Statistics

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of candidates</th>
<th>Level of achievement</th>
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General comments

The 2010 Modern History examination was based on the revised 2008 senior external syllabus. The overall performance of candidates reflected effective preparation for the examination and a sound understanding of the assessment criteria and standards. The highest performing candidates demonstrated a sophisticated understanding and an effective application of the assessment criteria:

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

Additionally, candidates who achieved at a high and very high level demonstrated an appropriate use of historical terminology and language, and understood the textual features of historical writing and the language and conventions of the discipline of history.

The 2009 Modern History Assessment report commented on Paper One Part A which assesses candidates’ understanding of and experiences in procedures used in historical research. It followed 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). While the performance of candidates has improved, 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. The sample response published in the 2009 Assessment report provides a sound model. This part of the examination is the only opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the quality of their learning in Criterion 1: Planning and using a historical research process.
**Paper One**

**Part A: Reflections on the research inquiry process**

Candidates were required to refer to a topic of their choice from Theme 4: Studies of power. The syllabus inquiry topics include 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 candidates in Part A was much improved from previous years. Evidence from the examination demonstrates that candidates prepared well in terms of understanding the topic, analysing and evaluating a range of sources and reflecting on the process of historical inquiry that is central to studying history.

The quality of some candidates’ responses could have been improved, however, with the use of a greater range of sources in their inquiry and by evaluating the nature of these sources in a more considered way. There is an extensive range of primary and secondary sources readily available in several modes for the inquiry topics listed above.

Some candidates’ responses could have also been improved with clearer and more structured responses to Questions 6 and 7. These questions required each candidate to revisit the steps in their inquiry and to understand and apply the process of critical reflection. Actual examples of undertaking critical reflection are required.

**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**

Eleven candidates responded to this question. There was a range of responses but all candidates demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of this popular topic at levels above sound. In general, the essay responses were more evaluative than descriptive and valid arguments were developed. Improvements to the quality of responses could have been made with more reference to actual sources or historical viewpoints in a broader sense.

**Question 2 — The end of apartheid**

Eight candidates responded to this question. Many candidates found this question challenging and their responses were hampered by attempts to write a broad sweep of the topic rather than focus on developing a specific argument that responded to the question. The context of the topic needed only one background paragraph. Again, reference to sources, perspectives and viewpoints would have strengthened the arguments presented and the overall quality of the responses.

**Question 3 — Efforts to achieve land rights for Indigenous Australians**

One candidate responded to this question and presented a descriptive essay with limited reference to events, government policy or social contexts.

**Question 4 — The changing role of the United Nations**

There were no responses to this question.
Paper Two

Extended written response to historical evidence

Paper Two was designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their understanding and experience of 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 the study of the People’s Republic of China: Marxism and capitalism (1949 to the 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. Additionally, good quality responses recognised the role of Mao Zedong in shaping and influencing the ideas of modern China.

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.

A key area for prospective candidates to consider is the critical evaluation of sources and the integration of sources into historical arguments. These skills are essential in demonstrating the standards of Criterion 2 at high levels.

Statement 1

Two candidates responded to this statement. These candidates wrote sound responses that argued Mao’s communism was essentially nationalistic in character and that nationalism has prevailed to the present day. Sources were used to support the arguments but needed to be evaluated in a more sophisticated manner to improve the overall quality of the responses.

Statement 2

Three candidates responded to this statement. All argued that Chinese communism drew on the traditionalism of the imperial past and were able to use the sources to support this position. This argument was best made when linked to the key events of modern China and to the nature of contemporary Chinese society.

Statement 3

This was the most popular statement with 15 candidates responding to it, although the quality of responses varied. The best responses discussed the movement from communism to state
capitalism and framed arguments that explored these ideas. Some candidates focused superficially on Mao and expressed generalised views about the links between his ideas and contemporary China. The best quality responses used the sources as evidence and evaluated the nature, purpose and audience of the sources.

Sample responses

The response on the following pages has been published to assist teachers and prospective candidates, specifically for Paper Two. It was developed by the Modern History examining team as an example of an indicative A Standard response.
Paper Two — Extended written response to historical evidence

Response to Statement C

Hypothesis. Mod China in the past Mao era has made a clean and decisive break with its communist past under Mao. An ideological shift has lead to policy change which maintains central control but at the same time embraces market reform. The sources available clearly demonstrate this shift, thus validating the policies and ideology Mao to be the major of Chinese history. Moreover while Mao born from idea will always be acknowledged as the father of modern China, the modern is so complete that Mao’s ideals and legacy, according to the sources, is not reversed.

