2021 Modern History Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2021 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Historical Skills

It was pleasing to see that more teachers and students made the effort to access the 2020 Subject Assessment Advice, and where appropriate take measures to amend and improve practises based on explicit feedback provided. Teachers should recognise that task design and the types of tasks being set are critical in providing students with opportunities to attain the highest levels of achievement against each performance standard. This is especially relevant for the Application and Evaluation criteria, where task design allows students to demonstrate evidence of a higher level of critical analysis of sources and a range of historical perspectives. Teachers should also pay attention to the different specific features being assessed in the Analysis assessment design criteria, with the focus lending itself to informing the study of Modern Nations and The World Since 1945, respectively. There were examples where teachers clearly provided opportunities for students to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the content being taught in class.

The more successful responses commonly:

* allowed students to develop and demonstrate a selection of 3-4 specific features in each task
* demonstrated clear and innovative task design that allowed students to show their application of a variety of historical skills in a myriad of ways including creating a sources analysis broadsheet, obituaries, podcasts, sources trail, curating a museum and evaluating historiographical approaches to periods. Nation Study tasks focussed more on extended responses including essays and reports
* demonstrated knowledge and understanding of different perspectives and points of view about the issue being explored. E.g. empathetic writing tasks which were designed to included writing from one or two individuals with short introductory biographical detail provided for each writer
* tasks were designed with specific criteria in mind that clearly linked to the learning objectives of the course and specific features of the assessment design criteria. Often tasks instructions included specific reference to the criteria being assessed in the task
* included rigorous and accurate scholarship when locating research
* included at least one Source Analysis task that was formatted in a similar style to that which is assessed in the end of year examination. This included many teachers designing a task that required their students to construct their own sources analysis task and answer questions linked to either Modern Nations or The World Since 1945
* were based on interesting and increasingly sophisticated tasks that included the study of different historical schools of thought and the writing of history, with tasks requiring students to compare specific historians
* covered three or more arguments (including at least one clear counter argument) in extended responses to the question being posed
* included tasks that demonstrated the application of historical conventions, i.e. planned paragraphs that thoroughly synthesised evidence. Included topic sentences, explained, and discussed highly relevant evidence, and drew conclusions on what the evidence showed
* prompted students to develop arguments, especially focussed on motives of individuals and groups
* addressed key concepts directly e.g. by providing evidence that they have been understood and explored (i.e. by providing a clear definition linked to ideas, people and events, and by identifying in the introduction the aspects of the concept that would be explored in the task)
* demonstrated understanding and facility in using subject specific language when analysing sources, particularly when dealing with the concepts of origin, type (or nature of the source), bias, perspective, and reliability
* required students to use consistent and accurate referencing and bibliographical conventions
* identified and evaluated both internal and external challenges, justifying judgements made about their interdependence and relative significance
* applied specific knowledge of short term and long-term interactions and relationships, using it to demonstrate how they changed during the time frame
* it was less common than in previous years for a task to be completed under test or timed conditions. When these were undertaken, students were provided with the opportunity to draft and polish their final responses in order to allow students to produce work that reflected performance standards in the higher-grade bands
* due to the nature of the subject, the more support that schools can give moderators when confirming grades, the better. This includes attaching task sheets, marked rubrics and/or comments indicating how a grade was arrived at for individual tasks/student work.

The less successful responses commonly:

* tasks that assessed 5-6 specific features tended to demonstrate uneven and superficial evidence against some performance standards
* Understanding and Exploration — did not include accurate details about ideas, events, and people. Tasks often simply discussed or recounted events
* open ended research and report style tasks do not give students the opportunity to show the reflection and evaluation, and inquiry and analysis criteria. e.g. pieces of empathetic writing which did not encourage demonstration and understanding of the social, political and economic factors and experiences ideas which lay behind beliefs and motives
* Application and Evaluation — made judgements/statements/used statistics/quotes without citing any sources and therefore not demonstrating where and how information was collected, making it harder to confirm all A&E performance standards
* did not provide students with the opportunity to view an issue from different perspectives
* exceeded the word limit or multimodal time limit
* contained no research undertaken in any task throughout the folio, with no use of referencing or a poorly constructed or no bibliography
* lacked application of historical conventions in essays and sources analysis tasks
* Analysis — demonstrated these performance standards did so through implied analysis rather than explicitly addressing the performance standards
* described, rather than discussed and analysed ideas, factors involved in a situation.

