

Victorian Certificate of Education

TEXTS AND TRADITIONS

STUDY DESIGN



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Important information

Accreditation period

Units 1–4: 1 January 2017 – 31 December 2022

Implementation of this study commences in 2017.

Other sources of information

The [VCAA Bulletin](#) is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The *Bulletin* also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the *Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* is available as an e-newsletter via free subscription on the VCAA's website at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

To assist teachers in developing courses, the VCAA publishes online the *Advice for teachers*, which includes teaching and learning activities for Units 1–4, and advice on assessment tasks and performance level descriptors for School-assessed Coursework in Units 3 and 4

The current [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#) contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers

Throughout this study design the term 'school' is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

Copyright

VCE schools may reproduce parts of this study design for use by teachers. The full VCAA Copyright Policy is available at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Copyright.aspx.

Introduction

Scope of study

The study of VCE Texts and Traditions considers the place and meaning of sacred texts within their religious traditions. In an attempt to understand the intended meaning of the texts, the study focuses on the original contexts of sacred texts and examines their literary characteristics. The study encompasses texts from the Christian, Islamic and Jewish traditions.

A range of methods exists for interpreting sacred texts and exploring their intended meaning. VCE Texts and Traditions focuses on sociocultural, historical and literary methods of criticism. The process of searching for, and giving expression to, the meaning of sacred text is called exegesis.

In this study, the term ‘texts’ refers to a body of writings held to be the authoritative core for the tradition, often referred to as scriptures. Additional writings that derive their authority from their relationship to the core can also be regarded as authoritative. For Units 3 and 4, the VCAA will publish a list of set texts annually. The term ‘traditions’ is understood to refer to established religious organisations that continue to play an important part in maintaining and shaping culture. Traditions contain ideas, values and beliefs about existence and human experience, and are expressed in a variety of ways.

Rationale

The study of VCE Texts and Traditions equips students to come to a deeper understanding of the relationship between religious traditions and the written texts, which have grown from and shaped those traditions. Examining the texts on which religious traditions are founded enables students to gain a good understanding about the basis of those traditions. These texts become a touchstone to the tradition as it develops and responds to changing circumstances.

Many religious traditions have a special relationship with a set of written texts, often referred to as scriptures. Through this study, students are taught to understand that these written texts have particular authority for the tradition and may act as an important reference and foundation for the tradition’s social organisation, rituals, values, beliefs and behaviour, both historically and in the world today.

Students study the texts in their original social, cultural, religious, political and historical settings, as well as investigate the impact such texts have had throughout history and are having on the world today. Different methods of interpretation are taken into account throughout this study. Students also investigate the texts as pieces of literature and consider how others have been inspired by the interpretation of such writings.

The study of VCE Texts and Traditions encourages independent and critical thinking in students that will assist them in work and study, and in fields that require critical thinking about, and research, analysis and interpretation of, written text.

Aims

This study is designed to develop students’ understanding of religious texts and:

- their interpretation within traditions
- the variety of text types associated with traditions
- their place and use within traditions, societies and cultures
- their historical development

- the ways in which their message was shaped and communicated
- the questions and methods appropriate to textual commentaries
- the skills of investigation, description, analysis and interpretation appropriate to the study of texts.

Structure

The study is made up of four units.

Unit 1: Texts in traditions

Unit 2: Texts in society

Unit 3: Texts and the early tradition

Unit 4: Texts and their teachings

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

A glossary defining terms used across Units 1 to 4 is included in the companion document *Advice for teachers*.

Entry

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 prior to undertaking Unit 4. Units 1 to 4 are designed to a standard equivalent to the final two years of secondary education. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curriculum.

Duration

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction over the duration of a semester.

Changes to the study design

During its period of accreditation minor changes to the study will be announced in the [VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET](#). The *Bulletin* is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes or advice about VCE studies published in the *Bulletin*.

Monitoring for quality

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the VCAA will periodically undertake an audit of VCE Texts and Traditions to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#). Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

Safety and wellbeing

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study.

Employability skills

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The *Advice for teachers* provides specific examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

Legislative compliance

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.

