Category 3: Multimodal presentation (Nero)

Criterion 1: Reflections

While evidence of reflection is found in a number of places in a student’s record of research, these extracts show some selections of key moments of reflection. They demonstrate the match to Standard A for an aspect of Criterion 1: Planning and using a historical research process.

A student response at Standard A demonstrates critical reflection during research to make valid choices about direction or emphasis.

Developing hypothesis

1. Nero’s reign demonstrates the unravelling of an empire through inadequate ruling abilities and the corruption of power.

2. The controversial sovereignty of Emperor Nero in historical documentation converges primarily on the inexplicable events surrounding his reign, shrouding the monarch himself in ambiguity. When I expanded my research to modern secondary accounts (which tended to be more emotionally detached) as well as finding some alternative views of Nero, I began to realise that Alexander the Great was not unique in the sense that it’s impossible to truly pinpoint the real personality of an ancient character.

3. Given the inescapable discrepancies in the opinions of every historian, it is impossible to create an accurate representation of the true Nero. By speculating on the information deduced from various individuals, however, a vague spectre of the former Roman Emperor can be formulated. The contentious events surrounding his reign are just related to one of my focus questions. Excluding this from my hypothesis created the necessity of focusing it more on answering my key question — attempting to discover the real personality of Nero.

4. Despite the difficulty of knowing completely the true character of any personality in history, the mainstream consensus emerging from historians both ancient and modern is that Emperor Nero’s position was occupied by a man inadequate for the job, a fact largely due to his upbringing. The language of the third hypothesis was too contradictory, especially with the word “impossible” followed by the suggestion of a “vague spectre” able to be created. Therefore, it was necessary to refer instead to the difficulty of completely discovering an ancient personality; instead a general gist of the individual’s character can be gleaned from the diverse accounts of historians.