General Comments

Moderators noted that in 2021 there was a more varied range of Modern Nations or The World Since 1945 areas studied, although Topic 3: Germany (1918–48) and Topic 7: The changing world order (1945–) remain the most popular. More schools are now teaching Topic 2: United States and Topic 6: China. There was an impressive range of continents and regions represented in Assessment Type 1: Historical Skills e.g. the Middle East and Asia.

* The high level of critical thinking and written literacy evident in the work of high performing students was impressive.
* Knowledge was provided in a list.
* It was again disappointing to see some students still being assigned several exam style sources analysis tasks as part of their Historical Skills Folio.
* Some students disregarded the word count assessment conditions.
* Many students did not include word counts and/ or exceeded them.

Assessment Type 2: Historical Study

The formulation and construction of the question is the most critical factor that influences success in this assessment type. Teachers are encouraged to work closely and guide students in the initial stages of this assessment type to help in the formulation of an effective question/hypothesis to form the focus of the historical study. The most effective questions/hypotheses have a very clear specific focus, including time frame and place. The most effective responses were those that used the correct conventions of history essay writing, with clearly defined and relevant arguments and counter arguments. Students often saw the historical study as an opportunity to construct an independent academic historical inquiry by focusing on an area of interest. Teachers are reminded that there is scope to differentiate the task design for individual students for students to present their understanding in a format most suited to them. There are also some schools that mark different performance standards for different students, dependent on the scope of their question (this specifically relates to A1 and A2 specific features), that can be advantageous in allowing students to achieve at the higher-grade band.

The more successful responses commonly:

* focussed on a historical topic that had a clearly defined contextual focus and specific scope, including time frame and place
* focussed on a question that invited reasoned historical argument. This approach was critical to allow student’s the opportunity to achieve at the higher-grade bands of Application and Evaluation
* applied evidence about events, ideas, and people in a careful, purposeful way to address the focus of their question
* provided a clear introduction which included the question’s context, unpacked, and explained the key terms, and clearly outlined the case the study would elaborate
* addressed key terms directly, providing evidence that they had been understood and explored
* demonstrated knowledge and understanding of different perspectives and points of view about the idea, event or person being explored
* covered four or more points (a two or more paragraphs arguing for the proposition, followed by at least one counter argument) to demonstrate a wider understanding
* demonstrated the use of a variety of primary and secondary sources, including speeches, diaries, artwork, propaganda, and eyewitness accounts. These sources were used to demonstrate a critical understanding of evidence
* were film analysis and literature analysis style questions. Higher achieving students used these texts as historical sources and engaged in a reasoned historical argument of reliability and limitations. Most successful essays carefully chose other primary and secondary sources to compare and contrast these
* included and evaluated different perspectives from e.g. participants, commentators or historians
* planned paragraphs thoroughly to synthesise evidence: included topic sentences, explained and discussed highly relevant evidence, and summed up what the evidence showed
* constructed a very coherent argument in their study through their focus on the question, outlining of their argument in the introduction and through the use of connecting words and phrases at the beginning or end of paragraphs
* included counter argument, either within the discussion in each paragraph, or in a separate paragraph
* ended with a comprehensive conclusion which provided a direct answer to the question, summarized the main arguments and often incorporated implications of the answer
* used a consistent form of referencing and a bibliography and adhered to the word count
* demonstrated a high level of academic research being undertaken. This was evident by students who showed a sophisticated use and engagement of historiography
* demonstrated careful consideration of the types of sources used - including use of academic journals and scholarly works
* demonstrated critical thinking skills when discussing and evaluating relevant sources
* demonstrated critical thinking skills when discussing and evaluating both internal and external issues and challenges, or long and short-term interactions and relationships.

