

Ancient History 2019 v1.2

Unit 1 sample assessment instrument

October 2023

Examination — short response to historical sources

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers in planning and developing assessment instruments for individual school settings.

Schools develop internal assessments for each senior subject, based on the learning described in Units 1 and 2 of the subject syllabus. Each unit objective must be assessed at least once.

Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

1. comprehend terms, concepts and issues in relation to archaeology and ancient societies
3. analyse evidence from historical sources to show understanding about the Ancient World
4. synthesise evidence from historical sources to form a historical argument in relation to archaeology and ancient societies
5. evaluate evidence from historical sources to make judgments about the Ancient World
6. create responses that communicate meaning to suit purpose in relation to the Ancient World.

Note: Unit objective 2 is not assessed in this assessment instrument.

Subject	Ancient History		
Technique	Examination — short response to historical sources		
Unit	Unit 1: Investigating the Ancient World		
Topic	Topic 1: Digging up the past		

Conditions			
Response type	Short response to historical sources		
Time	2 hours	Planning time	15 minutes
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800–1000 words • Sources 1, 3, 5 and 6 seen one week before the examination • Sources 2, 4, 7 and 8 not seen before the examination • No notes allowed • Clean copy of the stimulus supplied 		
Instructions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer all questions in your answer booklet. • Write using blue or black pen. • Respond in paragraphs consisting of full sentences. • Ensure your responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – follow language conventions, including spelling, grammar and punctuation – demonstrate the use of evidence from the sources as indicated in each question, and reference these sources. 			

Criterion	Marks allocated	Result
Comprehending Assessment objective/s 1		
Analysing Assessment objective/s 3		
Synthesising Assessment objective/s 4		
Evaluating Assessment objective/s 5		
Creating and communicating Assessment objective/s 6		
Total		

Question 1

Use evidence from Sources 1 and 2 to explain the role of stratigraphy in establishing a chronology of graves at the Royal Cemetery at Ur.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

A large rectangular box containing ten horizontal dotted lines, intended for writing answers.

Question 3

Evaluate the extent to which evidence from Sources 3 and 4 is reliable and useful for understanding the funerary practices of the Early Dynastic Sumerians. For each source, include one consideration for reliability and one consideration for usefulness to support your judgments.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

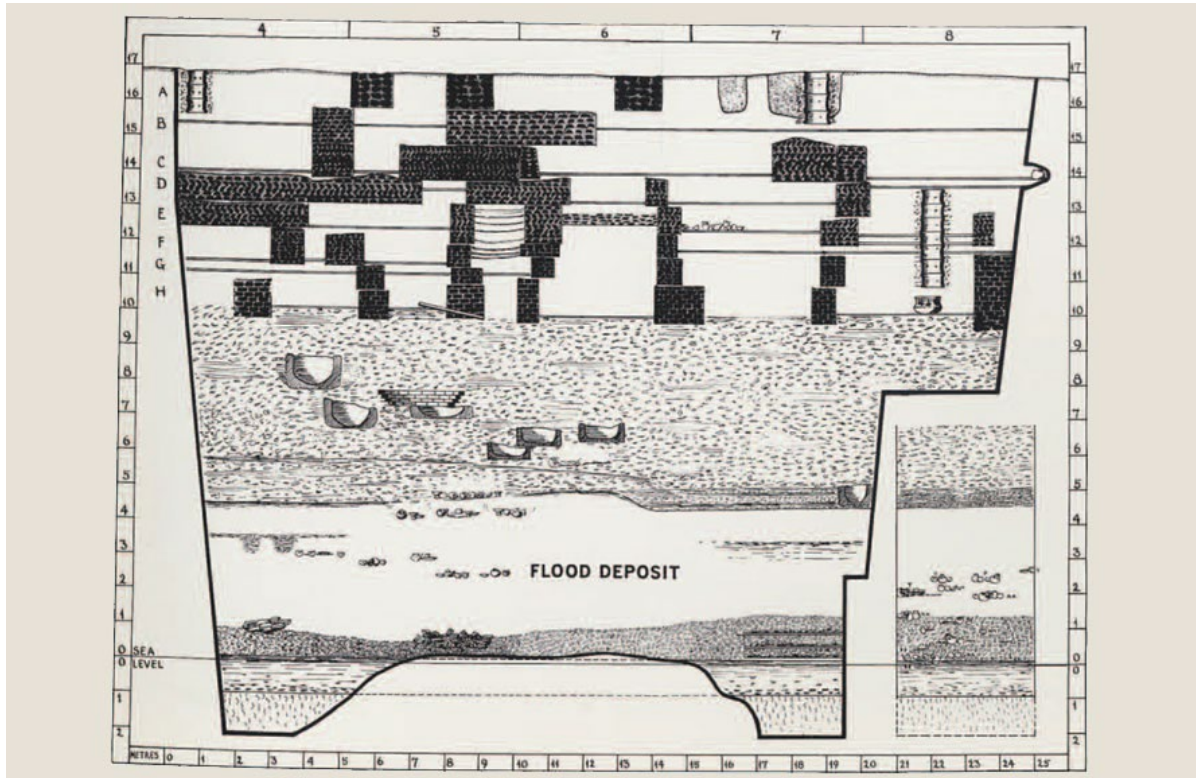
A large rectangular box with a solid border, containing ten horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a template for writing.

