**Gerry Martin:** Welcome to this video which will give an explanatory overview of the VCE history examination specifications for the VCE history study design 2022-2026. My name is Gerry Martin and I am the Curriculum Manager for History and Civics at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Examination specifications and sample examinations are published in the VCAA examination page. Take the time to review, reflect and familiarise yourself and your students with the structure and types of question items. If you have any questions, please do contact me.

Students will find a paper more accessible, easier to navigate, be able to use reading time to focus on comprehension of the sources that they will use, be able to show what they know from across both areas of study, have access to lower-order source comprehension questions and have a choice between two essays. The purpose of the sample examination paper is to illustrate the structure of the paper, the types of question items, the range of possible question items, the number of sources that may appear on a paper in a particular year, the source types and the source forms that may appear on a paper in a particular year, the number of sources and questions that may vary from year to year and illustrate what may vary in different years.

What is staying the same? Internal assessment would contribute to 50% of the study score. External assessment, the examination will contribute to 50% of the study score. 15 minutes reading time and 2 hours writing time. The examination paper will include source-based tasks which will include short answer questions and extended responses. Also examination will include an essay. What is changing? It changes addressed to feedback the VCAA received from many teachers in relation to the history examinations as well as ensuring that the examinations are valid, reasonable, equitable, balanced and efficient. These are central to VCE assessment principles.

The new examination specifications are: the exam will be out of 70 marks. There is one VCE History study design. Each of the three Historys will have a common structure and the key skills are consistent across all Unit 3 and 4 History options. Therefore the exam should reflect this. The examination will address student workload by containing the length of sources to read, the number of questions and provide options where appropriate so that students can use reading time productively. The exam provides opportunities for students to draw on what they know from across both areas of study when they are responding to questions. Exam will provide choice where appropriate. It is to avoid too much choice on a paper which can create challenges as well as reduce effective use of reading time. Exam will emphasise the importance of examination items such as using historical sources and extended pieces of writing such as essays. Also the exam will ensure that there is a range of cognitive demands for question types to let all students have a sense of success.

So the inclusion of lower-order questions will be a noticeable addition in historical source task. Section A will be a source-based task that you will already be familiar with. Section A is at a 50 marks. 25 marks for the context studied in Unit 3 and 25 marks for the context studied in Unit 4. Two questions are to be attempted, one for each context study. Each question will have sub-part A, B, C, etc. Sources and questions will cover both areas of study. There will be low-order questions that focus on source comprehension such as identify, describe. These will be weighted accordingly. That is, you would expect these to be one, two, three and four mark questions.

So for example, the Revolutions exam. In section A, sources task, there are four questions. One for each revolution, America, France, Russia and China. A student has studied the French and Russian revolution, therefore the students select the Question 2 on France and Question 3 on Russia. They read those sources only and complete the sub-part questions which will cover causes and consequences of the selected revolutions. For each question there will be 3 to 4 sources. They will cover a range of source types, primary and secondary sources and a range of source forms, texts and visuals. A historical source may cover both areas of study. At least one source of each of the following. A primary source such as a perspective. A secondary source such as a historical interpretation and a primary or secondary visual source. The word lengths for all the sources will be contained to ensure the volume of reading is manageable. The question items will be aligned to the key knowledge and key skills in the study design.

In Section A, each question will have sub-parts. There will be a total of four or five sub-part questions for each context with a total of 25 marks. The questions will be ordered chronologically, not in mark value. That means you may have a 2 mark, 3 mark, 10 mark, 4 mark, 6 mark question order. 5 marks will target lower order questions, mostly source comprehension questions and will consist of one or two questions. 10 to 12 marks will be mid-range questions and will consist of two to three questions and include explanatory questions and possibly an analytical or evaluative question. However, these would be contained. For example, using source 3 and 4, analyse one cause of the revolution. And there will be one 8 to 10 mark question which will be a higher order question.

To illustrate the variation from year to year, the sample questions in the VCAA exam will show the range of variations in the number of questions sub-parts, types of questions and number of sources. Section B will be worth 20 marks. There will be one essay for each context in Unit 3 and 4. Students will have a choice of essays they respond to. Either the context they studied in Unit 3 or the one they studied in Unit 4. Essay questions may cover Area of Study 1 or Area of Study 2 or both areas of study. So students will have a choice between two essays related to context they study. So for example, a student has studied the French revolution in Unit 3 and the Russian revolution in Unit 4.