The less successful responses commonly:

* required students to demonstrate achievement against seven specific features, including UE1 and both A1 and A2
* were too broad in scope
* were questions which did not provide scope from students to look at social, economic, political, religious, ideological, or cultural issues
* focused on contemporary issues without establishing sufficient connections with historical background /nature
* some students chose to address questions that would have been better suited to subjects such as Legal Studies or Psychology. There seems to be a trend towards true crime cases, that sometimes results in a Historical Study that does not address the significance of the political, economic, social, or cultural significant developments of the time
* were in response to questions that lead to students simply retelling how events and developments unfolded
* tried to cover to large a time frame, geographical region, or scope
* did not effectively conclude or resolve the question
* drew conclusions but provided no evidence to substantiate their findings
* simply presented information without synthesising ideas and show a lack of discernment of relevant historical details and examples
* relied on non-scholarly internet sources and did not evaluate their reliability or validity
* were poorly structured and lacked clear topic and closing sentences
* did not actively engage with sources
* lacked a reasoned historical argument including a counter argument
* appropriate questions need to ensure that questions are not based around conjecture or that are of little historical value
* misspelled names of historical figures and places
* did not integrate quotes fluently
* where multimodal presentations are used, it is imperative that a reference list is provided to acknowledge sources
* lacked a consistent form of referencing and accurate bibliography
* described, rather than discussed and analysed, the ideas, events and thoughts, motives and actions of individuals or groups
* used few sources
* included few references to sources of information
* were too similar to topics covered as part of the subject outline
* lacked originality and responded to topics that were clichéd.

General Comments

The overall standard of the Historical Studies submitted have improved. It was pleasing to see that there are some very interesting topics and areas of study being undertaken including Latin American, the environmental movement, treatment of different minority groups and genocide. There was a significant number of Historical Studies that explored topics related to Australian History. In 2021 there were more teachers using the option to present the Historical Study in a multimodal format.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

The students of 2021 appeared to be familiar and comfortable with the electronic exam format. The propositions in Part A rewarded students who possessed the relevant knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in a well-structured and articulate argument. As in previous years, a significant number of high‑quality responses were found in less popular topics and questions.

Students once again found an electronic source for Part B. While this year’s promotional video for a television documentary contained considerable information in a short time, it also enabled all students to use it to varying degrees of effectiveness to answer relevant questions. It was pleasing to be able to provide sources on a topic relevant to many Aboriginal Australians as well as the wider Australian and international communities. While a greater percentage of students’ responses to Question (f) were better than in previous years, the overall disappointing quality of responses to Question (d) was particularly noticeable to markers. It is obvious that recently teachers have focussed strongly on supporting students to develop an argument when answering question (f) and their efforts are reflected in the higher proportion of quality responses. They can help their students by doing the same to help them draw conclusions based on information from a source. Too many students continue to simply restate information from the source in different words.

Markers’ overall observations:

* Question 7 was by far the most popular question.
* Many students ran out of time and produced incomplete essays.
* Many essays lacked structure (e.g. topic sentences and linking sentences), some failed to properly address the proposition.
* Overall students demonstrated very good knowledge.
* Students must engage with the proposition for essay questions and not just talk about ‘other factors’.

Part A

The more successful responses commonly:

* utilised the introduction of their essay to clarify the terms in the question which led them to clear judgement and foreshadowed the argument and counter argument
* effectively used topic sentences to signpost the aspect of argument to be developed in each paragraph, rather than just provide an indication the area of the topic to be addressed in the paragraph
* contained comprehensive conclusions that summarised the key points made in the preceding paragraphs
* connected points to each other, as well as to the question, giving depth and strength to these responses
* provided specific evidence for their reasoning
* integrated the counter argument into the whole essay, adding depth to their argument
* applied relevant and accurate evidence to illustrate the points being made
* made detailed, direct, and nuanced connections and judgements about ideas, events and/or people and their impacts in relation to the question
* tended to organise paragraphs by ideas (social, political, economic) rather than events which allowed for more complex connections between internal and external events forces and challenges
* presented specific and detailed short-term and long-term consequences linking directly with the essay question.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not respond to all the words and terms in the question
* ignored the timeframe of the question
* included relevant historical details but did not link evidence effectively to the question
* lacked structure and relevant evidence
* provided limited or no counter argument
* did not show understanding of key terms in the question or did not address them
* answered the question they had prepared, not the question posed
* provided narrative or recount without any analysis or connection with argument
* included pre-prepared quotes that did not support the argument or connect with the question.