Assessment and reporting

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on the teacher's decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Demonstration of achievement of outcomes and satisfactory completion of a unit are determined by evidence gained through the assessment of a range of learning activities and tasks.

Teachers must develop courses that provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate satisfactory achievement of outcomes.

The decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. Schools will report a student's result for each unit to the VCAA as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory).

Levels of achievement

Units 1 and 2

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the VCAA. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

Units 3 and 4

The VCAA specifies the assessment procedures for students undertaking scored assessment in Units 3 and 4. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit in the VCE study designs.

The student's level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework (SACs) and/or School-assessed Tasks (SATs) as specified in the VCE study designs, and external assessment.

The VCAA will report the student's level of achievement on each assessment component as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score the student must achieve two or more graded assessments and receive S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who took the study. Teachers should refer to the current [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#) for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score. Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE Text and Traditions are as follows:

- Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
- Unit 4 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
- End-of-year examination: 50 per cent.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this study design.

Authentication

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student's own. Teachers need to refer to the current [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#) for authentication procedures.

Unit 1: Texts in traditions

In this unit students examine the place of texts and their literary forms within a religious tradition. Story-telling is one of the major literary forms in religious traditions; other forms include law, prophecy, sacred songs, reflection and instruction. Students explore the importance of texts at the source of a tradition and how their meaning for the earlier and continuing tradition might be found and described.

The process of searching for and giving expression to the meaning of text is called exegesis. This unit introduces students to basic methods of exegesis to bring about a deeper awareness of how texts came about, and the meaning of texts to the religious tradition. This unit also explores how texts have been used by people both within and beyond the religious tradition to bring meaning to issues or ideas in a new cultural setting.

This unit requires the study of texts in a variety of literary forms. The texts may come from one religious tradition or from a range of religious traditions.

Texts

There is no prescription of texts for Unit 1. The following criteria should be used to select texts on which to base courses for this unit:

- clear identification of the texts in terms of their acceptance by the tradition as complete and authoritative
- availability of the whole core in the English language (in translation where necessary)
- availability of supporting primary and/or secondary resources at an appropriate level.

Traditions

The following criteria should be used to select a tradition or traditions on which to base courses for this unit:

- members of a tradition define themselves to a significant extent in terms of the tradition's essential relationship to a set of texts
- clear identification of the tradition in terms of it having an authoritative core of texts
- availability of historical and other primary and/or secondary material in the English language (in translation if necessary) and at an appropriate level.

Area of Study 1

Exploring literary forms

Many religious traditions are based on an extensive series of writings that are carefully preserved within, and as, sacred books. The audience for whom the text was originally written received sacred teachings through a variety of literary forms. Different sacred texts and religious traditions put greater or lesser emphasis on different literary forms.

Ancient writings confront the modern reader with many unknowns. However, they remain rich stores of the wisdom and spiritual insight at the source of the traditions that created them. The collection of a variety of literary forms into one larger body of sacred texts gives further meaning to each individual text.

In this area of study students focus on how texts function as literature in themselves and as part of a wider body of religious writing.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to recognise and explain different literary forms and analyse their role within a tradition's scriptures.

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

Key knowledge

- characteristics of particular literary forms used within a religious tradition's scriptures
- the ways that some sacred texts perform a function within their wider literary context.

Key skills

- identify and explain particular literary forms according to their literary structure and character
- analyse the characteristics and function of a text within its wider literary and religious context.

Area of Study 2

The formation and exegesis of text

The origins of some ancient texts are obscure while others can be clearly located within defined historical events. Some texts show evidence of development, compilation and editing. However, as the sacred texts exist within the sacred books of a tradition, they indicate a particular sociocultural and historical setting which reflects their meaning for that religious tradition.

In this area of study students undertake textual analysis, which involves an understanding of the sociocultural and historical settings of these ancient texts. This gives students an insight into the way the original community might have understood the text. In this area of study, sociocultural refers to the social, cultural and religious.

Students focus on developing understanding of the original sociocultural and historical setting in which the tradition has placed selected texts, the literary aspects as they apply to particular texts, and the meaning that the founding tradition attached to the text.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply basic exegetical methods against the background in which the texts are located.