#1. 31 Brand & Context

Mao was clearly central/dominant figure but perception and ideological content was manipulated in order to.

7/8 Conform to modern

→ transition to modern
Planning space

2. China's leadership stated categorically a change in economic focus (no Mao).

3. What is celebrated & recognised

   Realise the relegation of Mao.
Modern China since 1976 has made a clear and decisive break with its past under the leadership of Mao Zedong. An ideological transformation begun by Deng has led to policy change, which has kept strong central control but also embraced ongoing market-style reforms. The sources available clearly demonstrate this shift, a shift which delegates the policies and ideology of Mao to the margins of current Chinese thought. Moreover, while Mao will always be acknowledged as the father of modern China, the modern era of change is so complete that his place as the father of Modern China appears to be challenged. Indeed, on the evidence available, Mao is largely absent from Chinese statements and gently mocked by the present. See the irony of China’s embrace of the market.

There is no doubt that Mao was the central and dominant figure of the Communist Party when the Great Leap Forward and ideological confusion terminated his legacy even during his rule. Mao himself has constructed a crisis of his role as father of the revolution, most eloquently and often, in proclaiming the Republic. Mao gave depth to a sense of national
Mao is stated that "Our nation will never again be an insulted nation" (Sc 5) and boldly
stated that the revolution had gained "sympathy and acclamation... throughout the entire world." (Sc 8). Mao has portrayed him the nation in
as glorious and by opportunism represent his
own role so very significant. He never
stopped his praise of the peasant revolution,
judging his predecessor Sun Yet Sen for failing
to fulfill the promise of the revolution (Sc 9).

Upon Mao’s death, even Western sources acknowledged his significance, with The Times stating that
"Marxism had to be re-made on a Chinese image... and it was Mao Tse who did it." (Sc 6) Notwithstanding
this his reputation and continued policy choices
were already under constant challenge. The
"Hundred Flowers Campaign" and its dramatic effect on China’s modernisation efforts and would eventually culminate in the
disastrous Cultural Revolution" (Sc 7). Mao’s secondary
policy clearly shows that policy was always
likely to change - as it did - and that Mao’s
leadership was not without opposition.

The policy changes after Mao's death were profound and represented a clear shift
in direction from the tumultuous days of the
immediate past. Economic reform was the
consistent cornerstone of policy change
and demonstrates that there was a policy of "de-Maoisation."
“as the new moderate leadership pushed further along the paths of modernisation” (Sc E) while often concentrating on the preservation of position and power, there were clear strides to move forward with foreign technology and techniques imported were actively sought” (Sc E).

Even with the challenges of dissent and demonstration in 1989 the US Secretary of State was briefed with the news of Deng’s commitment to economic reform (Sc E). This shows the continuity of policy change from Mao and the focus on economic growth. It is further corroborated by the poster marking the 50th anniversary of the revolution which clearly focuses on progress (Sc I). The change which was substantial and perhaps best summarised by the needles of the Chinese wise men. Such noted an old Chinese proverb “change the substance, but don’t change the name.” (Sc 15.) The source was published in 2008 and significantly notes that Mao had been replaced and that China is “undergoing major alterations to its core ideology and identity” (Sc 15). Significantly, this affirms the policy change noted by Kao, don’t question the place of Mao in modern China. By changing so much, Mao has not left been silenced, but revived. The revolution did occur, but Mao’s place is diminished.
The dual of idea of profound change and the silencing of Mao is no more clearly portrayed than in the visual representations of modern China. The 50th anniversary poster does not contain the stirring images of sedition or struggle, but the Shanghai Tower, space rockets and the modern leadership (Sec I). The embrace of the market is not only publicised by the Chinese themselves, but also by noted with due irony by the West. The cartoon from the New York Times book review (Sec I) is a perfect take on market reform and shows how Mao is mistaken for an A.D. though clearly exaggerated, reveals the essential trend of policy change and the relegation of Mao. The two ashtray cartoons correlate this modern view of big business established on the Great Wall (Sec 13) and cleaning expropriating the dynamic flame (Sec 14). Progress is clearly paramount and thus confirming the substantial policy shift. The one continuing from Mao’s time can be seen in Wu Bangguo’s emphatic statements, reported in straight times in (Sec 16) which ”struck an uncompromising stance against political liberalisation. Central control and state power is and has been a strong theme in Chinese history and Mao, the revolutionary, despite all his power must also take second place to principle of the party. Mao is no longer an influence on
policy and is no longer renewed.