Part B

The more successful responses commonly:

* were well structured
* contained relevant evidence from sources when required.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided responses without reference to any evidence from the source
* stated that sources are limited without reasoning
* did not address the nature of sources clearly
* did not include of the source in the response.

Essays

Question 1

Insufficient responses to provide meaningful feedback.

Question 2

There were very few responses to this question.

The more successful responses commonly:

* considered several areas of the experiences of returned soldiers (e.g. the Soldier Settlement Scheme, community organisations)
* clarified what they meant by ‘neglected’ and made nuanced judgements about groups of soldiers and their degree or type of neglect.

The less successful responses commonly:

* considered only one aspect of the topic.

Question 3

There were very few responses to this question.

The more successful responses commonly:

* included strong examples of Soldier Settlement Scheme.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were short
* lacked evidence
* provided a simplistic response to the proposition
* provided a limited argument after supporting the proposition presented to a significant extent
* provided few relevant examples to support their assertions.

Question 4

There were several answers to this question.

The more successful responses commonly:

* defined and gave good examples of ‘isolationism’
* explained how propaganda and the attack on Pearl Harbor influenced isolationist views and policies
* displayed ample knowledge
* focussed clearly on the proposition and debated it throughout the essay
* included relevant details about US involvement in Latin America, Europe and/or Asia to support points being made.

The less successful responses commonly:

* ignored or glossed over the issue of public opinion and thus did not engage with question fully
* tended to simply list isolation polices rather than connect these to public opinion.

Question 5

This was a popular and well-answered question.

The more successful responses commonly:

* quoted unemployment statistics
* argued about relief, recovery, and reform
* showed insight by discussing Roosevelt’s attitudes, goals, and achievements
* showed impressive grasp of events and understanding of the complexities of the impacts of Roosevelt’s policies on various social classes and on minorities
* clarified ways the New Deal was or was not effective
* stronger counter arguments focused on how it was not effective rather than changing public opinion
* identified the specific successes of the New Deal
* considered that the New Deal programs failed to completely rebuilding the American economy during 1930-1941.

The less successful responses commonly:

* recounted what relief, reform and recovery were
* summarised the Great Depression
* lacked context to Great Depression
* did not consider both successes and failures of the New Deal
* lacked discussion about the move to global war as a response to the Depression
* outlined various New Deal programs, but not discuss their effectiveness.

Question 6

The more successful responses commonly:

* discussed the proposition in relation to both women and minorities, with a clear division between the experiences of both
* considered those who fit into both categories – female and minorities
* elected to disagree with the proposition and articulated their position consistently
* provided an argument supporting the proposition (e.g. the changing/evolving status of women during wartime) then structured the rest of their response around the treatment of minorities (e.g. African‑American members of the US Army and internment of Japanese Americans).

The less successful responses commonly:

* only discussed women or minorities not both.

Question 7

There were an overwhelmingly large number of responses but unfortunately many lacked quality.

The more successful responses commonly:

* defined ‘instability’ and ‘ineffectiveness’
* mentioned people, ideas, and events other than the Nazi Party
* displayed excellent knowledge of all areas relating to the Republic
* showed detailed knowledge of impact of political instability on the Weimar Republic
* showed insight into the context of the Weimar experiment
* demonstrated knowledge of the way historians have explained the failure of the Weimar Republic and used this knowledge to create strong, insightful arguments
* built a well-structured powerful argument which addressed the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the Weimar Republic, making clear how political factors compounded an economic crisis which rendered the Weimer Republic very ineffective after 1929
* identified other areas of instability and/or external factors that shaped ineffectiveness
* considered the flaws within the Weimar Constitution and political system of proportional representation, which brought about instability within the Republic
* provided an argument demonstrating why the key reason for the failure of the Weimar Republic was political instability, and then provided counter arguments identifying the role of economic instability and evolving social influences on the stability of the Republic
* identified problems inherent in the Weimar constitution (e.g. Article 48)
* considered the impact of threats from the Left and Right (e.g. Spartacist Uprising, Kapp Putsch, Red Bavaria and Munich/Beer Hall Putsch) that either prompted instability or highlighted the instability of the government from 1918-1925
* recognised that the Golden Years demonstrated some stability.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not define ‘political instability’, ‘ineffectiveness’ or the period which constitutes Weimar Germany
* regurgitated or adapted essays that they may have written in class thus missing the crux of the question
* often discussed some of the political instability but did not link it to the government’s ineffectiveness
* tried to turn this into a propaganda response
* ignored the political failings of the Weimar system
* included irrelevant information regarding the Golden Years of the Weimar Republic
* focussed just on politics
* described extensively the period 1933-1935 and ignored the period 1919-1933
* discussed events that occurred in Weimar Germany between 1919-1933 instead of addressing the proposition
* relied primarily on the argument that the Treaty of Versailles provided political instability, but ignored the role of internal factors in causing instability within the government
* constructed a response which melded an answer to the 2020 exam question (challenges by extreme left-wing and right-wing groups) and the 2019 exam question regarding the Nazi Party’s movement away from the political fringe, with limited or no response to the actual 2021 question
* focussed on the Nazi Party or Hitler’s rise to power
* discussed the economic influence of the Treaty of Versailles in great detail, however missed the opportunity to consider the political implications of the Treaty including the impotency of the new Republic on a global scale, the imposition of the War Guilt clause and the political implications of that concession, and the inability of the new Republic’s government to negotiate or force negotiation with foreign governments.

Question 8

Many responses but overall not very well answered.

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided examples of anti-Semitism other than concentration camps
* showed detailed knowledge of the features of the Nazi state and how they were interrelated
* put anti-Semitism into its German context in 1933, showing understanding of the role of Jews in German society in 1933
* showed detailed knowledge of the process of institutionalisation of anti-Semitism by the Third Reich and its impact on German Jews from 1933 to 1939
* demonstrated an insightful understanding of the nature of the Third Reich and the impact of its goals, policies, propaganda, and governance in the years before World War Two.

The less successful responses commonly:

* included information beyond the scope of the proposition
* lacked details about anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic measures other than concentration camps so struggled to give relevant evidence.
* simply outlined the oppression of the Jews
* did not provide a clear understanding of ‘institutionalisation’
* focussed on the Final Solution
* included assorted information about the Nazi Party not linked to this question
* relied too much on examples of Nazi philosophy prior to Hitler’s rise to power and therefore limited their evidence of ‘institutionalisation of anti-Semitism in the Nazi state’
* provided a general discussion with limited examples to support their position
* focussed primarily on the Nazi party’s rise to power rather than their regime up to 1939.

Question 9

The more successful responses commonly:

* identified people, ideas and events connected with different forms of resistance
* included considerable relevant knowledge of different resistance groups
* argued about the effectiveness of the resistance groups
* showed knowledge of the state of Germany and waning support for the Nazi state in the final months of the war
* identified why the actions of the groups were ineffective (e.g. Nazi’s use of coercion, violence and indoctrination in order to counter the actions of the groups)
* gave specific examples of resistance events and groups and made judgements about why they were ineffective
* presented the idea of groups being a persistent nuisance and the resources their actions absorbed.

The less successful responses commonly:

* recounted the types of resistance, but did not argue their effectiveness
* did not know the names of any resistance groups or their leaders
* showed little knowledge of resistance other than awareness of the White Rose
* did not address the ‘ineffective resistance’.

Question 10

The more successful responses commonly:

* showed understanding that Brezhnev’s image changed as the years passed and that he became an undynamic and in many ways ineffective leader later in his presidency.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked clarity
* used this as an opportunity to provide an account of the problems of Soviet leadership as far back as Stalin

Question 11

Insufficient responses to provide meaningful feedback.