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

Key knowledge

- characteristics of the original sociocultural and historical setting of selected religious texts
- exegetical methods appropriate to exploring the meaning of these texts in their sociocultural setting, including, where possible, the study of their literary parallels.

Key skills

- identify sociocultural and historical information relevant to an understanding of selected texts
- apply exegetical methods to a foundational text by, for example, identifying the type of text, exploring its key terms and ideas, and considering authorship and the purpose/intention of the text in its original setting
- compare, where possible, similar literary texts from within and beyond the tradition.

Area of Study 3

Later uses and interpretations of sacred texts

Religious traditions that trace their origins to times well before the twenty-first century inevitably carry within them evidence of change. Some changes affect the ways sacred texts are understood. In different eras of the tradition, its guardians, scholars and teachers have left evidence of their developing understandings, which is often of value to the tradition today. Such understandings can also stand in tension with the understandings sought by the tradition today. In addition, at different points of the tradition, individuals – both from within and outside the tradition – have sought to provide a personal artistic interpretation of a text in ways that can be of value for today's student of the religious tradition.

In this area of study students focus on interpretations of selected texts at points later than the original founding tradition. These interpretations can issue from sources which might carry authority through scholarship, an instituted teaching office, charismatic leadership, or artistic insight. These later interpretations may be modern or from an earlier point in history.

Students will focus on at least one of the following for study:

- interpretations by the later tradition of selected sacred texts through such means as feasts, festivals, rituals and popular custom
- interpretations of selected sacred texts through artistic forms such as art, literature, film, calligraphy, music or architecture.

The selected focus should be supported by examination of relevant scholarly discussion and religious writings.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss a range of understandings and interpretations of sacred text.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

- the ways the later tradition showed its understanding of selected sacred texts through such means as feasts, festivals, rituals, and popular custom, and/or
- the ways art, literature, film, calligraphy, music, architecture or other artistic forms have provided interpretations of selected texts of the tradition
- key aspects of relevant scholarly commentaries and religious writings.

Key skills

- describe and evaluate meanings attributed to a text by the later religious tradition, and/or
- describe and evaluate the interpretation of a text offered in an artistic medium
- identify and summarise scholarly commentaries and religious writings.

Assessment

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 learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the 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 must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment may be selected from the following:

- summaries
- textual commentaries
- essays
- short reports, including ones based on interviews
- exegetical exercises
- comparative tables
- short-answer questions.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Unit 2: Texts in society

In this unit students study texts as a means of investigating social attitudes on issues such as justice, care for the environment, racism and gender roles. Therefore the texts selected for study should be potential sources of ideas about these or other issues in society. Some of the texts may call for change in attitudes and values; others may call for changes in social, religious and political institutions. Some texts may justify or support existing social, cultural, religious and political institutions, works, attitudes and values.

Students consider the social context within which the texts were produced, the conditions under which they are currently read, the reasons for reading them, and the kinds of authority attributed to them by traditions and society in general. They also look at the ways in which the texts shape, and are shaped by, the content of the message contained in them.

Additionally, students compare how texts from different religious traditions treat common social issues.

Outcomes 1 and 2 should be based on a range of texts from one or more traditions.

Outcome 3 should be based on a range of texts from at least two traditions.

Texts

Although there is no prescription of texts for Unit 2, the following criteria should be used to select texts on which to base courses:

- clear identification of the texts in terms of their acceptance by the tradition as core and authoritative
- availability of the whole core in the English language (in translation where necessary)
- availability of supporting primary and/or secondary resources at an appropriate level.

Traditions

The following criteria should be used to select traditions on which to base courses for Unit 2:

- members of a tradition define themselves to a significant extent in terms of the tradition's essential relationship to a set of texts
- clear identification of the tradition in terms of it having an authoritative core of texts
- availability of historical and other primary and/or secondary support material in the English language (in translation if necessary) and at an appropriate level.

Area of Study 1

Sacred texts in the past

In this area of study students investigate the general background to selected texts, using historical research skills and scholarly works to identify people, places and events relevant to the origins of the texts.

