

Units 3 and 4: Ancient history

Egypt, Greece and Rome were major civilisations of the ancient Mediterranean. They have bestowed a powerful legacy on the contemporary world. In each of Units 3 and 4, students explore the structures of one of these societies and a period of crisis in its history. Life in these ancient societies was shaped by the complex interplay of social, political and economic factors. Trade, warfare and the exchange of ideas between societies also influenced the way people lived. Furthermore, all three societies experienced dramatic crises which caused massive disruption. During these times of upheaval, individuals acted in ways that held profound consequences for themselves and for their society.

These units highlight the importance of primary sources to historical inquiry about ancient civilisations.

In developing a course, teachers select two societies to be studied from Egypt, Greece and Rome, one for Unit 3 and one for Unit 4. For the two selected societies, both areas of study must be undertaken. Students are expected to demonstrate a progression from Unit 3 to Unit 4 in historical understanding and skills.

Area of Study 1: Unit 3 and Unit 4

Living in an ancient society

- *What was it like to live in ancient Egypt, Greece or Rome?*
- *What were the social, political and economic features of life?*
- *Why were these features significant?*

In this area of study students explore the historical significance of social, political and economic features of Egypt, Greece or Rome. In terms of social features, the existence of hierarchies meant that individual experiences varied enormously. There were profound differences in the experiences of men and women, locals and foreigners, slaves and free people. Students also explore the significance of political institutions and the distribution of power between groups, and tensions resulting from such differences. They investigate the significance of economic features of life, including agriculture, industry and trade.

The social, political and economic features of society are interrelated and change over time. Students consider the causes and consequences of these changes both from within the society and from external catalysts such as trade, warfare and the exchange of ideas. Such inquiry involves the use of written sources and the material record.

For Egypt, students examine the social, political and economic features of life during the New Kingdom Period. They also investigate the social, political and economic features of Thebes to 1069 BC. They examine causes and consequences of warfare and its effect on the social, political and economic life of New Kingdom Egypt.

For Greece, students examine the social, political and economic features of life during the Archaic Period. They also investigate social, political and economic features of Athens and Sparta to 454 BC. Furthermore, they examine the causes and consequences of the conflict between Greece and Persia.

For Rome, students examine social, political and economic features of the early development of Rome and life under the Kings. They also investigate the social, political and economic features of the Roman Republic. Furthermore, they examine the causes and consequences of the conflict between Rome and Carthage.

**VCE Ancient History Units 3 and 4: 2016–2020
Contains clarifications to Unit 3, Area of Study 1
which will operate from 2017.**

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain and analyse the social, political and economic features of an ancient society.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

Egypt (1550–1069 BC):

- the social, political and economic features of New Kingdom Egypt, including the impact of the physical environment, expansion of the New Kingdom, the ruler as god-king, reigns of kings including Hatshepsut and Thutmosis III, civil administration, and roles of men and women, the nobility, the scribes, the artisans, and the agricultural workers
- the social, political and economic features of New Kingdom Egypt in relation to interaction with the ancient Near East, including the impact of the Hittite wars with reference to the Battle of Kadesh (1274 BC) and the treaty between Ramesses II and Khattushili III, war with the Libyans and Sea Peoples, the decline of tribute, trade and royal power
- The social, political and economic features of life in Thebes, including the workers of Deir el-Medineh, the construction of the tomb of Seti I, tomb robberies, strikes, the status of women, housing, commerce and trade, religious beliefs and practices
- warfare and its impact on the social, political and economic features of New Kingdom Egypt (to 1069 BC), including the presentation of the king as warrior, the role and structure of the army, the military campaigns of Thutmosis III, Rameses II, Meremptah and Rameses III.

Greece (800–454 BC):

- the social, political and economic features of ancient Greece, including the impact of the physical environment, the roles of men and women, the polis, oligarchy, tyranny, agriculture, slavery and colonisation
- the social, political and economic features of Sparta, including social classes (Spartiates, Perioikoi, and Helots) and government (kings, the Council of Elders, the Council of Ephors, and the Assembly), trade and commerce.
- the social, political and economic features of Athens, including classes of citizenship (pentakosiomedimnoi, hippeis, zeugitae and thêtes) and government (the reforms of Solon, the overthrow of tyranny and the reforms of Cleisthenes), trade and commerce
- warfare and its impact on the social, political and economic features of Greece, including the Ionian Revolt, the first and second Persian invasions and the foundation and development of the Delian League.