Question 12

Most responses were of high quality.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a good understanding of the effectiveness of glasnost and perestroika
* addressed the impact of the Chernobyl disaster
* understood the role of other leaders who had an impact on the collapse of the Soviet Union
* demonstrated good knowledge and provided comprehensive and detailed examples
* showed detailed knowledge of conditions within Gorbachev’s USSR
* explained various short and long-term factors which challenged the USSR and its leadership between 1985 and 1991
* developed effective counter arguments reflecting the way long-term factors and external factors contributed to the disintegration of the USSR under Gorbachev.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated little knowledge of people, events, groups, and place in the Soviet Union
* provided incomplete responses
* focussed on the Stalin/Brezhnev eras rather than 1979-1991
* identified the Chernobyl disaster as the reason for the collapse of the USSR, but failed to draw connections or identify that this event preceded the collapse of the USSR by 7 years
* claimed that the policies of glasnost and perestroika had no impact on the collapse of the Soviet Union without justifying that view
* completely disregarded the role of the republics.

Question 13

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated knowledge of both external and internal factors which impacted on Sukano’s rule (e.g. the PKI, Islamic groups, the army, internal divisions within the new nation, and the role of the United States, Indonesia’s Cold War objectives in the 1960s and other nations’ attitudes to Sukarno and his priorities).

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked depth of understanding of the major factors.

Question 14

Insufficient responses to provide meaningful feedback.

Question15

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided an overview of guided democracy
* provided some context as to why the policy was successful
* explained other relevant factors as part of a counter argument.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided limited specific evidence or examples to support the statements made.

Question 16

The more successful responses commonly:

* understood what ‘periphery’ meant (i.e. China’s border regions)
* mentioned the Korean war in depth and the Sino-Indian War
* displayed an understanding of the challenges which managing China’s periphery presented to Mao
* clarified types of force and made judgements about their use.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not discuss surrounding countries (e.g. India, USSR), but rather focussed on Mao’s internal policies and programs such as the Great Leap Forward and Hundred Flowers campaign.

Question 17

The more successful responses commonly:

* considered several factors, both internal and external, which contributed to the Tiananmen Square Protests including the 1978 Wall of Democracy and the impact of the death of Hu Yaobang in April 1978
* considered the role of restructuring in the increase of corruption and the influence of foreign ideas through the visitation of foreign dignitaries.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied heavily on describing the events with no connection to reforms or judgments about their impact.

Question 18

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided examples of economic recovery policies and their results
* demonstrated how other policies and projects also influenced the country
* identified the influence of propaganda and violence alongside economic recovery policies.

The less successful responses commonly:

* seemed to struggle with defining or showing an understanding all elements of the proposition.

Sources Analysis

General

As in previous years, most students performed much better in Part B of the examination.

More successful analysis of sources:

* understood the questions and sources well
* responded with relevant detail to questions posed.
* were clearly written
* showed sound understanding of key concepts in historical analysis: e.g. credibility, relevance, bias, perspective
* applied historical vocabulary very effectively to assist their analysis of sources.

Less successful analysis of sources:

* misunderstood questions
* failed to apply evidence from sources to the questions asked
* showed little understanding of terms such as credibility, relevance and reliability
* used historical vocabulary accurately, however, did not apply it to evidence in the sources provided, instead writing very general responses without details from the sources or their captions
* misunderstood some of the sources.

Question (a)

The more successful responses commonly:

* were succinct and straight to the point
* identified an opinion (e.g. ‘probably the most environmentally irresponsible activities ever undertaken in Australia’).

The less successful responses commonly:

* were unnecessarily long
* referred to the preamble rather than the source.

Question (b)

The more successful responses commonly:

* responded succinctly and clearly
* clearly identified two messages
* provided quotes to support the message conveyed.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were far too long and complicated
* repeated the same message rather than stating two different messages.

Question (c)

The vast majority of markers voiced concerns regarding responses to this question.