To understand a sacred text, it should, where possible, be seen in its historical context. Sacred texts are the products of certain times and places. While certain issues are universal and timeless, students learn to understand what the social and cultural contexts were in which texts evolved.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to understand the origin and development of selected texts that express a tradition's relationship to its society.

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

Key knowledge

- when, where, why and how the texts took shape and developed
- the historical people, places and events relating to the development of social attitudes, cultural beliefs and teachings, in selected texts
- particular attitudes, beliefs and teachings expressed in selected texts that relate to past social structures and ideas; for example, justice, authority, care for the environment, gender roles or other important social issues.

Key skills

- identify when and where the texts took shape and developed
- explain why and how the texts took shape and developed
- identify and describe the historical people, places and events relating to the development of social attitudes, cultural beliefs and teachings in selected texts
- describe a range of social attitudes, beliefs and teachings seen in the past to have been contained in texts
- discuss the development of social attitudes, beliefs and teachings in texts.

Area of Study 2

Sacred texts today

In this area of study students focus on how religious traditions use their sacred texts when confronted with particular social issues.

Sacred texts have an impact on the attitudes and values of individuals living today, both as members of a religious tradition and as they engage with wider society. This impact can be felt directly by individuals as they read the texts and by both religious and non-religious communities who are affected. To varying degrees, sacred texts are seen as authoritative and as providing sources of inspiration, guidance or instruction on, for example, issues such as ecology, racism or other social issues. Sacred texts can also stimulate debate both within and outside a tradition.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to understand the type of authority that a tradition currently attributes to its sacred texts, how these texts affect the current tradition's understanding of its relationship to society, and the effects of the sacred text upon society today.

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

Key knowledge

- the type of authority currently attributed to its sacred texts by a tradition and by society in general
- the ways in which a religious tradition uses its sacred texts today to understand its relationship to society
- the ways a religious institution or group from within the tradition has used sacred texts to inspire and/or guide their work in society today, particularly in relation to social issues within and/or beyond their tradition.

Key skills

- describe the type of authority currently attributed to sacred texts by a tradition and by society in general
- discuss ways in which a tradition uses sacred texts to express its understanding of its relationship to society
- analyse the way an institution or a group from within a tradition uses sacred texts to inspire or guide members within, and people outside, the tradition in their work in society today, particularly in relation to social issues.

Area of Study 3

Comparing religious traditions

In this area of study students compare religious traditions. Misunderstanding and conflict is sometimes generated by the way different religious traditions view and perceive their relationship with each other. By understanding the content regarding common social issues of the sacred texts of each tradition, students are able to acknowledge their similarities and differences. Examples of common social issues are social structures, justice, authority, care for the environment, and gender roles.

Outcome 3 should be based on a range of texts from at least two traditions to allow comparison of these traditions' attitudes to social issues.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to compare the similarities and differences between the ways sacred texts of two or more religious traditions present a particular social issue.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

- the content related to a common social issue found within selected sacred texts from two or more religious traditions
- the reasons that religious traditions offer, based on the teachings and values they find in their sacred texts, for their opinions on a common social issue
- the similarities and differences between attitudes and approaches to a common social issue, based on the traditions' study of their sacred texts
- a range of challenges involved in comparing sacred texts from different traditions.

Key skills

- identify the content in selected sacred texts from two or more religious traditions that relates to a common social issue
- compare the values and teachings of at least one sacred text from each of two or more religious traditions in relation to a common social issue
- analyse some of the reasons for similarities and differences between religious traditions regarding their approach to social issues raised in their sacred texts
- recognise the challenges in comparing sacred texts from different traditions.

Assessment

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 learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the 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 must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment may be selected from the following:

- summaries
- textual commentaries
- essays
- short reports, including reports based on interviews
- comparative tables
- short-answer questions.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Unit 3: Texts and the early tradition

The texts of a particular religious tradition are foundational in that they recount, for example, specific events, narratives, laws, prophetic pronouncements and teachings that describe the beginnings and initial development of a religious tradition. In this unit students explore the society and culture from which the tradition being studied was formed. They seek an understanding of the historical background that lent shape and content to the texts themselves.