Rome (c.700–146 BC):

- the social, political and economic features of the early development of Rome, including peoples of pre-Roman Italy, people and geography of Latium, Etruscan influences, site of Rome, foundation narratives, and the growth of Rome from village to city
- the social, political and economic features of ancient Rome, including hierarchy, family (the paterfamilias, men, women, children and slaves), freedmen, patrons and clients, patricians and non-patricians, the senate, monarchy, agriculture and commerce
- the social, political and economic features of the Roman Republic, including the consulship, priestly colleges and priesthoods, plebs, plebeian institutions, Assemblies, the Struggle of the Orders, the Twelve Tables, changes in public offices, the cursus honorum, militarism, land tenure, and colonisation
- warfare and its impact on the social, political and economic features of Rome (to 146 BC), including the Roman conquest of Italy and the wider struggle for supremacy in the Mediterranean, including the First Punic War (264–241 BC), the Second Punic War (218–201 BC), and the Third Punic War (149–146 BC).

Key skills

- ask questions about the social, political and economic features of an ancient society to inform historical inquiry
- evaluate the historical significance of the social, political and economic features of an ancient society
- analyse the causes and consequences of the social, political and economic features of an ancient society
- analyse continuity and change relating to the social, political and economic features of an ancient society
- analyse the beliefs and values of people from the period
- evaluate the perspectives of people from the ancient past on the social, political and economic features of their society
- evaluate historical interpretations of the significance of the social, political and economic features of an ancient society
- construct arguments about the significance of the social, political and economic features of an ancient society using primary sources and historical interpretations as evidence.

Area of Study 2: Unit 3 and Unit 4

People in power, societies in crisis

- *How did crises change ancient societies?*
- *How did key individuals contribute to such events?*
- *How might we judge the historical significance of these crises and the individuals who took part in them?*

In this area of study students explore a crisis in ancient Egypt, Greece or Rome with particular reference to the role of individuals in shaping events. Crises take the form of internal political struggles, civil war and conflict between states. To understand these turning points students evaluate the causes and consequences of the crisis. Students also explore how key individuals influenced events. In some cases, individuals made decisions that shaped their societies. On the other hand, the power of individuals was limited in a range of ways. To comprehend these people, students explore how their beliefs, values and attitudes informed their actions. Investigation of these individuals deepens students' understanding of human agency.

For Egypt, students explore the tensions of the Amarna Period in New Kingdom Egypt. Abandoning the name Amenhotep IV, Akhenaten ('Spirit of Aten') favoured the worship of Aten, the sun disk. He was supported in this change by his wife, Nefertiti. The worship of Aten was at odds with the traditional order. The resulting tensions were only resolved by the restoration of the status quo under Tutankhamun.

For Greece, study of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC) reveals a different form of crisis. The conflict was fought between the Athenian Empire and the Peloponnesian League. At the start of the war, Athens was wealthy and powerful. By the end of the struggle, her power was broken. Analysis of the involvement of the key individuals Pericles, Alcibiades and Lysander reveal the different aims, motives and perspectives at work at various stages of the conflict.

For Rome, some historians argue that the demise of the Republic began with the election of Tiberius Gracchus as tribune, his attempts at reform and his death. The crisis gathered momentum under Gaius Gracchus, Gaius Marius, Sulla and Pompey. In the climactic final years of the crisis, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra VII and Augustus were important figures in the struggle for mastery of the Roman world.

The focus of this area of study is on a crisis in the selected society and three individuals drawn from the same society. The selected society is the same as that chosen for Area of Study 1 for Unit 3 or Unit 4.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to evaluate the historical significance of a crisis in an ancient society and assess the role of key individuals involved in that turning point.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

Egypt – The Amarna Period (1391–1292 BC)

- key developments that contributed to tensions during the Amarna Period, including the relationship between the priests of the Amen-Ra cult and the king, changes to traditional religious beliefs and practices, the transfer of the capital to Akhetaten, changes in art (representations of Aten, the king and the royal family), the supposed withdrawal of the king from the governance of Egypt, and subsequent restoration of traditional beliefs

The role of the following individuals in the crisis:

- Amenhotep III, including comparison to earlier kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty, religious beliefs and practices, building projects like the temple at Karnak, and the mansion and mortuary temple
- Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten, including background, early reign, building program in Karnak and Akhetaten (talatat building principles, rather than monumental forms of construction), changes of religious practice, foundation of Akhetaten, military and foreign policy
- Nefertiti, including theories about her parentage, representation at Karnak, representation as wife and counterpart of Akhenaten and the debate about co-regency.

