VCE History 2022–2026

School-based Assessment report

Time allocation and efficiency

Some schools risked compromising the principle of efficiency by over-assessing students. The [VCE Assessment Principles](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/Pages/VCEPoliciesandGuidelines.aspx) indicate that assessment should be efficient and should not unduly add to student workload. As a general rule, the total time allocated to the SAC task(s) for any given outcome should not exceed 90 minutes, with the exception of the historical inquiry, which should generally not exceed one week.

Use of publicly available materials

Several schools used publicly available materials as the basis for their SACs, which created the risk of breaches of authentication requirements. These materials included commercially produced resources and resources shared on mailing lists or at conferences for VCE teachers. Schools are reminded that tutors or students from other schools may provide students with access to questions, exemplar responses or response guides for these publicly available materials. This compromises the integrity and equitability of the assessment task. Schools are reminded that publicly available material must be suitably modified if used in a SAC task. Suitable modifications include substituting historical sources, altering the key knowledge outcome targeted by questions, and/or altering the key skills, command terms and mark allocation of questions.

Task design

Many schools modelled their SAC questions on the style of questions in the sample examination. While this is an acceptable approach, schools are encouraged to use a wider variety of question styles in order to target the development of the historical thinking skills identified in the characteristics of the study on pages 6–7 of the [VCE History Study Design 2022–2026](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/history/Pages/index.aspx). For example, the sample Revolutions examination did not contain any questions asking students to contextualise sources or evaluate their purpose and reliability, but these are both vital skills for historians that will assist students in achieving highly on both their SAC tasks and the written examination. Schools are therefore encouraged to use a wider range of question styles in SAC tasks.

The best-designed SAC tasks reflected an understanding of the interconnectedness of the characteristics of the study, the key knowledge, key skills and outcome statement being assessed. Schools can improve teacher understanding of these interconnections by carefully reviewing the entire study design (not just the pages related to a specific study) and the corresponding [On-demand implementation videos](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/history/advice-for-teachers/Pages/ImplementationVideos.aspx). The best-designed SAC tasks also reflected the advice provided by the VCAA in the [Sample approaches to developing an assessment task](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/history/advice-for-teachers/Pages/SampleApproaches.aspx).

Where SAC tasks contain multiple questions, high-quality tasks tended to provide questions of graduated difficulty to ensure they were both accessible to all students and that all students had the opportunity to demonstrate their highest possible level of learning. For example:

* 25 per cent of marks allocated to low-order questions as per Bloom’s taxonomy (for example, short answer questions using verbs such as *identify* or *describe*)
* 50 per cent of marks allocated to mid-order questions (for example, questions that required construction of a paragraph synthesising evidence from sources and own knowledge, using verbs such as *explain*)
* 25 per cent of marks allocated to high-order questions (for example, one or two extended responses using verbs such as *evaluate* or *analyse*).

The historical inquiry SAC was better handled than in previous years. The best tasks:

* provided explicit scaffolding to students on steps in the task such as:
* illustrating, with examples, the process of constructing inquiry questions based on the key knowledge and key skills in the study design
* providing note-taking prompts or scaffolds to assist students in gathering evidence
* providing essay-planning prompts or scaffolds to assist students in writing up their final response
* required students to devise unique questions in consultation with the teacher, to minimise the risk of collusion
* were conducted efficiently, allocating no more than one week of teaching time (a common approach was to allocate 2–3 lessons to supervised research, followed by a final lesson in which students used their research findings to write an essay)
* had suitable authentication measures in place to verify that the final report or essay was the student’s own work, such as:
* regularly sighting student work throughout each step of the task
* requiring that all research and planning take place under teacher supervision during class time, with notes being collected by the teacher at the end of each lesson and returned at the start of the next
* requiring students to complete an authentication record or construct a bibliography
* requiring that the final essay or report be written under examination conditions, using only the notes gathered and authenticated at earlier stages of the task.

Command terms

In a number of reviewed assessment tasks, the command terms were limited and repetitive. The Audit Panel recommended that using a wider range of terms would better enable students to demonstrate their skill attainment. The Audit Panel suggested that teachers consult the VCAA [Glossary of command terms](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/GlossaryofCommandTerms.aspx). This glossary is not intended to be exhaustive or limiting; other terms may be used if required and/or appropriate, allowing study-specific questions to be constructed. Additionally, not all terms in the glossary will be suitable for use in all disciplines and studies. Reference to the relevant curriculum and current VCE study design is paramount when developing internal and external assessments.