Students develop an understanding of how the chosen set text is a response to particular social, cultural, religious, political and historical needs and events. They explore the formation of the text itself, the intended audience of that text, and the message or teaching found within the text. As a means to gaining an understanding of the content and message of a text, students become familiar with the nature of exegetical methods being used today by scholars in the religious tradition of their particular text.

The first exegetical method students are introduced to in Units 3 and 4 is called sociocultural criticism. The premise this is based on is that an understanding of the original social, cultural, religious, political and historical experience or situation at the time of the formation of the text can lead to a more accurate understanding of the original intention of the text. The second exegetical method used in Units 3 and 4 is literary criticism which seeks to classify texts according to form, considers their structure and literary forms and techniques, and attempts to establish authorship, date, and audience.

The traditions approved for study in Units 3 and 4 are Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Approval for the study of another tradition in Units 3 and 4 must be sought from the VCAA.

Texts for Units 3 and 4 are prescribed annually by the VCAA. To facilitate close reading of the texts, the VCAA will also annually prescribe certain themes and passages for special study taken from the set texts. Students are expected to have a general knowledge of the chosen set text as outlined in the Study Design and a detailed knowledge of the themes and passages for special study.

Set texts, themes and passages for special study will be published annually in the [VCAA Bulletin](#).

Area of Study 1

The background of the tradition

In this area of study students undertake a sociocultural and historical study of a religious tradition. They examine the origin and early development of the selected tradition, focusing on people, places and events, and social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions important to the development of the religious tradition. This prepares students for Area of Study 2, where they are expected to come to a deeper understanding and exploration of the literary aspects and themes of the chosen set text.

Students become familiar with the foundational period of the selected tradition by drawing background information from a range of foundational texts, documentation outside the tradition, and contemporary scholarly resources.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify and explain sociocultural and historical contexts that influenced the early development of the religious tradition.

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

Key knowledge

- the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions of the society out of which the tradition emerged and developed during its foundational period
- the historical context, that is, people, places and events that relate to the origin and early development of the tradition
- the ways that the historical context and social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions influenced the early development of the tradition
- the relevant documentation from both primary and secondary sources, both within and outside the tradition.

Key skills

- select and synthesise relevant information from both primary and secondary sources
- identify and explain the historical context related to the origin and early development of the tradition
- identify and explain conditions and institutions that influenced the formation of the tradition in its foundational period.

Area of Study 2

Thematic and literary aspects of the set texts

In this area of study students develop knowledge of the set text in terms of major themes and literary form, structure and techniques. These major themes stem from the passages for special study and are further applicable to the entire set text. Literary structure refers to the way the text is seen to be written in parts or sections as it develops into a literary piece. This might include sections delineated by content change or by changes in literary form. The structure can be looked at from the point of view of the text as a whole, as a separate passage, or in the way one part follows another part. Within literary criticism, students examine issues that relate to the writing of texts, for example authorship, date and intended audience.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss major themes of the set text, and analyse literary structure and other aspects related to the writing of the set text.

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

Key knowledge

- the social, cultural, religious, political and historical conditions contemporary with, and relevant to, the writing of the set text
- the major themes of the set text
- the literary structure of the set text
- the literary forms and techniques evident in the set text
- the ways that literary forms, structure and techniques function within the set text
- the issues involving the purpose, authorship and intended audience of the set text
- a range of scholarly opinion on the conditions contemporary with, and aspects related to, the formation of the set text, and its themes, literary structure and techniques.

Key skills

- identify social, cultural, religious, political and historical conditions and issues of purpose, authorship and intended audience that relate to the writing of the set text
- identify major themes within the set text
- outline why the major themes are in the set text
- locate examples of the development of given themes within the set text
- identify the literary form and structure of the set text as a whole and in particular passages, together with techniques evident in the text
- explain how specific literary forms, structures and techniques contribute to the text
- use passages from the set text to support discussion and analysis
- examine a range of scholarly opinion on the conditions contemporary with, and aspects related to, the formation of the set text, and its themes, literary structure and techniques, and use this to inform discussion.

