**[Gerry Martin]:** Welcome to this on-demand video, which will given an explanatory overview of how to use and adapt VCAA VCE History Performance Descriptors when designing assessment tasks. My name is Gerry Martin and I am the Curriculum Manager for History and Civics at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Prior to watching this on-demand video, please ensure you have familiarised yourself with the VCE History Study Design 2022-2026, and the designated assessment tasks for Units 3 and 4. This on-demand video will focus on explaining the alignment between the study design, assessment tasks and the VCAA VCE History Performance Descriptors. Also, this will provide advice on how to modify and adapt the VCE History Performance Descriptors when designing assessment tasks for your students in your school context.

Prior to watching this on-demand video, we encourage you to first watch the on-demand video on approaches to developing an assessment task and review the information in the Advice for teachers. The purpose of School-based assessment at Units 3 and 4 is to determine a student's Level of achievement, the scored assessment. And assessment can provide evidence that contributes to the determination of achievement of outcomes and satisfactory completion of a unit. Remember, the decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of Level of achievement.

The VCAA have developed performance descriptors which can be found in the Advice for teachers. These performance descriptors are advice only, and maybe adapted and used by teachers in the development of their assessment tasks and tools and support consistent assessing practises. Teachers may wish to develop their own performance descriptors, criteria or rubrics once they are compliant with the VCE History Study Design and VCE Assessment Principles. To understand the VCE History Performance Descriptors, it is important to understand them within the context of the VCE History Characteristics of the study, Key skills and assessment tasks. Teachers need to understand the purpose of the performance descriptors, how they were designed and how teachers should read them, modify and adapt them.

The assessment tasks for Units 3 and 4 History are designated by the study design and include a historical inquiry, evaluation of historical sources, extended responses, and an essay. An assessment tool, such as performance descriptors or rubrics, criteria, checklists and marking guides should be developed to assess student performance in the assessment task, assist consistent teacher assessment of student performance and support moderation within the student cohort. The assessment tasks and the assessment tools should be designed and developed together prior to the commencement of the teaching of the unit and the area of study. Together, they will support the assessment of the outcome for each area study, gathering of evidence on student performance, determining individual student achievement on the task, determining levels of achievement including the study score and teacher moderation of the student cohort. VCE History Performance Descriptors are intend to: only provide advice, describe the performance qualities for each skill and concept, illustrate progression, support consistent teacher assessing, inform development of subsequent assessments tasks, and support students in identifying progression and what improvement looks like.

The VCE History Study Design is grounded in a discipline of history and the methods of historical thinking, which are set out in the Characteristics of the study on pages six and seven of the VCE History Study Design 2022-2026. They underpin the outcomes, key knowledge and key skills in the study design by ensuring the development of historical thinking is promoted in and through the key skills in every unit and in every area of study. The Characteristics of the study are essential to teaching and assessing of VCE History and they underpin what students need to know to demonstrate a satisfactory achievement of the outcomes. When developing a teaching and learning programme, think about the enactment of the key skills through the knowledge and in classroom pedagogy and learning activities. By making the key skills explicit, by providing opportunities for students to practise them and then deploying them with new knowledge and through learning activities.

The Advice for teachers provides a detailed unpacking of the Characteristics of the study. The design and development of the VCE History performance descriptors are aligned to the Characteristics of the study. The VCE History performance descriptors are developed from the Characteristic of a study and align to each of the key skills. When observed together, teachers will see a continuity between the intent of the outcomes, the key skills, assessment tasks, and performance descriptors. When assessment tasks and performance descriptors are designed together, they will support teacher's judgements about students' satisfactory completion of the outcome and the levels of achievement.

Each VCE History Units 3 and 4 has a set of performance descriptors. There's one performance descriptors for Area of study one and one for Area of study two. The performance descriptors are consistent across all three Units 3 and 4 histories, with minor adaptions to reflect the intent of relevant outcomes. The performance descriptors include the following features: the outcome statement for the area of study, the Characteristics of the study as per pages six and seven of the study design, the key skills from the area of study that are aligned to the Characteristics of the study. The horizontal rows show the performance descriptors for each key skill. In each cell is an individual performance descriptor for each skill. Going from left to right along the row indicates an increasing level of difficulty for that particular key skill. The key skills from the area of study are listed vertically. The performance descriptors allocate one row per key skill. In designing assessment tasks, teachers should adapt these rubrics by selecting the rows that are most appropriate and relevant to assess the outcome, the key knowledge and key skills and the assessment tasks selected. However, each performance descriptor in each column are not necessarily of equal difficulty. Each row describes six progressively higher levels of performance in each skill and concept.

It is important to remember that the vertical alignment of each skill does not necessarily reflect similar difficulty between skills. I will explain why in the next slide using an example. It is important to remember each skill descriptor is not necessarily of equal complexity and difficulty to other key skill descriptors. On the slide, we have an example analysis of difficulty for each skill. You will notice that this is the same as the performance descriptor. However, the example analysis of difficulty of each skill includes gaps, which illustrate different levels of complexity within and between the key skills. In developing these performance descriptors the VCAA did a pairwise comparison to determine the relative complexity or difficulty of each descriptor in relation to the other descriptors.