Cover sheet and instructions to students

Well-designed SAC tasks contained a cover sheet that clearly identified:

* the outcome being assessed
* the type(s) of assessment task(s) being used
* the key knowledge and key skills students were expected to demonstrate (note that schools should check that they are *not* recycling a cover sheet with key knowledge or key skills from a previous study design)
* task conditions, including date(s), reading time, writing time and permitted materials (for example, whether notes were permitted and, if so, in what format)
* information about how the task will be assessed and what students need to demonstrate in order to achieve the maximum possible marks (for example, assessment criteria, mark schemes and/or rubrics)
* mark allocation, including, if appropriate, how allocated marks would be converted to a score of 50 for each unit.

Assessment tools

A number of schools did not use rubrics that were aligned with the VCE History 2022–2026 Study Design. These schools continued to use rubrics/performance descriptors originally distributed by VCAA for use with the VCE History 2005–2015 Study Design or the VCE History 2016–2021 Study Design. These schools were reminded that it is important to review all teaching and learning materials and ensure they align with the language of the VCE History 2022–2026 Study Design.

A number of schools used the written examination mark scheme published by VCAA to assess essay or historical inquiry SACs. This was inappropriate because this is a generic tool that does not target the outcome statements in the Study Design and is intended to assist written examination assessors in discriminating between levels of performance on a final examination, rather than supporting student skill development in a course of learning. Schools should instead use assessment tools that explicitly affirm the student’s level of achievement in relation to the key skills targeted by the outcome statement being assessed, and which identifies specific areas for improvement.

So far, relatively few schools are using the [performance descriptors](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/history/advice-for-teachers/Pages/PerformanceDescriptors.aspx) provided by VCAA to support the implementation of the VCE History 2022–2026 Study Design. These descriptors and the guidance provided with them can assist schools in designing developmental rubrics that affirm students’ success in deploying specific historical thinking skills and identify specific steps that must be undertaken to achieve more highly in future. The VCAA provides these assessment rubrics as advice and schools are encouraged to adapt the sample rubrics to customise them to their student cohort and the task they intend to deliver. Schools are encouraged to direct teachers to review the instructions on [How to use the VCE History 2022–2026 Performance Descriptors](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/history/advice-for-teachers/Pages/PerformanceDescriptors.aspx) and the corresponding [On-demand implementation video](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/history/advice-for-teachers/Pages/ImplementationVideos.aspx) for guidance on the development and customisation of effective assessment tools.

Wrong study design and superseded terminology

A significant concern, most commonly arising in schools teaching Ancient History and Revolutions, was the use of terminology drawn from past study designs in assessment tasks, tools and support materials. Examples included:

* cover sheets including incorrectly named tasks
* the identification of SAC tasks as ‘an analysis of primary sources’ and ‘an analysis of historical interpretations’
* the use of the term ‘historiography’
* key skills and key knowledge quotes drawn from previous study designs
* assessment rubrics using outcomes and descriptors from past study designs.

While these errors were uncommon, it is important that schools ensure that outcomes, content descriptors and task types are compliant and consistent with the current study design.

Units 3 and 4 Ancient History

Unit 3

Schools have used all four of the task types at Unit 3, with the historical inquiry the most prevalent format. Publicly available assessment tasks were uncommon in audited schools. The inquiry tasks created have paid considerable attention to authentication procedures to ensure that the student’s work is their own. This has demonstrated an awareness of the VCAA authentication requirements.

There were occasional concerns about the scope of knowledge covered by the tasks provided. Outcome assessments must have sufficient scope of the key knowledge and key skills to allow students to demonstrate an understanding of all aspects of the outcome. Some assessment tasks covered a limited range of key knowledge points from the Study Design and required a better balance between scope and depth. Schools should also ensure that questions in SACs include the full range of competencies specified in the key skills to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the outcome across a range of levels.

Unit 4

Planning documents showed that schools mostly designed learning sequences that supported fair and reasonable assessment, although this was not evident for all of the SACs provided. Schools created assessment tasks that are equitable and accessible to all students. Overall, the tasks submitted enabled students to demonstrate the achievement of the outcomes and teachers to make a reasonable judgment about student levels of knowledge and skill attainment.

The design of SAC questions maintained a balance between coverage and depth of the content of the current study design and scope for students of differing abilities to complete the tasks while demonstrating their skills and knowledge. The tasks also revealed the rich understanding of the course content among teachers, including the contribution of key individuals and of the salient concepts demonstrated by the tasks. Coverage of the key knowledge for each outcome across tasks was excellent.