A large rectangular area containing 25 horizontal dotted lines, intended for writing answers.

Stimulus

Source 1

A sketch from the journal of Leonard Woolley of the strata at Ur



Source: Woolley C L 1930, Sketch of section of Pre-Flood Pit in 'Excavations at Ur, 1929-30.' The Museum Journal XXI, no. 2 (June, 1930): 81-105. <https://www.penn.museum/sites/journal/9272/>

Context statement:

Sir Charles Leonard Woolley was a British archaeologist best known for his excavations at the Sumerian city of Ur in Mesopotamia. When examining the strata, he discovered 8 layers of mud bricks and clay walls, a 6-metre stratum of kilns, pottery and burnt brick and a flood deposit. The uppermost levels contain evidence of the First Dynasty of Ur and The Royal Cemetery of Ur.

Source 2

An excerpt on hidden treasure from the royal cemetery of Ur

The cemetery excavated by Woolley contained over two thousand burials (Woolley 1934: 33; 1956: 38–40, 127–45). Two main groups of graves separated by layers of debris were identified. The earlier graves were assigned to the Early Dynastic period using clay tablets, seal impressions and cylinder seals ...

The cemetery has been cut into sloping ground, which has been further modified by the deposition of mounds of rubbish. Some graves were superimposed so that later burials had disturbed earlier ones. Woolley realized that these factors meant that the relative heights of the graves could not be used to place them in chronological sequence. He therefore developed a typological sequence for dating the graves based on artifacts found within them. Pottery stone objects, metal vessels, tools and weapons were all placed in a developmental sequence. The deposits are difficult to interpret, however, and the relative dating of the cemetery's graves has remained an issue for research.

Modern radiocarbon dating has assisted in assigning the earlier group of graves to the Early Dynastic III A period, ca. 2600–2400 BCE (Moorey 1977: 24; Zettler 1998b: 21–22). The graves within this group totalled 660. Most were simple inhumations but among these were sixteen termed 'royal' by Woolley, a definition based on their structure, rich grave goods and evidence of ritual practice (Zettler 1998b: 22). These tombs appeared to form a focal point within the early cemetery, around which other graves were clustered (Woolley 1934: 15). The tombs were numbered and a prefix PG, denoting private grave, was added.

Source: Irving, A and Ambers, J 2002, 'Hidden Treasure from the Royal Cemetery at Ur: Technology sheds new light on the ancient Near East', *Near Eastern Archaeology*, vol. 65, no. 3, pp. 206–213, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3210885>

Context statement:

Alexandra Irving and Janet Ambers are academics who specialise in Near Eastern archaeology.

