How to use VCE History 2022–2026 Performance Descriptors

The following shows an approach a teacher may use when using the VCAA Performance Descriptors to develop an assessing tool for an assessment task. Teachers may select from the performance descriptors and apply them to individual assessment tasks where appropriate. 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. For example, a teacher is teaching VCE Revolutions Unit 3 Outcome 1: ‘*Analyse the causes of 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.

Students were asked to answer four to six questions on the historical sources.

1. Rather than using the entire performance descriptor for the outcome, which contains eight skills and six levels of performance for each, the teacher decides to choose those most appropriate for the designed assessment task. The teacher chooses the five key skills highlighted:

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| ***Units 3 and 4***  ***Outcome 1***  ***Analyse the causes of revolution, and evaluate the contribution of significant events, ideas, individuals and popular movements*** | **Characteristic of study** | **Key skills** | **DESCRIPTOR: Typical performance in each range** | | | | | |
| **Ask historical questions.** | **Ask and use a range of historical questions to explore the causes of the revolution.** | Ask relevant questions. | Ask specific, open-ended questions. | Ask questions that explore the causes of the revolution. | Use questions to direct inquiry. | Ask sub-questions that help answer central question. | Evaluate how effectively questions guide the historical inquiry. |
| **Use sources as evidence.** | **Evaluate sources for use as evidence.** | Identify content of source(s). | Describe content of source(s). | Explain context of source(s). | Explain meaning/inferences  of source(s). | Explains purpose of source(s). | Discuss relationship between content, context, and purpose of source(s). |
| Identify reliable content of a source. | Identify useful content of a source. | Describe the reliability and/or usefulness of source(s). | Corroborate sources to determine reliability and/or usefulness. | Explain how/why source(s) are reliable and useful as evidence. | Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of source(s) as evidence. |
| **Explore historical perspectives.** | **Analyse the perspectives of people during the development of the revolution and how perspectives changed and/or remained the same over time.** | Identify a perspective from the past. | Summarise perspective(s) from the past. | Explain perspective(s) of people in their historical context. | Compare perspectives from  the past. | Determine how events, ideas, individuals and popular movements influenced perspectives from the past. | Analyse how perspectives have changed and/or remained the same over time. |
| **Use historical interpretations.** | **Evaluate historical interpretations about the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a historian’s interpretation | Summarise a historian’s interpretation | Explain a historian’s interpretation | Question historian(s) interpretations. | Compare historians’ interpretations. | Evaluate historian’s interpretations. |
| **Analyse cause and consequence.** | **Analyse the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a cause. | Describe cause(s). | Explain how events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements caused the revolution. | Distinguish between long-term causes and short-term triggers. | Explain why events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements have varying levels of influence in causing the revolution. | Analyse how causes affect each other and have intended/ unintended consequences. |
| **Identify continuity and change.** | **Evaluate the extent of continuity and change in ideas, individuals and popular movements in the development of the revolution.** | Identify a continuity. | Describe how a continuity occurred. | Describe how a pattern of continuity can vary in pace and direction. | Explain why continuity occurred. | Analyse how ideas, individuals or popular movements contributed to continuity. | Evaluate the overall extent of continuity and change by referring to ideas, individuals and popular movements. |
| Identify a change. | Describe how a change occurred. | Describe how a pattern of change can vary in pace and direction. | Explain why change occurred. | Analyse how ideas, individuals or popular movements contributed to change. |
| **Establish historical significance.** | **Evaluate the historical significance of events, ideas, individuals and popular movements that contributed to the outbreak of the revolution.** | Identify historical significance. | Describe historical significance. | Explain why events, ideas, individuals, and popular movements were historically significant. | Determine historical significance from sources. | Use explicit criteria to determine historical significance. | Evaluate historical significance using multiple types of evidence and sources. |
| **Construct historical arguments.** | **Construct arguments about the causes of the revolution using sources as evidence.** | Identifies accurate knowledge in response to a question. | Writes narrative in response to a question. | Identifies key ideas for a historical argument in response to a question. | Use relevant knowledge and evidence in response to a question. | Explains the relationship between historical knowledge, evidence, and concepts in response to a question. | Synthesis of knowledge, evidence, and concepts into a historical argument. |