Area of Study 3

Interpreting texts

Teachings within texts may be presented in different ways. They may be presented in the form of proverbs, codes of law, rules of behaviour, collections of sayings, prophetic pronouncements, accounts of the lives of significant individuals, or other recognisable literary forms. Texts have also been developed under the influence of a historical context and certain social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions. Understanding these situations affects understanding of the purpose, meaning and teachings of those texts, while consideration of literary aspects contributes to knowledge concerning authorship, date and audience of those texts.

Students develop their understanding and application of at least two exegetical methods – sociocultural and literary criticism. In exegetical study, students analyse a text in the light of scholarship and their growing knowledge of the background to the text. This analysis then leads to a synthesis of ideas regarding the purpose, meaning and teachings of any particular text within its original setting.

The focus of Unit 3 should be on the whole of the set text. It is not expected that all passages for special study be addressed in detail by the end of Unit 3. Rather, it is anticipated that exegetical skills formed in Unit 3 will be further developed in Unit 4.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply exegetical methods to develop an interpretation of some of the passages for special study, and discuss the nature of exegetical method.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

- the nature of exegesis in general and of at least two exegetical methods: sociocultural criticism and literary criticism
- what the set text conveys about historical context, where appropriate, and the sociocultural context, that is, the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions within which the text developed
- where and how these conditions and institutions and, where appropriate, historical context, appear in the passages for special study
- the contextual placement of the passages for special study including, as appropriate:
 - how they arose in relation to a particular historical event or circumstances

- the location of the passages for special study in relation to their placement within the set text as a whole
- the sociocultural context of the passages for special study
- the literary context of the passages for special study
- the literary forms, structures and techniques of the passages for special study
- major ideas and themes of the set text as found in the passages for special study
- the meaning and significance of the passages for special study for the original community
- a range of scholarly commentaries on the interpretation of the passages for special study.

Key skills

- explain the nature of exegetical method
- identify and describe the relationship that the purpose, meaning and teachings of texts have to their sociocultural and, where appropriate, historical context
- identify and describe the literary context of passages for special study
- apply exegetical methods appropriate to the tradition to explain contextual placement of the passages for special study
- explain the literary forms, structures and techniques of the passages for special study
- discuss major ideas and themes found in the passages for special study
- discuss the meaning and significance of the passages for special study for the original community
- use interpretative commentaries to inform an exegesis.

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 learning activities and 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 Unit 3 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.

Outcomes	Marks allocated*	Assessment tasks
Outcome 1 Identify and explain sociocultural and historical contexts that influenced the early development of the religious tradition.	30	For each of Outcomes 1 and 2 one or more: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extended responses report short-answer questions textual commentary.
Outcome 2 Discuss major themes of the set text, and analyse literary structure and other aspects related to the writing of the set text.	30	
Outcome 3 Apply exegetical methods to develop an interpretation of some of the passages for special study, and discuss the nature of exegetical method.	40	For Outcome 3 one or more: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> exegetical tasks.
Total marks	100	

*School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 contributes 25 per cent.

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 50 per cent.

Unit 4: Texts and their teachings

In this unit students continue to apply exegetical methods to the passages for special study begun in Unit 3, but to greater depth.

Some texts are regarded as essential for the continuation of a tradition because they function as a means of communicating teachings or understandings about the relationship between the human and the transcendent. These understandings are often expressed through ideas, beliefs or themes in the particular texts.

Some of the themes contained in the foundational texts have been reinterpreted at different times by the tradition. In this unit students study a significant idea, belief or theme contained in the set text, and consider the interpretation of the text in the light of the idea, belief or theme.

Area of Study 1

Interpreting texts

In this area of study students further develop the knowledge and skills required to write exegeses on passages from the set texts begun in 'Interpreting texts' in Unit 3. As the course progresses, students produce exegetical exercises that demonstrate developing skills. After having completed this area of study, students should be able to write exegeses for all the passages for special study, drawing on the key knowledge and key skills for this outcome.