Source 3

Leonard Woolley's description of Early Dynastic Sumerian funerary practices

We must imagine the burial in the chamber to be complete and the door sealed; there remains the open pit with its mat-lined walls and mat-covered floor, empty and unfurnished. Now down the sloping passage comes a procession of people, the members of the court, soldiers, men-servants, and women, the latter in all their finery of brightly colored garments and headdresses of lapis-lazuli and silver and gold, and with them musicians bearing harps or lyres, cymbals, and sistra; they take up their positions in the farther part of the pit and then there are driven or backed down the slope the chariots drawn by oxen or by asses, the drivers... the grooms holding the heads of the draught animals, and these too are marshaled in the pit. Each man and woman brought a little cup of clay or stone or metal, the only equipment required for the rite that was to follow. Some kind of service there must have been at the bottom of the shaft, at least it is evident that the musicians played up to the last, and that each drank from the cup; either they brought the potion with them or they found it prepared for them on the spot — in (Grave Pit) PG 1247 there was in the middle of the pit a great copper pot into which they could have dipped — and they composed themselves for death. Then someone came down and killed the animals and perhaps arranged the drugged bodies, and when that was done earth was flung from above on them, and the filling-in of the grave shaft was begun.

... The idea, first put forward by my wife, that the victims quietly drank some deadly or soporific drug is borne out not only by those appearances on which we had at the outset to base our conclusions but by the fact that in every royal grave afterwards found a little cup seems the invariable and the sole attribute of every body.

Source: Woolley, CL 1934, *Ur Excavations, Volume II: The Royal Cemetery — A Report on the predynastic and sargonid graves excavated between 1926 and 1931*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, p. 35, <http://www.etana.org/sites/default/files/coretexts/20263.pdf>

Context statement:

This excerpt is from Sir Charles Leonard Woolley's 1934 report on the progress of his excavations at Ur, in which he described his interpretations of the evidence from the Royal Tombs. Woolley (1880–1960) was a British archaeologist who led the joint expedition of the British Museum and University of Pennsylvania to Ur, where many bodies were exhumed, and many artefacts were excavated. Though Woolley never formally studied archaeological methods, his methodical excavations and practice of keeping careful records as the director of the excavations of Ur led to his reputation as one of the first modern archaeologists.

Source 4

A description of Early Dynastic Sumerian funerary practices, by Aubrey Baadsgaard, Janet Monge and Richard Zettler

The discovery of apparent blunt-force fragmentation patterns on the Penn Museum skulls supports Woolley's contention that the retainers found in royal death pits were indeed the victims of human sacrifice. The mode of death, however, was not willing suicide by means of ingesting poison but rather a forceful blow to the skull by a sharp, weighted weapon. This evidence sheds important light into the practice of human sacrifice, particularly the means by which it was carried out, and also into its very nature. Rather than a 'peaceful' process with willing participants, the evidence from Ur's Royal Cemetery points towards bloody homicidal sacrifice, the intentional and violent killing of human victims as part of sacrificial ritual. While this revised scenario is based on admittedly limited evidence, the fact that the two skulls subjected to testing come from different royal death pits suggests a similar method of death might be expected for other, possibly most of the court attendants, particularly those from the three largest death pits.

After the killing, treatment and dressing of the bodies, the sacrificial victims were perhaps put on public display and then brought down into the tomb chamber or the associated death pits. The CT images of Penn Museum's skulls reveal that both were positioned so that the side bearing the mark of the blunt trauma injury was placed on ground, and, thus, not visible. The marks of trauma may not have been visible on the corpse in any case, because the heads of both were covered, the male by a copper helmet and the female with elaborate gold jewelry, but were doubtless known to those handling the bodies and overseeing their final deposition in the royal tombs. Whether or not this arrangement was typical for all attendants is obviously impossible to determine, but it may explain why Woolley, a careful observer, did not notice any signs of their violent death. Breakage of the skulls due to trauma might have been impossible to see in the field given the poor condition of the skulls at recovery.

