Statistics

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of candidates</th>
<th>Level of achievement</th>
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<td>2012</td>
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General comments

The 2012 Modern History examination was based on the revised 2008 senior external syllabus. The highest performing candidates demonstrated effective preparation for the examination and a sophisticated understanding of the assessment criteria:

- Planning and using a historical research process
- Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry
- Communicating historical knowledge.

Candidates who achieved the highest levels of achievement demonstrated their understandings of the discipline of history. This was evident in essay responses that appropriately and consistently used historical language and terminology, and the textual features and conventions of historical writing. These candidates also engaged critically with historical sources. This was shown through an understanding of the nature of historical sources, assumptions about the problematic character of historical sources, and the tentative and interpretive qualities of historical knowledge. The quality of high-achieving candidates’ analysis and evaluation of sources, and their use of interpretations to develop valid and coherent historical arguments in response to Paper Two, showed skilful application of these understandings.

Paper One Part A assesses candidates’ understanding of historical inquiry and their application of these processes in a research task. Candidates’ responses are based on the five major aspects of inquiry described in the syllabus (Definitions; Sources; Backgrounds, changes and continuities: motives and causes; Effects, interests and arguments; and Reflections and responses). It is important for prospective candidates to carefully consider and reflect on the inquiry topic on the aspect of Australian history (organised under Theme 1: National history or Theme 4: Studies of power). Candidates need to prepare for the style of written responses required to successfully complete this part of the paper. It should also be noted that candidates who were awarded HA levels of achievement and above used the opportunities presented in Question 9, which was
introduced this year, to show how they use sources appropriately and effectively in the inquiry process.

Sample responses published in previous assessment reports provide worthwhile models of all the assessment techniques used and candidates should consider this material as part of their preparation.

Paper One

Part A: Reflections on the research inquiry process

Part A assessed Planning and using a historical research process. Candidates were required to refer to an inquiry topic of their choice from Theme 4: Studies of power about Australia’s foreign relationships, including Australia’s relationship with Great Britain (1901 to 1919), Australia’s relationship with the United States of America (1939 to 1975) and Australia’s relationship with Asia (1975 to the present).

The performance of the majority of candidates in Part A showed effective preparation in terms of understanding the topic, analysing and evaluating sources and reflecting on the process of historical inquiry.

Candidates needed to use of a wider range of valid and reliable sources in their inquiry and describe the evaluation of these sources clearly and thoughtfully. Candidates needed to access the extensive range of primary and secondary sources available for the inquiry topics listed above.

Part B: Extended written response to an unseen question

Part B assessed Communicating historical knowledge. Candidates were required to write an extended response to one question chosen from the four questions provided. The questions were based on Theme 5: Studies of cooperation.

Question 1 — The League of Nations and the rise of Hitler’s Germany

Fifteen candidates responded to this question and generally wrote appropriate essays which demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of the topic. Higher achieving candidates made thoughtful evaluations of issues and sources and presented valid arguments.

Question 2 — The end of apartheid

One candidate responded to this question.

Question 3 — Efforts to achieve land rights for Indigenous Australians

One candidate responded at a very high level to this question. They wrote a well-constructed argument with effective evaluations of government policy and social contexts and with consistent and accurate reference to key events, developments and people.
Paper Two

Extended written response to historical evidence

Paper Two allowed candidates to demonstrate their understanding and experience of Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry (Criterion 2) and Communicating historical knowledge (Criterion 3). Candidates were required to write an extended written response to one statement chosen from the three provided. The response could agree, disagree or qualify the views represented in the statement. Candidates had to use and reference relevant sources (both seen and unseen) in their response. The instructions to candidates stressed that sources were to be used critically. The statements provided referred to the study of the People’s Republic of China: Marxism and capitalism (1949–present) from Theme 6: History of ideas and beliefs. Each statement offered opportunities for candidates to explore different aspects of the impact of the ideas and related events that have shaped modern China.

Paper Two was the only part of the examination where candidates could demonstrate their achievement in Criterion 2. It was important for candidates to perform well to obtain a high overall result.

The statements prompted candidates to explore the ideas of the theme — Marxism/communism and capitalism as well as the complementary and competing ideas of nationalism, imperialism and traditionalism. The best responses recognised that China does not fit neatly into a historical evaluation that gives prominence to any one of these ideas. Instead, they proposed which ideas impacted on particular events and which ideas were more dominant at certain points of the nation’s history.

The majority of candidates produced responses that were at a sound level or better, with candidates generally performing better than in the extended response part of Paper One. Higher performing candidates demonstrated the development of hypotheses and the use of seen and unseen sources in a critical rather than descriptive manner. They also constructed arguments that featured the evaluation of sources and development of a position through analysis and synthesis of historical evidence and understanding.

Prospective candidates need to focus on the critical evaluation of sources and the integration of sources into historical arguments. These skills are essential in demonstrating the Criterion 2 standards at an HA level of achievement and above.

Statement 1

Five candidates responded to this statement. The majority of candidates performed well and were able to relate the key events in the statement to the source material and develop arguments about the unique nature of Chinese state capitalism and the dominance of economic considerations and one-party rule.
Statement 2

Four candidates responded to this statement. The responses varied in quality; each candidate argued that Chinese communism drew on nationalism and traditionalism and was able to use the sources to support this position.

Statement 3

Eight candidates responded to this statement. The best responses discussed the role of nationalism as an equal or dominant set of ideas in relation to Marxism and Communism.

Sample response

The following response to Paper One Part B was selected from those scripts that met the A standard in that part of the examination. It has been reproduced exactly as written and therefore includes any spelling or grammatical errors made by the candidate.
Paper One

Part B — Extended written response to an unseen question

Part B assesses Communicating historical knowledge (syllabus criterion 3).
The following questions are derived from Theme 5 of the syllabus: Studies of cooperation.
Respond to one question in 600–800 words.
In your response, refer to and evaluate historical evidence including specific sources.
Planning space is provided. Cross out any draft work that is not to be assessed.
Suggested time allocation: 1 hour 15 minutes.

Either

Question 1 — The League of Nations and the rise of Hitler’s Germany
Evaluate the extent to which the failure of the League of Nations to meet the challenges facing international security facilitated Hitler’s foreign policy objectives.

or

Question 2 — The end of apartheid
Assess the importance of selected internal and external social, economic and political factors in ending the policy of apartheid in South Africa.

or

Question 3 — Efforts to achieve land rights for Indigenous Australians
Evaluate the contributions of specific movements in the second half of the 20th century to the gaining of recognition and land rights for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

or

Question 4 — The changing role of the United Nations
Assess the effectiveness of the methods used by the United Nations to achieve its stated aim of a cooperative approach to international security in either the period 1946–1991 (the end of the Cold War) or the period 1991–2010.

End of Part B

End of Paper One
Notepaper

Directions
You may write on this notepaper during perusal time.
Take the notepaper when you leave the examination room.

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2012 Senior External Examination

Notepaper

Directions
You may write on this notepaper during perusal time.
Take the notepaper when you leave the examination room.

7/11/1938 The Aborigines had bestirred me labour
on the lands and that — and only that — is what gives
right to it.
"W.E.H Stanner - Great Australian Silence."

Xavier Herbert.
Until we give back to the black man just
a little of the land that was his ... we shall
continue to be a nation of thieves."
When the British settlers arrived on the shores of the Australian mainland in 1788, so began a history of the Australian Aborigines being dispossessed from their lands and their traditional culture. The British believed in the doctrine of "terra nullius" and applied this land as their own, believing it to be unoccupied and unused. However, it was not until the 1960s, when the world was experiencing change, in terms of civil rights and racial discrimination, did the Australian public begin to recognize the plight suffered by Australia's indigenous people. While small steps were taken with events such as the Bark Petition and the Gurindji strike, they provided confidence for further land rights claims in the future. The public became more aware of the land rights movement, and began to find the support and cooperation of politicians such as Gough Whitlam and Paul Keating. It was not until the 1997 High Court ruling in favour of the Mabo Case, that the doctrine of "terra nullius" was finally invalidated.

When the British arrived in 1788, "terra nullius".
a Latin term for empty lands, formed the
decree of white settlement. The British
with their ethnocentric views, failed to recognize
that both the British and Aboriginal
cultures and social organizations were
diametrically opposed. The Aborigines
lived a hunter and gather lifestyle relying
of the land for their survival. They had
a history of myth and story telling that was
passed down through the generations. A
newspaper article, article, on 7 November
reported that the Aborigines bestowed no labour
on the land and that and only that is what
gives right of property to it. As a result
of these theories, the British Privy Council
decree in 1889, “that it was a tract of
territory practically unoccupied, without
settled inhabitants and settled laws when it
was peaceably annexed into the British
dominion.” This began a history of the
Australian Aborigines being experienced
massacres and even genocide at the hands of
the white settlers. For example, the Myall
Creek Massacre where twenty-eight
Aborigines were murdered, and the genocide
of the Tasmanian Aborigines when the last
full-blood Aborigines, Truganini, died
in 1876. They became fringe dwellers and
suffered European diseases. And fought their
wars with and their world was poisoned and they
had to fight for their land... it was not until the great social change around the world did Australia become aware of the land rights issues and the Indigenous people of Australia began to be recognised.

While the world experienced a great era of social change in the 1960s, small steps were taken in Australia to begin its journey for the recognition of Aboriginal land rights. In 1963, a petition was presented to the House of Representatives, on a piece of bark and written in the language of the Yirrkala people. It requested an inquiry so that a committee could be formed to hear the views of the Yirrkala people and their traditional lands be heard before their traditional lands were leased to mining company, Nobelco. While this symbolic petition was not successful, Justice Blackburn of the Northern Territory Supreme Court did acknowledge the Aboriginal spiritual connection to their traditional lands. However, this did not represent Australian common law and the doctrine of terra nullius was upheld. The efforts of the Yirrkala people provided courage and confidence to other Australian Aborigines in further claims.

One such person who had courage was...
Vincent Lingiari... who led his people to walk out of the Wave Hill cattle station. Their initial protest was over poor working and living conditions, but it became a claim for ownership of their traditional lands. The Gurindji people moved to Wattie Creek on the Wave Hill lease known to them as Dagaunya. The strike lasted for eight years, and after growing public support and cooperation from Australian politicians, a Crown lease of some of their traditional lands was handed back to the Gurindji people. The profound photo of Gough Whitlam, one of Australia's most powerful politicians, and Vincent Lingiari, a powerful black man, hunting the ancestral poles placed back into the hands of Vincent Lingiari, a powerful black man, will remain his legacy.

However, the limitations of the government meant they could only legislate in the Northern Territory.

It wasn't until the ruling in 1992 of the High Court, in the Mabo case, did the Australian Aborigines begin to have their land rights recognised. In 1982, Eddie Kiki Mabo began a 27-year journey requesting ownership of his traditional lands. He claimed that...
and passed it down through the generations. His family, who had practiced ‘Mabo law’, had lived on the lands for centuries. Unofficially, they claimed to own the land. Their case was heard in the Queensland Court of Appeals and the High Court, who ruled in their favour, invalidating the doctrine of ‘Terra Nullius’. In 1992, Paul Keating’s Redfern speech in December 1992, acknowledged that this was the beginning of a new relationship between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous people. Paul Keating went on to introduce new legislation, and since then, 140 land rights claims have been successful, and seventeen per cent of Australia has native title applied to it.

In conclusion, as a result of Australian Indigeneous peoples being judged on another culture, they have endured a history of dispossession of their traditional lands. Not until the era of great social change in the 1960s, with the Bank Strike and the Garma-Gurindji strike did small changes begin in recognition of land rights. The monumental High Court ruling of the Mabo Case in 1992 invalidated the doctrine of ‘Terra Nullius’, meaning that an author Xavier Herbert declared, “Until we...”
give back to the black man just a little of the land that was his... we shall remain a country of thieves.