Units 3 and 4 Australian History

The audits revealed that schools have generally been successful in the implementation of the new study design with regards to their two selected investigations. Generally, it was found that the investigations ‘Power and resistance (1788–1998)’ and ‘War and upheaval (1909–1992)’ were common choices. Provided course timelines indicated that schools are successfully navigating the key knowledge and key skills and developing courses that reflect the demands of the study design. The successful implementation of the new study design may be attributed to the excellent professional learning opportunities provided to teachers by the VCAA, as well as organisations such as the History Teachers’ Association of Victoria, and the availability of teaching and learning resources proved support to teachers and students.

Unit 3

In Outcome 1, the evaluation of historical sources was the most popular choice. Some teachers combined this task with an extended response. It was pleasing that most tasks submitted in the audit were clear and generally met the requirements of the new study design. Most teachers provided a range of high, medium and low-level questions to cater to students of a range of learning abilities. A broad range of appropriate written and visual sources were used in the task. The historical sources were also relevant to the timeframes of each investigation. Generally, teachers are using appropriate command terms.

While it is recommended that assessment tasks do not reflect the examination structure, some schools still tended to take this approach. Differentiating school-assessed coursework from the examination format provides greater opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning and understanding of key knowledge and keys skill in relation to the outcome.

In Outcome 2, the essay was the most frequently selected task. Few schools provided students with a choice of questions that would have allowed students to draw on the breadth of their key knowledge. The Audit Panel recommended that teachers provide students with a choice of questions. It also recommended that questions targeting the key skill ‘Continuity and change’ be included to ensure that students have the opportunity to draw on knowledge from both areas of studies.

Most schools permitted students to access notes, generally an A4 page of quotations, to complete this task. In some instances it was unclear how schools were managing the authentication of students’ notes. Teachers need to be aware of the authentication requirements set out in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*. Teachers should also ensure that SAC tasks of this nature stay within the 90-minute time allocation recommended in the VCAA *Advice for teachers*.

Unit 4

Generally, schools provided assessment tasks that demonstrated a sound understanding of the key knowledge and key skills. The investigation ‘War and upheaval’ was a popular choice with the schools that were audited.

For Outcome 1, schools generally combined the evaluation of historical sources and extended response task types. The comfort of teachers with the key knowledge of the ‘War and upheaval’ investigation is reflected in the range and scope of the historical sources and interpretations included in the evaluation task. Schools also demonstrated a confidence with creating questions that enabled students to demonstrate an understanding of continuity and change over the period of the investigation.

In Outcome 2, schools generally selected an essay or a historical inquiry/essay combination. Schools demonstrated sound authentication processes. The Audit Panel, however, noted the importance of adapting and changing publicly accessible assessment tasks. The topic of Australia and the Vietnam War was a popular choice among schools.

Units 3 and 4 Revolutions

Area of Study 1: Causes of Revolution

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the causes of revolution, and evaluate the contribution of significant events, ideas, individuals and popular movements.

SAC tasks should focus on eliciting student thinking about how significant events, ideas, individuals and popular movements contributed to the development of the revolution. Tasks should provide students with an opportunity to analyse different types of causes (for example, long-term tensions, short-term causes, immediate catalysts) and the relationships between different causes (for example, how they combine to create crisis situations).

While the broad focus of Outcome 1 is analysis of causation, it is important that teachers also develop questions that provide for the development of all key skills. For example, an evaluation of historical sources task might ask students to evaluate the reliability of a primary source to target the skills of analysing the perspectives of people during the development of the revolution and evaluating sources for use as evidence.

Area of Study 2: Consequences of Revolution

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the consequences of revolution and evaluate the extent of continuity and change in the post-revolutionary society.

School-assessed Coursework tasks should focus on eliciting student thinking about how the revolutionary government responded to challenges to its power, conditions that influenced leaders to compromise or achieve their ideals, the role of individuals in shaping a new society, the diverse experiences and responses of key social groups, and the extent of continuity and change over the entire revolution.

A major change in the VCE History Study Design 2022–2026 was the embedding of the concept of 'Continuity and change’ in both the key knowledge and key skills for both outcomes. This skill can be most effectively assessed in SAC tasks for Outcome 2, after students have gained an understanding of the entire scope of the revolution. However, relatively few schools posed questions targeting this skill. It may be useful to pose questions targeting these key knowledge outcomes:

* the continuities and changes in political, social, cultural, and economic conditions that influenced leaders to compromise and/or achieve their revolutionary ideals
* the extent of continuity and change in the post-revolutionary society.

Questions on continuity and change should not target specific key knowledge from Outcome 1 but should instead provide students with broad opportunities to apply what they have learned in evaluating continuity and change in the post-revolutionary society.