Source: Baadsgaard, A, Monge, J and Zettler, RL 2012, 'Bludgeoned, Burned, and Beautified: Reevaluating mortuary practices in the royal cemetery of Ur', in AM Porter and GM Schwartz (eds), *Sacred Killing: The Archaeology of sacrifice in the ancient Near East*, Eisenbrauns Inc, Pennsylvania, US, pp. 144–147, https://www.academia.edu/4512613/Bludgeoned_Burned_and_Beautified_Reevaluating_Mortuary_Practices_in_the_Royal_Cemetery_of_Ur

Context statement:

This excerpt is from a report of the findings of Aubrey Baadsgaard, Janet Monge and Richard Zettler following their analysis of computerised tomography (CT) scans of two skulls excavated in the early 20th century from the royal tombs of Ur, which are now part of the Penn Museum collection. Baadsgaard, Monge and Zettler are widely published archaeologists and anthropologists from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, who specialise in the archaeology and anthropology of the Near East.

Source 5

An excerpt from *Expedition* magazine: 'Ur and its Treasures'

This content has not been published for copyright reasons.

The information for the redacted excerpt came from paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 6 of the article.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 wording from '... Sumer lay in lower Mesopotamia ...' to '... commercial, cultural, and artistic life.'

Paragraph 3 wording from 'This era of Sumerian ascendancy ...' to '... the life-giving Euphrates River.'

Paragraph 6 wording from 'The royal burials contained riches ...' to '... by their own hands.'

Source: Horne, L 1998, 'Ur and Its Treasures', *Expedition*, vol. 40, no. 2, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Pennsylvania, US, <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=5402>.

Context statement:

Lee Horne was a research associate and editor of the *Expedition* magazine at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. She conducted extensive field work and co-authored the article *Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur*.

Source 6

The Standard of Ur

Side 1: 'War'



Side 2: 'Peace'



Source: The Standard of Ur [Online images], Assets 8056001 and 596061001 from the British Museum.

Context statement:

The Standard of Ur, dated to c.2500 BCE (Early Dynastic Period), was discovered by Leonard Woolley in tomb PG 779, one of the largest royal graves. Side 1 is believed to depict a Sumerian army with wagons and infantry charging an enemy, and prisoners being brought before a large central figure. Side 2 is believed to depict men bringing animals as tribute, men banqueting and musicians playing instruments. This artefact is housed at the British Museum.

Source 7

A description of Early Dynastic Sumerian society by Leonard Woolley

... we can picture Sumer as a powerful political unit held together partly by force but in a greater degree, at the present time, by the bond of a civilisation which had imposed itself uniformly on the different elements of the population and was exercising a profound influence on the neighbouring peoples.

In the advance of civilisation the lead is generally taken by military science and equipment. In the case of the Sumerians, set down in the midst of peoples physically more powerful and addicted to war as a pastime, intellectual and artistic superiority would have made little headway, could not indeed have held its own against that covetousness it must have provoked... They built up an empire because they had a better army and better weapons than their neighbours, and throughout their annals war plays a very large part.

The cemetery, and the royal graves in particular, have supplied numerous examples of copper pikeheads ... arrow-heads of many types are found and even fragments of decorated bows; some of the former, such as the flint (arrow) heads from the grave of Meskalam-Dug, were not likely to have been used for war, but others are certainly military weapons and we are therefore obliged to assume the existence of a force of archers in the Sumerian army of the fourth millennium BC.

... In the royal graves adzes, axes and spears of gold occur; in a few other graves axes of silver; the latter may well be the insignia of officers.

Source: Woolley, CL 1995, *The Sumerians*, Barnes & Noble Books, New York, US, pp. 49–55.

Context statement:

This description of Early Dynastic Sumerian society is from Sir Charles Leonard Woolley's 1929 book *The Sumerians*. It was written during his excavations of the Royal Tombs of Ur.