1. This table represents the teacher’s chosen skills with this 6x6 performance descriptors.

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| **Key skills** | **DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range** | | | | | |
| **Evaluate sources for use as evidence.** | Identify content of source(s). | Describe content of source(s). | Explain context of source(s). | Explain meaning/inferences  of source(s). | Explains purpose of source(s). | Discuss relationship between content, context, and purpose of source(s). |
| Identify reliable content of a source. | Identify useful content of a source. | Describe the reliability and/or usefulness of source(s). | Corroborate sources to determine reliability and/or usefulness. | Explain how/why source(s) are reliable and useful as evidence. | Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of source(s) as evidence. |
| **Analyse the perspectives  of people during the development of the revolution and how perspectives changed and/or remained the same over time.** | Identify a perspective from the past. | Summarise perspective(s) from the past. | Explain perspective(s) of people in their historical context. | Compare perspectives from the past. | Determine how events, ideas, individuals and popular movements influenced perspectives from the past. | Analyse how perspectives have changed and/or remained the same over time. |
| **Evaluate historical interpretations about the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a historian’s interpretation. | Summarise a historian’s interpretation. | Explain a historian’s interpretation. | Question historian(s) interpretations. | Compare historians’ interpretations. | Evaluate historian’s interpretations. |
| **Analyse the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a cause. | Describe cause(s). | Explain how events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements caused the revolution. | Distinguish between long-term causes and short-term triggers. | Explain why events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements have varying levels of influence in causing the revolution. | Analyse how causes affect each other and have intended/unintended consequences. |
| **Construct arguments about the causes of the revolution using sources as evidence.** | Identifies accurate  knowledge in response  to a question. | Writes narrative in response to a question. | Identifies key ideas for a historical argument in response to a question. | Use relevant knowledge and evidence in response to a question. | Explains the relationship between historical knowledge, evidence, and concepts in response to a question. | Synthesis of knowledge, evidence, and concepts into  a historical argument. |

1. The teacher has done a lot of work with their students in developing their source use and using historical interpretations, and thinks that they do not need the lowest level descriptor for those skills. Therefore, the teacher decides to remove them.

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| **Key skills** | **DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range** | | | | | |
| **Evaluate sources for use as evidence.** |  | Describe content of source(s). | Explain context of source(s). | Explain meaning/ inferences of source(s). | Explains purpose of source(s). | Discuss relationship between content, context, and purpose of source(s.) |
| Identify reliable content of a source. | Identify useful content of a source. | Describe the reliability and/or usefulness of source(s). | Corroborate sources to determine reliability and/or usefulness. | Explain how/why source(s) are reliable and useful as evidence. | Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of source(s) as evidence. |
| **Analyse the perspectives  of people during the development of the revolution and how perspectives changed and/or remained the same  over time.** | Identify a perspective from the past. | Summarise perspective(s) from the past. | Explain perspective(s) of people in their historical context. | Compare perspectives from the past. | Determine how events, ideas, individuals and popular movements influenced perspectives from the past. | Analyse how perspectives have changed and/or remained the same over time. |
| **Evaluate historical interpretations about the causes of the revolution.** |  | Summarise a historian’s interpretation. | Explain a historian’s interpretation. | Question historian(s) interpretations. | Compare historians’ interpretations. | Evaluate historian’s interpretations. |
| **Analyse the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a cause. | Describe cause(s). | Explain how events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements caused the revolution. | Distinguish between long-term causes and short-term triggers. | Explain why events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements have varying levels of influence in causing the revolution. | Analyse how causes affect each other and have intended/unintended consequences. |
| **Construct arguments about the causes of the revolution using sources as evidence.** | Identifies accurate knowledge in response  to a question. | Writes narrative in response to a question. | Identifies key ideas for a historical argument in response to a question. | Use relevant knowledge and evidence in response to a question. | Explains the relationship between historical knowledge, evidence, and concepts in response to a question. | Synthesis of knowledge, evidence, and concepts into a historical argument. |

1. The teacher also decides to remove some other descriptors, as they don’t believe these necessarily apply to the task that has been designed.

