This subject guide relates to courses developed from the Ancient History Senior Syllabus 2004.

Why study Ancient History?

In History, as in our everyday life, people ask meaningful questions, collect evidence, sift through it, analyse and evaluate it, to produce satisfactory answers to problems of living. These answers provide a context for our own lives and establish a range of values that shape our attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

Through the study of Ancient History, we can understand how the modern world has been influenced by the peoples and achievements of the distant past. Through a study of early peoples and cultures, we can understand the processes of change and continuity that have shaped today’s world, their causes, and the roles people have played in those processes. We develop these understandings through processes of critical inquiry, debate and reflection, and through empathetic engagement with the standpoint of others.

Ancient History is a fascinating area of study, rich in wonderful stories of human endeavour, achievement and disaster. The history of humankind from the very earliest times is part of everyone’s heritage and the study of the subject Ancient History ensures that this heritage is not lost.

What do students learn?

The Ancient History syllabus offers students an extensive range of themes and topics. There are twenty-two themes in all, each offering a wide choice of topics. Some themes deal with specific geographical regions and civilisations, such as society and government in Greece and Rome, pharaonic Egypt, and ancient China and India. Others allow students to study ancient societies using a central concept, such as power, conflict, religion, the arts, and everyday life.

Opportunity is provided to study the major ancient civilisations of the Middle East, Greece and Rome, as well as the emerging areas of interest in Asia and Central and South America. The syllabus also makes available the study of the medieval period.

The course that students study will:

- include a study of archaeology, either as a separate theme, or integrated into a number of inquiry topics as appropriate
- select themes and inquiry topics to reflect the geographical diversity of ancient societies
- include a number of briefer studies (background, comparative, linking) to ensure that students can place the inquiry topics within a broader understanding of the history of the period or theme being studied
- include some study of Australia, either as a separate inquiry topic, or integrated into an inquiry topic as a comparative or related study.
How do students learn?

Historical study is based on inquiry. While the teaching of history may involve expository and text-based teaching, the main approach to learning is student inquiry. Students are actively involved in locating, interpreting, analysing and evaluating historical sources, both primary and secondary. In Ancient History, sources can include texts, artefacts such as buildings, art, religious objects, weapons, and everyday items such as jewellery, pottery and clothing. Using the inquiry approach, students identify historical issues for investigation, develop research questions to investigate issues, locate, analyse and evaluate sources, and reach conclusions or make judgments about the issue they have identified.

All of the themes in the Ancient History syllabus use an inquiry process that identifies five aspects:

- definitions
- sources
- backgrounds, changes and continuities: motives and causes
- effects, interests and arguments
- reflections and responses.

How is student work assessed?

Assessment in senior Ancient History is criterion-based and is designed to help students to demonstrate achievement in the objectives of the syllabus. The criteria used are Planning and using a historical research process, Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry, and Communicating historical knowledge.

Students will be assessed in each of four categories of assessment, including, test essays in response to historical sources, research assignments in response to inquiry questions, multimodal presentations that may include non-written and visual presentations such as video, Powerpoint or interactive CD-ROM materials, short response tests, and response to stimulus tests.

How can parents help?

Parents can assist their children as they study Ancient History by taking an active interest in the topics that the students are studying. Some of the subject matter for Ancient History provides insight and understanding of the contemporary world and its issues and concerns. Parents can help their students by taking an interest in and discussing with their students the connections between current issues and their historical background.

There is a wealth of reference material available outside the school that is relevant to the study of Ancient History, including internet and television materials, dedicated television channels, and other print and electronic material. Many expensive references, including CD-ROM and internet access, are available through local libraries.

Parents can also assist their students to develop a systematic approach to managing class notes and other information and resources, to manage time effectively and to meet deadlines for assessment tasks. Parents are welcome to visit the school to establish contact with their child’s Ancient History teacher. The Ancient History syllabus and the school work program are available to all parents at the school, to help them to understand the work that their students will be undertaking in Ancient History, and to familiarise them with assessment requirements and deadlines.
More information

If you would like more information, please email senior.syllabuses@qcaa.qld.edu.au. You can also visit the QCAA website www.qcaa.qld.edu.au and search for ‘Ancient History’.