VCE History: Australian History
2016–2020

Written examination – End of year

Examination specifications

Overall conditions

The examination will be sat at a time and date to be set annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook.

There will be 15 minutes reading time and 2 hours writing time.

The examination will be marked by a panel appointed by the VCAA.

The examination will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

Content

The VCE History Adjusted Study Design for 2020 only 2016–2020 (‘Units 3 and 4: Australian History’) is the document for the development of the examination. The adjusted study design includes a section on ‘Characteristics of the study’ (pages 10 and 11). All outcomes in ‘Units 3 and 4: Australian History’ will be examined.

All of the key knowledge and skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.
Format

The examination will be in the form of a question and answer book.

The examination will consist of four sections, one for each of the four outcomes in Units 3 and 4.

Section A will consist of one question with sub-parts. The number of sub-parts may vary from year to year. The question will be derived from Unit 3, Area of study 1 – The reshaping of the Port Phillip District/Victoria 1834–1860. The question will involve analysis of one to three visual and/or written sources. Students must respond to all parts of the question. Section A will be worth a total of 20 marks.

Section B will consist of two essay questions derived from Unit 3, Area of study 2 – Making a people and a nation 1890–1920. Students must attempt one of these essay questions. Section B will be worth 20 marks.

Section C will consist of two questions with four sub-parts derived from Unit 4, Area of study 1 – Crises that tested the nation 1929–1945. One question will focus on the Great Depression; the other question will focus on World War II. Students must attempt one question and respond to all sub-parts of that question. Either or both questions may require students to refer to visual and/or written sources. Section C will be worth 20 marks.

Section D will consist of five extended-answer questions; one derived from each of the five topics in Unit 4, Area of study 2 – Voices for change 1965–2000. Students will be required to respond to two questions. Section D will be worth a total of 25 marks.

The examination will be worth a total of 80 marks.

Criteria

The essay in Section B will be assessed against the following criteria:

- construction of a coherent and relevant historical argument that addresses the specific demands of the essay question
- demonstration of historical knowledge that is accurate and appropriate for the essay question
- use of historical thinking concepts
- use of primary sources and historical interpretations as evidence

Approved materials and equipment

Pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers

Relevant references

The following publications should be referred to in relation to the VCE History: Australian History examination:

- VCE History Adjusted Study Design for 2020 only 2016–2020 (‘Units 3 and 4: Australian History’)
- VCE History: Australian History – Advice for teachers 2016–2020 (includes assessment advice)
- VCAA Bulletin
Advice

During the 2016–2020 accreditation period for In 2020 the VCE History: Australian History, examinations will be prepared according to the examination specifications above. Each The examination will conform to these specifications and will test a representative sample of the key knowledge and skills from all outcomes in Units 3 and 4.

Teachers and students should be aware of the characteristics of the study, including historical thinking and historical interpretations in VCE History, as described on pages 10 and 11 of the adjusted study design. In VCE History, evidence may be drawn from primary and/or secondary sources, and include factual detail related to the key knowledge stated in the adjusted study design, historical perspectives and historical interpretations.

Further information about using sources as evidence is provided in the ‘Historical thinking’ section of the VCE History: Australian History – Advice for teachers 2016–2020 on pages 1–6.

Students should use command/task words, other instructional information within questions and corresponding mark allocations to guide their responses.

A separate document containing a sample examination has been published on the VCE History: Australian History ‘Examination specifications, past examinations and examination reports’ page on the VCAA website.

The sample examination provides an indication of the format of the examination, and the types of questions teachers and students can expect until the current accreditation period is over. It demonstrates a range of source configurations that could appear on the examination.

The VCAA does not provide answers to sample examinations.

Please note: The sample examination has not been amended to reflect the adjustments made to the study design in 2020.