The Characteristics of the study and the key skills are listed vertically and the increasing difficulty of each skill and concepts are unpacked in the horizontal rows. The example analysis of difficultly for each skill is a representation of this and can be found in the Advice for teachers. These performance descriptors were then tested against student work samples, and then this was followed by teacher trials. Throughout this process the performance descriptors were refined and clarified. The list of performance descriptors for each skill are not exhaustive. And teachers may add more fine-grain descriptors to their own assessment tool. Adding additional fine-grain performance descriptors may be helpful depending on your student cohort and your assessment task. In the example analysis of difficulty for each skill, each key skill is allocated one or two rows and each row describes six progressively higher levels of performance for that skill or concept.

It also illustrates increasingly relative complexity of each skill performance descriptor. The example analysis of difficulty for each skill shows not all the skills are of equal difficulty. Each of the key skill performance descriptor are grouped together into very low, low, medium, high, and very high. The VCE performance descriptors remove the blanks and collapses this down, so that they're accessible and easier to adapt for your assessment tasks. The following slide shows an approach a teacher may take when using the VCAA VCE History performance descriptors to develop an assessment tool for an assessment task.

Teachers may select from the performance descriptors and apply them to individual assessment tasks where appropriate. Step one, the task design may not provide the opportunities for students to demonstrate each skill at all levels and/or the full range of the skill. Rather than using the entire performance descriptors for the outcome which contains eight skills and six levels of performance for each, the teacher should choose those most appropriate for the design of the assessment task.

For an example, a teacher is teaching VCE History Revolutions Unit 3 Outcome 1: analyse the causes of the revolution and evaluate the contribution of significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements. The teacher asks the students to evaluate a number of historical sources. The teacher chooses the five key skills highlighted that are most relevant to the task and question items. In the design of the assessment tool for this task, it is important to select the most appropriate skills related to the assessment task, aim for a selection of at least five key skills, and identify which qualities of performance are most relevant to the students for example, you may remove the lowest descriptor.

In step two, your assessment tool is reduced to the five performance descriptors the teacher has selected. This table shows the teachers chosen skills to be assessed in the assessment task. In step three, the teacher identifies which descriptors are most relevant to the task. The teacher throughout the unit has done a lot of work with the students in developing their source use and using a historical interpretations. The teacher makes a judgement that they do not need the lowest level descriptor for those skills. Therefore, the teacher decides to remove them from the assessment tool. In step four, the teacher also decides to remove some descriptors, as they do not believe these are necessarily applicable to the task that has been designed.

In step five, the teacher then collapses the table so the assessment tool is easier to read. In step six, the teacher may also add to or nuance a descriptor depending on the task or historical context. They add specific knowledge from the outcome and key knowledge. The teachers may include additional fine-grain descriptors to provide greater differentiation within the student cohort when assessing. The teachers may also decide to contextualise the language in the performance descriptor to the area of the study. In step seven, the teacher collapses the performance descriptors down for ease of reading. The teacher then considers the weighting and mark allocation for each performance descriptor, taking into account the task item design. Each outcome is allocated 50 marks. When designing assessment tasks, teachers decide how they wish to allocate marks for each selected performance descriptor.

Also, teachers may consider allocating different marks and/or different weighting to each skill determined by the level of difficulty of the skill and task. For example, in an evaluation of historical sources task, it would include a number of question items and a range of cognitive demands for each question. If teachers had more than one assessment task for an outcome, they may have more than one assessment tool for that outcome. The performance descriptors and assessment scale on the slide is an example only. Teachers have the flexibility to determine the assessment task design, assessment tool and assessment scale once it is compliant with the VCE History Study Design 2022-2026 and the VCE Assessment Principles.

The teachers has used a performance descriptors to develop an assessment tool to determine each student's level of achievement on the particular assessment task. In step eight, once the assessment is complete, it is important to use the performance descriptors and evidence gathered on student performance to have conversation with students about their improvement and progression. Use the evidence gathered to reflect on the effectiveness of the assessment tool to assess student performance and illustrate their progression such as providing a good spread of your student cohort. Use the performance descriptors to help moderate and determine the student's level of achievement. Adapt and modify the performance descriptors for future use, for example, if the task and question items and, or the skill focus are changed, then the performance descriptors would need to be adapted to reflect the new assessment task. Use the performance descriptors and evidence gathered to inform subsequent development of assessment tasks and assessment tools.

To sum up, modify VCAA performance descriptors: adapt to the assessment tasks and student cohort, identify relevant descriptors and how they relate to the intended assessment task from the study design, modify and create the performance descriptive rubric, weight the relevant descriptors. Design assessment tasks for designated tasks in the study design: select an assessment task type, design an assessment task, apply VCE Assessment Principles of validity, reasonable, equitable, balanced, efficient, and be able to authenticate the assessment task, remember to apply to 25-50-25 rule in designing assessment items, that is 25% lower order question items, 50% mid-range question items and 25% higher order question items.

Ensure the adapted performance descriptors are aligned to the assessment task. Implement your assessment task by: assessing using the student achievement, using the performance descriptors, reflecting, modifying, adapting where and when required, supporting student improvement and progression, informing the teaching and learning and informing future assessing.

For more information please go to the VCE History Advice for Teachers Performance Descriptors webpage For further information, please access these essential resources: the VCE History Study Design, the Advice for teachers, the performance descriptors and the VCE and VCAL Administration Handbook. If you have any questions regarding to VCE History Study Design 2022-2026, the assessment tasks or assessing using performance descriptors please do contact me.

Thank you for taking your time to listen to this on-demand video on performance descriptors, I wish you well.

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