Greece – The Peloponnesian War (460–403 BC)

- key developments that contributed to the conflict between the Athenian Empire and the Peloponnesian League, including the First Peloponnesian War (460–c.445 BC), the Thirty Years Peace, the crises at Corcyra and Potidea, and the Megarian Decree, as well as the key stages of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC): the Archidamian War (including the plague and the Mytilene Debate), the Peace of Nicias, the Sicilian Expedition, and the Decelean (Ionian) War.

The role of the following individuals in the crisis:

- Pericles, including family background, early career, military roles, democratic reforms, building programs, leadership of Athens early in the Peloponnesian War and death
- Alcibiades, including family background, early career, the Sicilian Expedition, refuge in Sparta, coup of 411 BC, the Four Hundred, recall to Athens, and military contributions
- Lysander, including family background, friendship with Cyrus the Younger, naval commands, the fall of Athens, installation of the Thirty Tyrants, and the Battle of Piraeus (403 BC).

Rome – The fall of the republic (133–23 BC)

- key developments that contributed to the fall of the Roman republic, including the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus, the tribunate of Gaius Gracchus, the military and political career of Gaius Marius, the dictatorship of Sulla, the military and political career of Pompey, the political alliance between Caesar, Pompey and Crassus (the so-called 'First Triumvirate') and its collapse, the Civil War (49–45 BC), the dictatorship of Caesar and his assassination, the legally enshrined Triumvirate of Octavian/Augustus, Mark Antony and Lepidus and its collapse, and the Battle of Actium (31 BC)

The role of the following individuals in the crisis:

- Julius Caesar, including family background, early career, the alliance with Pompey and Crassus, the Gallic Wars, dictatorships and assassination
- Cleopatra VII, including Ptolemaic rule in Egypt, family background, the relationship between Egypt and Rome, the reign of Cleopatra, and her relationships with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony
- Augustus, including family background, adoption by Julius Caesar, rivalry with Mark Antony, the Triumvirate of Octavian/Augustus, Mark Antony and Lepidus, Actium, the settlement of 27 BC, and the settlement of 23 BC.

Key skills

- ask questions about a crisis and key individuals to inform historical inquiry
- evaluate the historical significance of a crisis and key individuals
- analyse the causes of a crisis and consequences for an ancient society
- analyse continuity and change relating to a crisis in an ancient society
- analyse the beliefs and values of people from the period
- evaluate the perspectives of people from the ancient past on a crisis and on the key individuals
- evaluate historical interpretations of the significance of a crisis and key individuals
- construct arguments about the historical significance of a crisis and key individuals using primary sources and historical interpretations as evidence.

School-based assessment**Satisfactory completion**

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student's level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes *Advice for teachers* for this study, which includes advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student's level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher's assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

Outcomes	Marks allocated	Assessment tasks
Unit 3 Outcome 1 Explain and analyse the social, political and economic features of an ancient society.	50	Each of the following four assessment tasks must be completed over Units 3 and 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a historical inquiry • an analysis of primary sources • an analysis of historical interpretations • an essay. Teachers may choose the order of the assessment tasks.
Outcome 2 Evaluate the historical significance of a crisis in an ancient society and assess the role of key individuals involved in that turning point.	50	
Total marks	100	

Outcomes	Marks allocated	Assessment tasks
Unit 4 Outcome 1 Explain and analyse the social, political and economic features of an ancient society.	50	Each of the following four assessment tasks must be completed over Units 3 and 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a historical inquiry • an analysis of primary sources • an analysis of historical interpretations • an essay. Teachers may choose the order of the assessment tasks.
Outcome 2 Evaluate the historical significance of a crisis in an ancient society and assess the role of key individuals involved in that turning point.	50	
Total marks	100	

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination.

Contribution to final assessment

The examination will contribute 50 per cent.

End-of-year examination

Description

The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the VCAA. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions

The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

- Duration: two hours.
- Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the VCAA.
- VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#).
- The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the VCAA.

Further advice

The VCAA publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the VCAA website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format/s and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Units 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.