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| **Key skills** | | **DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range** | | | | | |
| **Evaluate sources for use as evidence.** |  | | Describe content of source(s). | Explain context of source(s). | Explain meaning/ inferences of source(s). | Explains purpose of source(s). |  |
| Identify reliable content of a source. | | Identify useful content of a source. |  | Corroborate sources to determine reliability and/or usefulness. |  |  |
| **Analyse the perspectives of people during the development of the revolution and how perspectives changed and/or remained the same  over time.** | Identify a perspective from the past. | | Summarise perspective(s) from the past. | Explain perspective(s) of people in their historical context. | Compare perspectives from the past. |  |  |
| **Evaluate historical interpretations about the causes of the revolution.** |  | | Summarise a historian’s interpretation. | Explain a historian’s interpretation. |  | Compare historians’ interpretations. | Evaluate historian’s interpretations. |
| **Analyse the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a cause. | | Describe cause(s). | Explain how events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements caused the revolution. |  | Explain why events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements have varying levels of influence in causing the revolution. | Analyse how causes affect each other and have intended/unintended consequences. |
| **Construct arguments about the causes of the revolution using sources as evidence.** | Identifies accurate knowledge in response to a question. | | Writes narrative in response to a question. | Identifies key ideas for a historical argument in response to a question. | Use relevant knowledge and evidence in response to a question. |  | Synthesis of knowledge, evidence, and concepts into  a historical argument. |

1. The teacher then collapses the table, so it is easier to read.

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| **Key skills** | **DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range** | | | | |
| **Evaluate sources for use as evidence.** | Describe content of source(s). | Explain context of source(s). | Explain meaning/inferences of source(s.) | Explains purpose of source(s). |  |
| Identify reliable content of a source. | Identify useful content of a source. | Corroborate sources to determine reliability and/or usefulness. |  |  |
| **Analyse the perspectives of people during the development of the revolution and how perspectives changed and/or remained the same  over time.** | Identify a perspective from the past. | Summarise perspective(s) from the past. | Explain perspective(s) of people in their historical context. | Compare perspectives from the past. |  |
| **Evaluate historical interpretations about the causes of the revolution.** | Summarise a historian’s interpretation. | Explain a historian’s interpretation. | Compare historians’ interpretations. | Evaluate historian’s interpretations. |  |
| **Analyse the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a cause. | Describe cause(s). | Explain how events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements caused the revolution. | Explain why events, ideas, individuals, or popular movements have varying levels of influence in causing the revolution. | Analyse how causes affect each other and have intended/ unintended consequences. |
| **Construct arguments about the causes of the revolution using sources as evidence.** | Identifies accurate knowledge in response to a question. | Writes narrative in response to a question. | Identifies key ideas for a historical argument in response to a question. | Use relevant knowledge and evidence in response to a question. | Synthesis of knowledge, evidence, and concepts into a historical argument. |

