D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited or inaccurate discussion of interpretations of the site or event and its historical context. None or few references to primary and secondary sources and/or historical context. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies main points of differing interpretations of the site/ event and its historical context: own and others interpretation. Identifies the merit of differing interpretations. The student refers to at least one of the following with regards to evidence: interpretation and understanding. The student has referred to at least one of the following with regards to evidence: reliability, contestability and validity of primary sources, although significant improvement is needed. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes main points of differing interpretations of the site/event and its historical context: own and others interpretation. Discusses the merit of differing interpretations. The student refers to both of the following with regards to evidence (including synonyms): interpretation and understanding. The student has referred to and described at least two of the following with regards to evidence: reliability, contestability and validity of primary sources. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses differing interpretations of the site/event and its historical context: own and others interpretation. Analyses and evaluates the merit of differing interpretations. The student refers to both of the following with regards to evidence (including synonyms): interpretation and understanding. Consistent and comprehensive evidence that the learner understands this terminology. The student may have implicitly/explicitly referred to the reliability, contestability and validity of primary sources with a high degree of accuracy and relevance. 		

CRITERION 6: describe the nature and characteristics of an ancient civilisation			Section B only								
D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not discuss a key feature in any detail. Does not clearly identify a core element. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines the organisation of at least one specified element of an ancient society. Identifies the impact of the elements on the nature and characteristics of the feature/s. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the organisation of one or more specified elements of an ancient society. Discusses the impact of the elements on the nature and characteristics of the feature/s. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes and explains the organisation of one or more specified elements of an ancient society. Analyses the impact of the elements on the nature and characteristics of the feature. May be analysis of the reciprocal nature of elements and features. May describe how elements and features were shaped over time. 		

CRITERION 7: assess the impact of human agency on an ancient society						Section C only					
D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes an individual or not from the prescribed list <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very generalised discussion of the society Discusses mainly family background or provides a narrative of known facts and events with limited or no links to the key concepts of the question 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies at least one impact of the individual on their society (nature and scope). Identifies at least one action of an individual and how these shaped/impacted society in at least one way. Response is mostly narrative with very little evidence of using historical information to answer the question. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and describes the impact/s of the individual on their society (nature and scope). Identifies and describes at least two actions and/or beliefs of an individual and how these shaped/impacted society in at least two ways (political, economic, social, cultural and/or short, medium, long term). Response includes information that is relevant to the key concepts in the question (i.e., nature, scope, significance). There is some narrative. Describes evidence for success, including historical depictions and judgements. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies, describes and analyses the extent of the impact/s of the individual on their society. Identifies, describes and analyses at least two actions and/or beliefs of an individual and how these shaped/impacted society in at least two ways (political, economic, social, cultural and/or short, medium, long term). Response includes information that is consistently made relevant to the key concepts in the question. There is some narrative. Analyses evidence for success, including historical depictions and judgements. 		