As exegetical methods are further developed, students consider the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions and, where appropriate, historical context, within which the set text developed. They also further consider the literary aspects of form, structure and techniques evident in the text, and how these and the sociocultural and, where appropriate, historical contexts affect the original readers' understanding of the purpose, meaning and teachings of the text.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply exegetical methods to develop an interpretation of all the passages for special study.

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

Key knowledge

- the historical context conveyed by the set text, where appropriate, and sociocultural context, that is, the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions, within which the text developed
- where and how these conditions and institutions and, where appropriate, historical context, appear in the passages for special study
- the contextual placement of the passages for special study including, as appropriate to the tradition:
 - how they arose in relation to a particular historical event
 - the location of the passages for special study in relation to their placement within the set text as a whole
 - the sociocultural context of the passages for special study
 - the literary context of the passages for special study
- the literary forms, structures and techniques of the passages for special study
- major ideas and themes of the set text as found in the passages for special study
- the meaning and significance of the passages for special study for the original community
- a range of scholarly commentaries on the interpretation of the passages for special study.

Key skills

- analyse and explain the relationship that the purpose, meaning and teachings of texts have to their sociocultural and, where appropriate, historical context
- explain the significance of the literary context and features of the passages for special study
- apply exegetical methods appropriate to the tradition to explain contextual placement of the passages for special study
- discuss major ideas and themes found in the passages for special study
- discuss the meaning and significance of the passages for special study for the original community
- use interpretative commentaries to inform an exegesis.

Area of Study 2

Religious ideas, beliefs and themes

Foundational texts express major ideas and beliefs of significance during the early periods of a tradition. At various periods of its history, the later tradition has responded to ideas and teachings arising out of foundational texts associated with the tradition's early period of development.

In this area of study students investigate a significant religious idea, belief or theme arising out of the passages for special study; this idea, belief or theme is then investigated over the entire set text. Students develop understanding of the particular idea, issue or theme in its original social, cultural, religious and historical contexts. They also examine the way this text has been interpreted by the religious tradition at a later time in history. Consideration is given to the impact on the tradition of these interpretations.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss a significant religious idea, belief or theme in the set text, and analyse and evaluate how related passages from the set text have been interpreted within the tradition at a later stage in the light of the particular idea, belief or theme.

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

Key knowledge

- a religious idea, belief or theme arising from the passages for special study in the set text, within its original social, cultural, religious and historical context
- the ways that, and why, the later tradition discussed and understood the meaning of a religious idea, belief or theme
- the ways that the later tradition explained or reconciled its later interpretation of an idea, a belief or a theme with the original text
- the continuing relevance and meaning of the set text for a religious tradition when the tradition develops a response to a particular religious idea, belief or theme
- the ways that a tradition is affected by later interpretations of a core text.

Key skills

- discuss a significant religious idea, belief or theme arising from the passages for special study in the set text by:
 - describing the idea, belief or theme
 - explaining the idea, belief or theme within the social, cultural, religious and, where relevant, historical context of the text
 - analysing the importance of the idea, belief or theme to the early tradition
- examine how a tradition's understandings about, and teachings on, ideas, beliefs and themes have changed over time, reflecting the impact of particular circumstances
- evaluate the relevance of the original sacred text for the tradition at the later stage
- explore the relationship between the interpretations of a later tradition and its foundational texts
- explore the impact of interpretive activity on a tradition
- use passages from the set text and, where appropriate, documents or writings of the later tradition to support discussion and analysis.

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 learning activities and 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 Unit 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 4 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

Outcomes	Marks allocated*	Assessment tasks
Outcome 1 Apply exegetical methods to develop an interpretation of all the passages for special study.	60	One or more: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exegetical tasks.
Outcome 2 Discuss a significant religious idea, belief or theme in the set text, and analyse and evaluate how related passages from the set text have been interpreted within the tradition at a later stage in the light of the particular idea, belief or theme.	40	One or more: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essay • extended responses • report • short answer questions.
Total marks	100	

*School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 contributes 25 per cent.

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: 2 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 Unit 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.