1. The teacher may choose to include additional performance descriptors such as specific key knowledge.

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| **Key skills** | **DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range** | | | | |
| **Evaluate sources for use as evidence.** | Describe content of source(s). | Explain context of source(s). | Explain meaning/inferences of source(s). | Explains purpose of source(s). |  |
| Identify reliable content of a source. | Identify useful content of a source. | Corroborate sources to determine reliability and/or usefulness. |  |  |
| **Analyse the perspectives of people during the development of the revolution and how perspectives changed and/or remained the same over time.** | Identify a perspective **from 1917.** | Summarise perspective(s) **from 1917.** | Explain perspective(s) **of different individuals in Russia during 1917.** | Compare perspectives **of different individuals and groups in Russia during 1917.** |  |
| **Evaluate historical interpretations about the causes of the revolution.** | Summarise a historian’s interpretation. | Explain a historian’s interpretation. | Compare historians’ interpretations. | Evaluate historian’s interpretations. |  |
| **Analyse the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a cause. | Describe cause(s). | Explain how **Lenin, Marxist-Leninism and the Bolsheviks** caused the **October** Revolution **1917.** | Explain why **Lenin, Marxist-Leninism and the Bolsheviks** had varying influence in causing the **October** Revolution **1917.** | Analyse how causes affect each other and have intended/ unintended consequences. |
| **Construct arguments about the causes of the revolution using sources as evidence.** | Identifies accurate knowledge in response to a question. | Writes narrative in response to a question. | Identifies key ideas for a historical argument in response to a question. | Use relevant knowledge and evidence in response to a question. | Synthesis of knowledge, evidence, and concepts into a historical argument. |

1. Each outcome is allocated 50 marks. When designing an assessment task, teachers decide how they wish to allocate marks for each selected performance descriptor. Also, teachers may consider allocating different marks and/or weight to each skill determined by the level of difficulty of the skill.

\*The assessment scale 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 VCE Assessment Principles.

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| **Key skills** | **DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range** | | | | | |
| **Evaluate sources for use as evidence.** | Describe content of source(s).  **1–2 Marks** | Explain context of source(s).  **3–4 Marks** | Explain meaning/inferences  of source(s).  **5–7 Marks** | Explains purpose of source(s).  **8–9 Marks** |  | **9 Marks** |
| Identify reliable content of  a source. **1 Marks** | Identify useful content of  a source. **2–3 Marks** | Corroborate sources to determine reliability and/or usefulness. **4–5 Marks** |  |  | **5 Marks** |
| **Analyse the perspectives of people during the development of the revolution and how perspectives changed and/ or remained the same over time.** | Identify a perspective **from 1917. 1 Mark** | Summarise perspective(s) **from 1917. 2–4 Marks** | Explain perspective(s) **of different individuals in Russia during 1917.**  **5–7 Marks** | Compare perspectives **of different individuals and groups in Russia during 1917. 8–10 Marks** |  | **10 Marks** |
| **Evaluate historical interpretations about the causes of the revolution.** | Summarise a historian’s interpretation.  **1–2 Marks** | Explain a historian’s interpretation.  **3–4 Marks** | Compare historians’ interpretations.  **5–7 Marks** | Evaluate historian’s interpretations.  **8–10 Marks** |  | **9 Marks** |
| **Analyse the causes of the revolution.** | Identify a cause of the October Revolution 1917. **1 Mark** | Describe cause(s) of the October revolution 1917. **2–3 Marks** | Explain how Lenin, Marxist-Leninism and the Bolsheviks ideas, individuals or popular movements caused the October Revolution 1917. **4–5 Marks** | Explain why Lenin, Marxist-Leninism and the Bolsheviks ideas, individuals or popular movements had varying influence in causing the October Revolution. **Marks 6–7 Marks** | Analyse how causes affect each other and have intended/unintended consequences. **Marks 8–9 Marks** | **9 Marks** |
| **Construct arguments about the causes of the revolution using sources as evidence.** | Identifies accurate knowledge in response to a question.  **1–2 Marks** | Writes narrative in response to a question.  **3 Marks** | Identifies key ideas for a historical argument in response to a question. **4–5 Marks** | Use relevant knowledge and evidence in response to a question.  **6–7 Marks** | Synthesis of knowledge, evidence, and concepts into  a historical argument.  **8 Marks** | **8 Marks** |

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| Very Low 1–10 | Low 11–20 | Medium 21–30 | High 31–40 | Very High 41–50 |

1. The teacher has used the performance descriptors to develop an assessment tool to determine each student’s level of achievement on the assessment task.   
   It is important for teachers to evaluate the effectiveness ofthe adapted performance descriptors to ensure there is scope for clear differentiation between students’ level of achievement.