The more successful responses commonly:

* clearly stated two conclusions (e.g. nuclear testing caused widespread impacts/had far-reaching effects/produced vast negative effects/created significant long-term impacts/devastated the Anunga people and their culture)
* provided the evidence from which each conclusion was drawn
* clearly identified a conclusion, specifically by using language such as “A conclusion that can be drawn is…”

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked evidence for the conclusions drawn
* used direct comprehension to answer the question rather than forming a conclusion
* were poorly structured and hard to follow
* provided only one conclusion with or without evidence
* provided quotes from the source with no indication of what these quotes meant in relation to the impacts of the tests
* included the term socio-religious within the conclusion rather than in the supporting evidence.

Question (d)

The more successful responses commonly:

* included a statement indicating the extent to which the concerns in Source 2 were supported by those in Source 4 using terms such as large, considerable, slight
* contained both supported points and unsupported points
* provided evidence to substantiate each point
* showed both similarity and differences between the sources and qualified this with “to what extent”
* provided evidence and made connections rather than just stringing quotes from the sources together
* were clear and well-structured with two paragraphs including relevant quotes – one explaining how the sources supported each other, the other on how they didn’t
* provided two examples of similarities and one point of difference after stating that Source 4 supported Source 2 to a large extent
* stated that Source 4 supported Source 2 to a small extent provided one example of similarities and two points of difference.

The less successful responses commonly:

* contained points showing how sources supported or didn’t support each other
* did not provide sufficient evidence to support their view
* lacked detail
* described how Source 4 supported Source 2
* either did not use evidence or used irrelevant evidence
* focussed on source type or genre rather than source content
* stated that one source supported the other to a ‘partial’ extent, however provided more similarities than differences and therefore contradicted themselves
* used terms like ‘moderate’, ‘medium’, ‘some’ or ‘certain’ to rate the extent to which Source 4 supported Source 2 suggesting that some students are reluctant or unable to make a clear, identifiable judgement

Question (e)

The more successful responses commonly:

* mentioned strengths and limitations for each source
* provided valid examples
* showed an understanding of the purpose of each source as well as content
* identified and explained any apparent inherent and/or intentional bias
* clearly articulated how the origin, nature and type of source affected their usefulness, and the way the perspective of the artist or the writer of the journal article affected the details in the source they created, and therefore the strengths and limitations
* identified how a source’s origin is recognised (e.g. the author, producer, place of publication, date of publication)
* clearly structured, for example, in one paragraph:
* explain the origin and nature of Source 1
* explain a strength and limitation of Source 1 in relation to its origin and nature (with an example as needed)
* and in another paragraph, follow the same process for Source 4.

The less successful responses commonly:

* only mentioned strengths or limitations
* did not contain quotes or examples
* did not mention nature or origin
* claimed the sources were biased without explaining how
* identified the nature and/or origin of the sources but didn’t explain how they affected their usefulness
* misunderstood that the cartoon was drawn in response to the Royal Commission not the testing and so claimed that it was a secondary source
* did not include specific details from either source
* only discussed one source
* misunderstood the nature and purpose of an editorial cartoon by stating that its purpose was to entertain through its comedic value, failing to identify the role of satire in political commentary
* failed to recognise the usefulness of sources despite origin or bias presented (e,g, “ultimately the source is very unreliable and should not be used by any historians who wish to learn about the Maralinga tests.”)
* do not seem to understand the difference between bias and biased, or that these two words are not interchangeable
* compared the sources.

Question (f)

A significant number of responses to this question were incomplete. It is recommended that students prioritise this question given its marks value.

The more successful responses commonly:

* contained a brief introduction and/or conclusion
* mentioned each source explicitly
* provided a clear and well-balanced response, integrating all the sources into their argument or counter argument
* used an essay structure with an introduction, at least 2 body paragraphs (one with the argument and the other containing the counter argument) and a conclusion
* were able to create a perceptive answer that integrated the fact that at the time of the bomb tests, misperceptions of Aboriginal people and culture, particularly by officials and governments, limited foreseeable consequences of the tests.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were too short
* did not mention all sources
* did not create an argument, rather recounted how each source supported or opposed the proposition
* did not engage with the proposition and did not consider any opposing evidence
* described effects of the tests without stating whether they were foreseen or unforeseen
* were unable to reach an overall conclusion when evaluating the proposition.