Source 8

An excerpt from Gibbons' 'The Ultimate Sacrifice'

Retainer sacrifice, as at Ur, was apparently performed so that rulers could live in the afterlife much as they did in life, and to demonstrate their importance to the living. 'It's not a sacrifice in the sense of slaughtering a cow or offering meat' to a god, says Penn archaeologist Richard Zettler. At Ur, the court attendants were set up as though they were at a banquet with food, drink, and music. They were adorned in golden wreaths studded with lapis lazuli and carnelian. But did those who died really play the roles of guards, grooms, and courtesans in life? Strontium isotopes in bones and teeth show that two retainers at Ur were born locally and were not foreign captives, suggesting that they were indeed servants, says Penn archaeologist Aubrey Baadsgaard. Such extravagant retainer sacrifices were rare. At Ur, the practice appears in only 16 out of about 2000 graves unearthed in the Royal Cemetery.

... 'When you establish a new kingdom, a new kind of political organization with a ruler at the top, very often there is this strategy of making a big show of the power of this new social order by having this kind of retainer sacrifice,' [says archaeologist Glenn Schwartz of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland]. At Ur, the number of sacrificial victims and wealth of the treasures declines from about 2600 B.C.E. to 2450 B.C.E. The practice also declines and then vanishes in Egypt, perhaps because it was too costly to bury such wealth, both in objects and human life, or because established kings didn't need such a conspicuous display of power.

Source: Gibbons, A 2012, 'The Ultimate Sacrifice', *Science*, vol. 336, no. 6083, pp. 834–837, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41584841>

Context statement:

Ann Gibbons was a science journalist and a contributing correspondent for *Science* magazine. She has taught science writing at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, and has written on a range of science topics for magazines such as *National Geographic* and *Smithsonian Magazine*.



© State of Queensland (QCAA) 2023

Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> | **Copyright notice:** www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright — lists the full terms and conditions, which specify certain exceptions to the licence. |

Attribution (include the link): © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2023 www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright.

Other copyright material in this publication is listed below.

1. Woolley C L 1930, Sketch of section of Pre-Flood Pit in 'Excavations at Ur, 1929-30.' The Museum Journal XXI, no. 2 (June, 1930): 81-105. <https://www.penn.museum/sites/journal/9272/> Used under terms at <https://www.penn.museum/about-collections/rights-and-permissionsIrving>
2. A. and Ambers, J. (September 2002). 'Hidden Treasure from the Royal Cemetery at Ur: Technology Sheds New Light on the Ancient Near East.' Near Eastern Archaeology, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 206-213. Used by the permission of the University of Chicago Press. © 2003 American Schools of Oriental Research. All rights reserved. Permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc
3. Woolley, C. L. (1934). Ur Excavations. Vol 2. The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonid Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931. Oxford University Press for Trustees of the two museums. p. 35. Electronic Tools and Ancient Near East Archives repository. <http://www.etana.org/sites/default/files/coretexts/20263.pdf>
4. Baadsgaard, A., Monge, J. and Zettler, R. L. (2012). 'Bludgeoned, Burned, and Beautified: Reevaluating Mortuary Practices in the Royal Cemetery of Ur'. In Anne M. Porter and Glenn M. Schwartz (Eds.) Sacred Killing: The Archaeology of Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East. Eisenbrauns Inc. pp. 144-147. Used with permission of Eisenbrauns, permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc
5. Horne, L. (1998). 'Ur and Its Treasures.' Expedition Magazine 40.2. Penn Museum. <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=5402>
6. The Standard of Ur [Online images]. Assets 8056001 and 596061001 from the British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Used under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence
7. Woolley, C. L. (1995) *The Sumerians*. Barnes & Noble (Original work published 1929). pp. 49-55.
8. Gibbons, A. (18 May 2012). 'The Ultimate Sacrifice'. Science. Vol. 336. No. 6083. pp. 834-837. Published by American Association for the Advancement of Science. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41584841>. Used with permission of the publisher, permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc