Statistics

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General comments

The 2013 Modern History examination was based on the revised 2008 senior external syllabus. Overall, this year’s candidates performed better than those in 2012. Approximately 52% of candidates achieved an HA or a VHA; 95% of candidates achieved an SA or above.

The highest performing candidates demonstrated thorough preparation for the examination and a very high or high level of understandings and skills described by the assessment criteria:

- planning and using a historical research process
- forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry
- communicating historical knowledge.

The HA and VHA candidates demonstrated their understandings of the discipline of history. This was evident in essay responses in both papers and in the research inquiry question. To varying degrees, these candidates:

- appropriately used historical language and terminology
- used the textual features and conventions of historical writing
- showed a consistent understanding of the nature of historical sources
- made assumptions about the problematic character of historical sources, and the tentative and interpretive qualities of historical knowledge
- analysed and evaluated historical sources and used their interpretations to develop valid and coherent historical arguments.
Previous assessment reports have commented on Paper One Part A which 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
- reflections and responses.

The advice to prospective candidates is again 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 and ensure the questions are clearly understood.

It should also be noted that high achieving candidates used the opportunities presented in Question 9 (Paper One Part A) to show how they used sources appropriately and effectively in the inquiry process.

Sample responses published in assessment reports provide sound models of all of 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**

Candidates were required to refer to an inquiry topic of their choice from Theme 1: National history about the development of the nation-state in Australia, the ongoing operation of its political processes at the national and international level, and emerging challenges to the concept and realisation of the nation-state. Candidates studied one of the following inquiry topics in depth:

- Australia: The evolution of a nation-state from Federation to end of World War I
- Australia: The impact of immigration from 1945 to 1975
- Australia: The effect of changes in the workplace from 1972 to the present.

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

Candidates need to use a greater range of valid and reliable primary and secondary sources in their inquiry and describe the evaluation of these sources clearly and in-depth.

**Part B: Extended written response to an unseen question**

Part B assessed the criterion 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 2: Studies of conflict.
Candidates responded as follows:

- Question 1: Causes and outcomes of World War One — eight candidates responded to this question
- Question 2: Causes and outcomes of World War Two — thirteen candidates responded to this question, including both VHA candidates
- Question 3: Women’s movements and feminism — one candidate responded to this question
- Question 4: Israel and the Arab world — there were no responses to this question
- one candidate did not respond to any of the questions.

Paper Two

Extended written response to historical evidence

Paper Two was designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their understanding and experience of the criterion *Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry*. 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, and 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 inquiry topic ‘China: the impact of Mao Zedong’ from *Theme 3: Studies of change*. Each statement offered opportunities for candidates to explore the impact of Mao on the events that shaped the Peoples’ Republic of China and his legacy on China after 1976.

Paper Two was the only part of the examination where candidates could demonstrate their achievement in criterion 2, *forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry*.

The statements prompted candidates to evaluate the impact of Mao in a number of ways including the balance between visionary and realist, the impact of nationalism and traditional Chinese ideas on his version of communism and the way the Chinese Communist Party preserved and justified his legacy.

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 achieving candidates demonstrated the development of a clear hypothesis 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 sophisticated or nuanced 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 providing evidence of performance against the criterion 2 standards.

Candidates responded as follows:

- Statement 1 — twelve candidates responded to this statement
- Statement 2 — six candidates responded to this statement, including both VHA candidates
- Statement 3 — five candidates responded to this statement.
Sample response

The candidate responses on the following pages have been published to assist tutors and prospective candidates. They were chosen by the Modern History examining team as an example of A standard responses for Paper One and Paper Two. The responses have been reproduced exactly as written and therefore include any spelling or grammatical errors made by the candidate.

Paper One

Part A — Reflections on the research inquiry process

Part A assesses your understanding and experience of Planning and using a historical research process (criterion 1 of the Modern History Senior External Syllabus 2008).

Part A refers to an inquiry topic of your own choosing based on Theme 1 of the syllabus: National history.

Respond to all questions in the order provided. The amount of space provided for each response is an indication of how much you are expected to write.

Suggested time allocation: 1 hour 15 minutes.

Write the topic you selected for inquiry during your study:

The impact of the White Australia Policy from Federation to the end of World War One.

Question 1

How does your inquiry topic highlight some of the important features of Theme 1: National history?

The various Acts which both the Federal and State governments of Australia legislated in order to control the Indigenous population and restrict “undesirable” ethnicities from migrating here had lasting effects on our national and international perceptions from 1901 to the 1970’s, when the Menzies and Whitlam governments began the process of dismantling such laws.
Question 2

List the five initial focus questions that you used to guide an investigation into your topic, based on the aspects of inquiry below.

i. Definitions:

   What was the White Australia Policy?

ii. Sources:

   Which historians wrote about this subject, and what were their conclusions?

iii. Backgrounds, changes and continuities — motives and causes:

   Why did the new Australian Government adopt this policy soon after federation?

iv. Effects, interests and arguments:

   Was the White Australia Policy detrimental to the welfare of Indigenous Australians?

v. Reflections and responses:

   How has this policy affected Australian society?

Question 3

Which key historical sources did you use in your investigation? Name actual authors, collections (including internet resource sites) and primary and secondary sources.

- H.J. London — historian (secondary)
- Humphrey McQueen — historian (secondary)
- Sally Morgan — biographer (primary — Morgan's great-uncle recounts the discrimination he suffered under the WAP)
- National Museum of Australia — (primary and secondary)
- Keith Windschuttle — historian (controversial)
- Wikipedia — (secondary, links to many other Wikipedia pages on topics related to White Australia Policy)
Question 4

After the completion of the initial stage of investigation, what key research question did you develop and what was your initial hypothesis?

Key research question:

"Why did the new Government of Australia adopt the White Australia Policy soon after Federation in 1901?"

Initial hypothesis:

"The new Australian Government adopted the White Australia Policy soon after Federation because British attitudes of superiority and racism were common at the period of the early 20th Century."

Question 5

Select one key challenge or opportunity that you encountered in the research of your chosen topic. Explain how you dealt with this challenge or opportunity.

"I was appalled and deeply shocked by the racism and selfishness that underpinned the drafting of the various Acts which were known collectively as the White Australia Policy (WAP). I was particularly horrified at the treatment of indigenous Australians - they were unable to move about freely, were denied schooling and medical care, and were basically used as slave labour by State sanction. As a white Australian, I was deeply ashamed by these events, and I resolved to work toward recognition of Indigenous peoples’ relevance in our present society. Though I have been involved in reconciliation projects before, I had never understood the context behind the common assumption that Aboriginal Australians were inferior to white Australians until undertaking this research statement."
Question 6

How did you revise and refine your initial focus questions and hypothesis? Clearly show the development of your ideas.

Focus questions:

After researching the various reasons behind the various Acts underpinning the White Australia Policy, I began to understand... particularly through the scholarly and well-defined reasoning given by well-respected historian H.J. London) that the prevailing psychological attachments that Australian politicians (almost all of whom were born in Britain) felt toward the "mother country" informed their behaviour and policy-making profoundly.

Hypothesis:

After Federation the new Government adopted what has become known as the "White Australia Policy" in an effort to keep Australia as British as possible, believing that doing so would preserve the best, most admirable qualities in their citizenry and society.

Question 7

Define “critical reflection” in the context of historical inquiry.

"Critical reflection" relates to examining a topic of historical inquiry by researching what other historians have said/written about it, examining source evidence and assessing its reliability, formulating a hypothesis about the reasoning behind the topic under examination, and writing a paper which supports that hypothesis. Critical reflection necessitates that bias and emotional reasoning be left out, and the evidence assessed purely on its merits.
Question 8

Critically reflect upon the following source. How might it change or confirm the direction and emphasis of your research process?

Australian immigration policy

With the granting of internal self-government in the 1850s, each colony administered its own immigration policies, and while Federation in 1901 gave the Commonwealth ultimate responsibility, each state jealously guarded its de facto control of this area of government for many years. In fact, there was little assisted immigration into Australia between the Depression of the 1890s and the return of relative prosperity fifteen years later. Passage assistance was resumed in 1906, and at the Premiers Conference in that year it was agreed that the Commonwealth should sponsor appropriate advertising in the British Isles.

In the event, over the 40 years 1901–40, almost 600,000 immigrants arrived in Australia and no fewer than 471,400 were assisted. In 1912, the Premiers Conference agreed on uniform maximum assistance — £6 for an adult, half the minimum fare. One year later, the Federal Government commenced the advertising campaign in Britain which had been recommended seven years previously to attract migrants. It worked through cinema, press, lectures and posters. A new film unit prepared the material. Migration boomed: 92,000 migrants arrived in 1912, and many more in the two subsequent years before the outbreak of war. It was in this euphoria that the Drednought Scheme was initiated in 1911 to bring young British teenagers to New South Wales to work on the land and Kingsley Fairbridge established his first farm school near Pinjarra in Western Australia in 1913.

This was the era of the “white Australia” policy. The immigrants accepted were all of European origin, overwhelmingly from the British Isles. Federation in 1901 was soon followed by the passage of two Acts, the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 and the Pacific Islands Labourers Act 1901, which prohibited non-white immigration to Australia for more than 60 years. The Contract Immigrants Act was passed in 1905. The encouragement of immigration was selective, driven by economic and political considerations, and based on a firmly established racial hierarchy.

The short-lived immigration boom for the years 1910–13 was interrupted by the outbreak of war in August 1914. This virtually suspended all immigration until shipping once again became available in 1919. The war period, however, served to reinforce previously held views on the size, composition and distribution of Australia’s future population: that it should be predominantly British, that non-Europeans should be denied entry, and that immigrants should be directed to rural rather than urban areas. The war also strengthened British and imperial ties and led to plans to redistribute the population of the Empire through a variety of immigration and development projects after the war.

Coldrey, B 1968, Good British Stock: Child and Youth Migration to Australia, Research Guide 11, National Archives of Australia

This source supports my hypothesis that, in drafting the White Australia Policy (WAP) soon after Federation in 1901, the new Government was seeking to preserve the British quality of Australian society (of which they were key representatives) believing that in doing
...so they were preserving the best...most admirable qualities (according to their assumptions of such things) in their...citizenry and society. Because this source comes from the National Archives of Australia, I believe it is well-researched.

The lack of emotional language...and sentiment...as well as...the lack of any persuasive tone in B. Coldrey’s writing...suggests that...this is a factual, unbiased source based on the principles of critical reflection. Therefore, I would happily use this source to further augment the facts and resolutions outlined in my Research Assignment.

End of Part A
In 1919, world leaders met at a conference in Paris to talk over the effects and consequences of the devastating Great War that had raged for the four years from 1914–18. Though Germany had been identified as the chief instigator and aggressor of the war, neither German politicians nor diplomats were allowed to attend the Peace Conference where their fate was being decided. Though many delegates to the Conference believed this commission was a good one, there were some dissenting voices, notably raised by British economist John Maynard Keynes and French foreign commander, Marshal Foch. The deliberations of the conference concluded with the drawing up of the Treaty of Versailles, which outlined the measures Germany would be forced to adopt in order to atone for its sins, among them, disarmament of troops and surrender of mandates to Germany. Diplomats were forced to sign the Treaty as their people were suffering under the severe terms of a trade embargo against them; the only way to end the embargo was to admit their war guilt and pay reparations. On the day the Treaty of Versailles came into effect, so too did the League of Nations, and Germany’s mandates were surrendered to it.
care, under the assumption that they would eventually gain independence and govern themselves. Though the League had been a suggestion of United States President Woodrow Wilson, the USA did not join the league, which meant it was headed instead by the two remaining European superpowers, Britain and France. Both these nations had been heavy losers of men, materials, and infrastructure during the Great War, and in their anxiety to avoid another such conflict, their future leaders would opt for a policy of appeasement toward Adolf Hitler's initial acts of aggression.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany's army was cut back to 100,000 men and its navy was given to Britain. It was ordered to pay £6 billion to Britain and France as reparations for the loss of life, economic ramifications, and damage to infrastructure suffered during the war. Kaiser Wilhelm fled to the Netherlands and was sheltered from prosecution by the Dutch royal family. The Weimar Republic was established, but the democratic governments over the next fourteen years struggled to gain and maintain power and frequent dissolutions of the Reichstag (German Parliament) occurred.
In 1933, the Nazi Party, which was fascist and fervently nationalistic, gained power in Germany. Their leader was Adolf Hitler, whose aggressive foreign policy, his “Weltanschauung,” mirrored Kaiser Wilhelm’s “Weltpolitik” in many key respects. Desiring total power to achieve his aims, Hitler dissolved the Reichstag and announced himself Führer (supreme leader).

Hitler raided against the Treaty of Versailles, calling it a “Diktat” which placed an impossible burden on the German people. He branded the men who had signed the Treaty “November Criminals” and claimed that their actions were a betrayal of the German people. He outlined his plans for leading Germany to greatness once again, and the people who were suffering from severe economic hardship, believed him and gave him their support.

Britain and France chose to pursue a policy of appeasement when Hitler reintroduced compulsory conscription, rearmèd Germany’s forces, and began
Chairman Mao Zedong presided over times of celebration, upheaval, and chaos during his leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, which lasted from 1949-76. The “Great Helmsman” won the passionate devotion of the Chinese people by casting out various foreign aggressors, overthrowing the corrupt Guomindang government, and demolishing the Confucian-based feudal system, under which the peasantry had suffered for millennia. When he declared the establishment of the People’s Republic of China at Tiananmen Square and told the world that the Chinese “have stood up” (Source A), Mao the visionary proclaimed his beliefs about the country’s future. Though he seemed at the time to be a strong and capable leader who had proved his mettle by completing the arduous Long March, Mao’s subsequent actions showed that his show of devotion to Marxist-Leninist ideology were contrary to his nation’s interest. It has been left to true pragmatic visionaries such as Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Wu Bangguo to adapt CCP ideology to “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” which has led to the...
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...astonishingly rapid economic recovery...and advancement...of the...P.R.C. Today, the PRC is a superpower, second only to the United States of America, and it is predicted by world economists to overtake the U.S. within the next decade. Such progress was impossible under the Chairman’s strict policies of self-sufficiency and isolationism.

Mao was an ideologue...whose dogmatic approach to guiding and managing the P.R.C.’s affairs...only within the strict confines of...Marxist...Leninist ideology...was often unrealistic and sometimes disastrous. The two worst disasters to befall the Chinese people in modern times, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, were both sprung from Mao’s total faith in Communist ideology...being more important than practical considerations. Liu Shaoqi...a high-ranking CCP official...and for a time...Mao’s second-in-command...at first praised him...leader for making a “great accomplishment”...[Source C], but was later ousted from office...when he spoke to the CCP Central Committee about the disastrous effects of the Great Leap Forward, which he observed during a tour of the countryside in 1961...[Source K], quoting Mao’s belief in the “scientific” principle of all societies eventually becoming Communist via a process of revolution against Capitalism...
shows how out-of-touch with economic realities the Chairman was. Mao’s utter faith in Communism’s ability to cure all China’s ills ruled his decisions about policy. Source 10 shows how the modern, “pragmatic” leadership of the CCP have distanced themselves from this excessive ideology-based decisions and promote instead the “...ideological principles of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts.”

Mao’s ousting and “re-education” (along purely Communist lines) of intellectuals during the 100 Flowers Campaign and the Cultural Revolution put China in an untenable position – without scientific, social, or business innovation and progress, the country’s economy would never prosper. And the Chairman’s bitter rivalry with Stalin led him to formulate the First Five Year Plan. (Source 5) which was a success, and the second Five Year Plan, the Great Leap Forward, which led to famine and economic disaster. Though the figures shown in Source 5 are very positive, historians agree that they are not strictly accurate, as State urging led to wild exaggerations of actual output.
led to him boasting to the USSR government (Source F) about how “socialist
consciousness” had led to the Chinese
proletariat achieving “...unity within...
the ranks of the people strengthened,...and
labour discipline and productivity increased.

After Mao’s death in 1976, the CCP Central
Committee was quick to stamp out any
reevaluation of the Chairman’s ideals. The
Gang of Four were arrested, tried, and
imprisoned, and the government began
a policy of de-Maoification. Sources 10 and 11 outline how the PRC’s post-Mao
leadership sought to distance themselves
from his disastrous policies while pointing
out the new direction they planned to take.
Deng Xiaoping, demonised by Mao as a
“Capitalist-Reader,” and who once infuriated
the dogmatic leader by saying “it doesn’t
matter if the cat is black or white, as long
as it catches the mouse...” quickly gained
the Central Committee’s blessing to carry
out his vision for China’s badly-needed
economic reform.

Deng, stating that “pauperism is not
socialism, still less Communism,”
announced Four Modernisations which
were utterly contrary to Mao’s dogma.
(Source 12), yet were...the only realistic... course to take. Source 14 outlines the... difficulties. Deng and his cohort inherited,... and...his...practical methodology for... overcoming them. P. Short, a historian... and Mao biographer, wrote that... “Mao’s greatest legacy was to clear the... path for other, less visionary men, to... build...the...glorious...future...for China,... which he himself could not achieve.”

So, it is...with great excitement and... understandable pride that the new,... made-over CCP,...with...their...Western... business suits...and...capitalist ideals,...find...themselves...leading...the...world’s,...penultimate superpower. Seeing that... the PRC is destined...shortly to become...the...world’s...leading economy,...the... CCP...leadership...have...advanced...the... ideals of “Socialism with Chinese... characteristics” (Sources 10 and 13).... Their campaign of de-Maoisation and modernisation over...idealism...has...seen Mao’s relevance...dwindle...to...the... level of...mere...provincial...folk...hero. (Source N.)