2021 Politics, Power and People Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

2021 was the first year of teaching the renewed Politics, Power and People subject outline, which replaced Australian and International Politics.

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 [Politics, Power, and People website](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/politics-power-and-people/stage-2/subject-outline/subject-changes) for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

Students undertake at least three folio assessments. One assessment must focus on collaborative skills.

The following assessment design criteria are assessed: critical and creative thinking; communication and collaboration; understanding and ethical reasoning, and research and analysis.

The more successful responses commonly:

* proposed insightful solutions in a coherent communication style
* provided evidence of contemporary political topics
* posed challenging questions and challenged assertions
* provided a range of options in each of the folio tasks that supported development of inquiry skills, e.g. for an essay task there were a number of questions to choose from
* showed a variety of task options within the folio. It is encouraging to see students given the opportunity to showcase their knowledge beyond just writing an essay
* acknowledged a wide range of perspectives to provide well-balanced judgments
* demonstrated some good ideas for the ‘collaboration’ aspect, these included group submissions, collaborative reflections, and formative collaboration
* provided some analysis of the level of success of the ‘collaborative’ aspect
* showed where, to what extent, and how collaboration was incorporated
* were the result of tasks that were flexible enough for students to showcase their learning at a variety of levels, particularly at the higher achievement levels
* did not overextend how many criteria were being assessed
* used a wide range of appropriate sources, not just websites
* demonstrated consistent and accurate referencing.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked structure and clarity
* did not pose challenging questions
* made statements without substantiation
* were descriptive rather than evaluative
* were limited in the number and type of sources they accessed.

Assessment Type 2: Sources Analysis

Students undertake two source analysis assessments. The following assessment design criteria were assessed: communication and collaboration; critical and creative thinking; understanding and ethical reasoning.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used a range of sources and source types
* demonstrated clearly worded questions with a range of levels of difficulty
* used evidence from the source material to support answers astutely
* used examples beyond websites and often with multimedia components
* were the result of those tasks that provided clear questions, and made clear ‘how much’ was required/expected in each short answer response.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were descriptive rather than analytical
* showed limited, and superficial analysis, or just recounted the material
* had sources that were not examined in detail
* showed minimal ‘external’ knowledge
* demonstrated a description rather than an evaluation of sources
* answered questions that were not explained clearly or in their entirety.

It was pleasing to see students given the opportunity to find and analyse their own sources, as well as the differentiation in the sources analyses.

*Important – change to assessment criteria for the Sources Analysis from 2022*

During the 2021 moderation process all teachers reasonably assumed that the assessment design criteria ‘Research and Analysis (RA)’ would be assessed in their tasks for the sources analysis. However, the subject outline did not specifically state that this needed to be assessed. It appears that during the drafting, consultation, and accreditation phases of the subject renewal process, ‘RA’ was never included under Assessment Type 2: Sources Analysis, although the intention was that it should have been. No student was disadvantaged during the 2021 moderation process.

*As a result of this, the SACE Board has approved the inclusion of RA1-apply inquiry skills to research political issues and perspectives, and RA2-analyse and evaluate political issues using primary and secondary sources to be assessed in the sources analysis from 2022.*

This assessment design criteria will replace ‘Understanding and Ethical Reasoning’, which is already assessed in the folio and again in the external assessment.

General

* Teachers are reminded to label files clearly, especially when one task has multiple files submitted.
* The inclusion of the task sheet for each student’s work is useful.
* It was encouraging to see school assessment tasks presented in multimodal format.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

Students complete one investigating focusing on any theme from the option themes or of personal interest. They select a recent political issue that involves a range of views and some level of unresolved disputation. The following assessment design criteria are assessed critical and creative thinking (CCT1, CCT2); communication and collaboration (CC1); understanding and ethical reasoning (UER2), and research and analysis (RA1, RA2).

The more successful responses commonly:

* synthesised their ideas with political concepts
* explained, using political policy and history, the reason for outcomes in their investigations
* demonstrated a wide range of research using a range of primary and secondary sources
* displayed an academic and formal tone/structure
* provided topical references and comparisons to case studies
* included suggestions to solutions/recommendations
* provided some resolution to the terms of the proposition
* displayed a seamless use of political concepts/principles
* integrated and explained evidence in reference to the key finding
* provided historical understanding and context of key terms
* covered a topic with a 2021 focus
* had a range of conflicting sources
* was contemporary and/or controversial with a clear focus
* attempted to demonstrate a range of perspectives
* used a/one reference system clearly and consistently
* included clear, and annotated maps and/or graphs and/or charts and/or statistics and/or cartoons from both secondary and primary data
* used a diverse skill set to offer alternative perspectives.

The less successful responses commonly:

* found it difficult to use political terminology
* did not explain the political reasoning for why outcomes occurred
* demonstrated limited research
* demonstrated inconsistent, incorrect, and limited referencing
* relied on unreliable sources such as Wikipedia, and History.com
* used broad statements with little evidence or explanation
* chose a topic that was outside the scope of the question, and that did not lend itself to a range of views or some level of unresolved disputation
* included the student’s personal opinions about events/individuals that could not be substantiated
* included figures/graphs with no reference of explanation
* was narrative rather than analytical
* were outside the scope of the question
* provided a vague hypothesis or unclear guiding question or set of questions
* skimmed the surface of the surface of the topic at hand
* used too few sources or demonstrated limited research
* missed the opportunity to develop a set of interview questions that might/would have a significant impact
* had only one perspective with a limited range of sources to support that perspective.

General

* There was an array of topics presented with direct links to the subject themes, and some where there were implicit links. It is acceptable for there to be implicit links to the themes.
* Depending on the chosen issue or topic, recommendations and/or solutions may not apply.
* Teachers are reminded to monitor ethical topics chosen, and encourage the student’s responses to avoid becoming too emotive. While it is important to have a range of topics presented, how they are presented is also an important consideration. The aim of the investigation is to present a fair, balanced, and reasonable response.