Students will have a choice between the essay Question 2 on France or the essay Question 3 on Russia. The cognitive demands of essay questions may include analyse, evaluate, discuss and to what extent. The sample of the questions on the sample example illustrate the types of questions that may cover Area of Study 1 and/or Area of Study 2. In the essay, students may use knowledge and evidence from both areas of study in an essay response once it is appropriate and relevant to responding to the question. This is obvious for an essay question that may target Area of Study 1 and Area of Study 2. However, it is important to remember if an essay question they may target one Area of Study, it may be appropriate to use knowledge and evidence from the other Area of Study. For example, if the essay question targeted Area of Study 2 then there may be appropriate for students to use ideas, knowledge and evidence from Area of Study 1 to respond to the question.

This is to provide students with an opportunity to show what they know, make links between causes and effects, continuing change and provide context. It is important to remember, avoid temptation to place more emphasis on Unit 3 or Unit 4 because the teacher or the student may decide no matter what they are going to do the essay for the Unit 3 context. For example, a school may be doing the French and Russian revolutions. Do not limit student choice by making a decision to spend more time teaching the French revolution and telling students that they will do the essay on the French revolution. Ensure students have an authentic choice so they can select the questions that best allows them to show what they know and do the best on the exam. Let the students decide.

The essay in section B will be assessed against the following criteria. Construction of a coherent and relevant historical argument that addresses specific demands of the question. Demonstration of historical knowledge that is accurate and appropriate for the essay question. Application of historical thinking concepts such as cause and consequence, continuity and change and/or historical significance. Use of sources of evidence to support historical argument including a range of primary sources, perspectives and historical interpretations. Essay criteria draws from the key knowledge and key skills and are unpacked in the Characteristics of Study in the study design and further detailed in advice for teachers.

So what does this look like for a student? Anna is studying Ancient History. For Unit 3, she has studied Ancient Egypt and for Unit 4 she has studied Ancient Rome. She completes both source tasks in Section A, Question 1 on Egypt and Question 3 on Ancient Rome. And then section B, she has a choice of either essay Question 1 on Egypt or essay Question 3 on Rome. To simplify these changes from the 2016 to 2021 examinations, in revolutions we reduced a paper from 80 marks to 70 marks, removed the Section A to by 10 marks, extend response questions, Question 2 and 3 and converted the other 10 marks into lower order questions, identifies and describes.

In Ancient History, we reduced the paper from 80 marks to 70 marks, gone from two essays to one essay and converted the remaining 10 marks into lower-order source based questions. In Australian History, we reduce the paper from 80 marks to 70 marks, removed a Section D to 10 marks, extended responses and converted the remaining 10 marks into lower-order source based questions. Overall, this is a reduction both in content and number of questions and we've made examination more accessible to all students through a range of lower, medium and higher order questions, whilst ensuring it remains compliant to the VCE Assessment Principles and ensuring the exam remains rigorous.

As I said earlier, the examination will still be worth 50% of the study score. Section A, source task marks will be somewhat balanced between Areas of Study 1 and Areas of Study 2 within each context. For example, Area of Study 1, 13 marks and Area of Study 2, 12 marks. Difference would be not greater than 3 marks. Weighting between Unit 3 and Unit 4 will be dependent on the student essay choice in Section B. Section B essay will be weighted to one context dependent on student choice. Section B, an essay may focus on Area of Study 1 or Areas of Study 2 or be balanced between both areas of study. Students will be able to use knowledge and evidence from both areas of study that is relevant to respond to the question.

To recap, the purpose of the sample examination is to illustrate that the structure of the paper, the types of question items, the range of possible question items, the number of sources that may appear on a paper in a particular year, source types and source forms that may appear on a paper in a particular year, number of sources and questions may vary from year to year and illustrate what may vary in different years. On examination day students will receive two booklets, a question and answer book and a sources book. The sources book will contain all historical sources related to Section A questions. Students write all the responses into the question-answer book. End-of-year examination papers in a particular year, the exam will have in Section A, the same number of sources for each context, the same number of sub-part questions items for each context. In Section B, the essay questions for each context will be consistent.

Therefore, if one essay question is covering both areas, Area of Study 1 and Area of Study 2 then all questions in that exam will be consistent. Number of sources and the number of questions will vary in different years. There will be fairness consistency and equity within a paper and across contexts in a particular year. Examination papers will be equitable across years. Essays will all use a common command term and target the same or both areas of study. The sample questions in the sample exam will illustrate the variation types of questions across years. Irrespective of which Unit 3 and 4 History you may teach, please do familiarise yourself with all three sample examination papers for Ancient History, Australian History and Revolutions.

They provide a good representative sample of the types of question items and their design. The range of cognitive demand. Source types and forms. This will help you think about the range of possibilities for assessment. Now take the time to look at the sample examination papers and familiarise yourself with the types of examination items that appear on the paper. If you have any questions regarding the examination specification or sample examinations or anything to do with the implementation of VCE History 2022-2026, please do contact me. I wish you the best of luck in implementing VCE History 2022-2026.

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