### Category 3: Multimodal presentation (Nero)

#### Criterion 1: Note taking

This extract from a student’s record of research shows a portion of student note taking and annotations. Across the whole record of research at A standard, a student:

- **demonstrates initiative by locating and organising primary and secondary sources that offer a range of perspectives**
- **creates and maintains detailed, systematic, coherent records of research that demonstrate the interrelationships of the aspects of inquiry.**

#### Aspect 2: Sources


  Tacitus was an early historian renowned for his precise documentation of the past. Born in the year of Nero’s death, time would not have been an obstacle for the historian; his colleagues undoubtedly remembered the Roman emperor and presented him with an accurate depiction of his life and reign. Tacitus was unique in his time in the sense that he harboured a goal to detach himself emotionally from his subjects when writing, an objective that even if unsuccessful would have filtered a great majority of prejudices and opinions from his works. Therefore, Tacitus is considered to be a highly reputable source.

- The histories of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero while they were in power, were falsified through terror, and after their death were written under influence of a recent hatred. Hence my purpose is to relate a few facts about Augustus — more particularly his last acts, then the reign of Tiberius, and all which follows, without either bitterness or partiality, from any motives to which I am far removed.

- He was adopted as a son, as a colleague in empire and a partner in the tribunitian power, and paraded through all the arrhes, no longer through his mother’s secret minstrels, but at her open suggestion.

- Nero from early boyhood turned his lively genius in other direction: he carved, painted, sang, or practiced the management of horses, occasionally composing verses which showed that he had the rudiments of learning.

- Meanwhile the mother’s influence was gradually weakened, as Nero fell in love with the freedwoman, Acta by name... he threw off all respect for his mother, and put himself under the guidance of Seneca.

- - At a game of lot drawing for king, the lot fell to Nero, upon which he gave all his other companions different orders, and such as would not put them to the blush, but when he told Britannicus to step forward and begin a song, hoping for a laugh at the expense of a boy who knew nothing of sober, much less of riotous society, the lad with perfect coolness commenced some verses which hinted at his expulsion from his father’s
**Comments**

Demonstrates initiative by locating and organising primary and secondary sources that offer a range of perspectives. Sources reflecting a range of perspectives from ancient and modern times were located.

Although more evident across the whole record of research, this section of note taking shows examples of the interrelationships of the aspects of inquiry (see highlighted text boxes). For example, this section of note taking shows when a source has been judged to be reliable and useful it has consequently contributed to the answer to Question 5: “Were there positive outcomes from his time in power?” (Effects, interests and arguments). Reflection on this question informs the developing hypothesis.

**Student’s source evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Marys, P. 2006, The Sons of Caesar: Imperial Rome’s First Dynasty, Thomas &amp; Hudson, New York</td>
<td>Largely known as a non-fiction author, his work possesses a high degree of credibility. He received a doctorate in Roman History from St John’s College in Oxford. Became an ancient history teacher at Cambridge University. He is the author of numerous books pertaining to Rome, and the work that his work has been published in book form adds to his authority as a reliable source when studying the life and reign of the Roman Emperor Nero.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Suetonius Tranquillus, 119 AD, Lives of the Caesars: Nero, Oxford University Press, New York</td>
<td>Suetonius is often dismissed among the great historians of the ancient world. This is due to the Roman historian’s inclination to instil within his writings events too insignificant, private or scandalous for other historians to consider including. However, his literary style is considered to be among the most concise of his time, and was supported by his extensive access to official documents lent to him by the Roman Senate. Although Suetonius was fond of rumors and tended to exaggerate aspects of certain events to satirise his audience’s hunger for drama, correlation with other ancient figures can help pinpoint those. Suetonius is also noted for his relative objectivity, treating none of the Emperors as heroes or villains. Therefore, Suetonius is an exceptionally plausible primary source, despite his notorious reputation.</td>
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**Student notes and direct quotes**

- Name of Nero held an honourable place in Roman history for hundreds of years before its last bearer made it synonymous with tyranny.
- At the age of thirteen, at least a year younger than usual, Nero took togas vinilia and received the title Prince of Youth.
- Yet Nero reacted with good sense when the ubiquitous Britons flared into open revolt under Boudicca in AD60. The rebellion was of extraordinary intensity, and Rome came close to losing a province. The common people supported the Caesars because they saw in them a champion of their own cause against the excesses of autocracy.
- The danger of Nero’s palace was that the Roman people saw this expense lavished on something which was not just for Nero’s sole benefit, but was actually inimical to the interest of the Romans as it defamed them in the middle of their own city.
- The Greeks hailed him as absolute monarch and Nero Zeus, god of freedom.
- So missed was Nero in the Greek speaking part of the empire that for years after his death there were a number of short-lived rebellions by pretendors calling themselves by his name.

**Student reflections**

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<th>Aspect 3: Causes</th>
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<td>Comment: Suetonius provides evidence that Nero was a man of many interests and passions. He was fascinated by the arts, particularly music and poetry. His love of music led him to commission the construction of the Domus Aurea, an extravagant palace that he built to house his personal collection of musical instruments.</td>
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**Aspect 2: Sources**

- To make his good intentions still more evidence, he declared that he would rule according to the principles of Augustus, and he let slip no opportunity for acts of generosity and mercy, or even for displaying his humility. The more oppressive sources of revenue he either abolished or moderated.
- He distributed four hundred sesterces to each man of the people, and granted to the most distinguished of the senators who were without means an annual salary, to some as much as five hundred thousand sesterces, and to the praetorian cohorts he gave a monthly allowance.
- When he was asked according to custom to sign the warrant for the execution of a man who had been condemned to death, he said, “How I wish I had never learned to write!” when the senate returned thanks to him, he replied, “When I shall have deserved.”
- For a long time he would not admit the sons of freedom to the senate, and he refused office to those who had been admitted by his predecessors. He commonly appointed consuls for periods of six months.
- He devised a new form for the buildings of the city and in front of the houses and apartments he erected porches. From the flat roofs of which fires could be fought, and those he put up at his own cost. He has also planned to extend the walls as far as Ostia and bring the sea from there to Rome by canal.
- He also drove a chariot in many places, at Olympia even a ten-horse team, although in one of his own poems he criticised Minidias for that thing.
- When someone in a general conversation said, “When I’m dead, be earth consumed by fire, he replied “Nay, rather live,” and his action was wholly in accord.
- He was at Naples when he learned of the uprising of the Gallic provinces, on the anniversary of his mother’s murder, and received the