Ancient and Modern History 2004
Advice for teachers

Category 3: Multimodal presentations
December 2011
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Compiled by the Queensland Studies Authority
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About this advice

This advice is intended to help teachers implement the syllabus in their school setting. It provides information about:

- features of Category 3 tasks
- considerations in the design and implementation of Category 3 tasks
- sources for further advice.
Category 3: Multimodal presentations

Features

Category 3 instruments engage students in an independent historical inquiry that explores an aspect of the inquiry topic and theme under study. Students present the results of their inquiry in a multimodal presentation. That is, they present an historical argument in response to a research question. Details of the characteristics and conditions for Category 3 tasks are found on page 55 of the Ancient History Syllabus 2004 and on page 51 of the Modern History Syllabus 2004.

A wide range of formats is possible for the multimodal presentation and schools are encouraged to explore the full potential of this category of assessment. The syllabus provides examples of some options including: a non-written seminar or formal presentation, a dramatic presentation, a presentation involving one of the visual arts, a video presentation or website that is interpretive and interactive (Ancient History Syllabus, p. 55, and Modern History Syllabus, p. 51).

Category 3 assessment instruments provide opportunities for demonstration of Criterion 1: Planning and using an historical research process, Criterion 2: Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry and Criterion 3: Communicating historical knowledge. Schools should apply the full range of standards descriptors for a Category 3 instrument. The highlighted standards on the Ancient History www.qsa.qld.edu.au/2047.html and Modern History www.qsa.qld.edu.au/2055.html subject pages emphasise the qualities that discriminate between the standards.

Considerations in task design and implementation

Topic

The relevant theme purpose statement in the syllabus (Ancient History Syllabus, pp. 27–48, and Modern History Syllabus, pp. 28–43) is a useful starting point when developing and focusing Category 2 assessment tasks.

Year 11 students may be provided with research topics or a research question from which they can develop appropriate sub-questions. Negotiation of the presentation concept is an option for Year 11 students.

By Year 12 students negotiate their presentation concept with their teacher (Ancient History Syllabus, p. 56, and Modern History Syllabus, p. 51). Teachers may provide suggestions for areas of investigation that are within the scope of the inquiry topic and theme under study.

A rationale provided by the student will acknowledge the origins of their research question. For example, a few sentences explaining how the student came up with the question and concept, why it is of interest and how it links to the inquiry topic and theme would be sufficient.

Research process

A process of historical inquiry will be demonstrated through research via the five Aspects of Inquiry that are referred to in the syllabus in Section 6: Learning Experiences, Section 7: Themes and Inquiry Topics and Section 8: Assessment (Ancient History Syllabus, p.19, and Modern History Syllabus, p. 20):

- Definitions
- Sources
- Backgrounds, changes and continuities: motives and causes
Effects, interests and arguments

Reflections and responses.

Directing students to the Aspects of Inquiry when developing Category 3 assessment instruments will enhance opportunities for students to demonstrate elements of Criterion 1: Planning and using an historical research process. For example, the Aspects of Inquiry could be used to structure students’ records of research.

The scaffolding provided and format selected to maintain records of research is a school decision. Research booklets, notebooks with headings, templates filled in electronically, or student-developed records based on guidelines on the task sheet are some of the ways students have recorded their progress through an inquiry.

Reflection occurs at all stages of research; however, it is the key moments of critical reflection that should be evidenced in student folios. Examples of these reflections could include when students:

- encounter information that alters the direction of their research, including revision of research questions and sub-questions
- encounter and address difficulties, e.g. contradictory evidence
- synthesise the information they have located for each sub-question, e.g. answer their sub-questions
- make changes to, or confirm, their hypothesis.

Conferencing and monitoring of progress throughout the research period is an important element of the inquiry and also assists in authenticating student work. The syllabus states that “consultation and feedback on the research process should be provided judiciously, gradually diminishing with student experience and confidence” (Ancient History Syllabus, p. 55, and Modern History Syllabus, p. 50).

Evidence needs to be retained to substantiate judgments made about Criterion 1: Planning and using an historical research process — such as research questions, rationale, notes, reflections and planning. Judgments about standards for Criterion 1 must be based on the qualities of the evidence submitted, not the quantity.

Final response

For all formats of multimodal presentation evidence for Criteria 2: Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry and Criterion 3: Communicating historical knowledge will be found in the final response where students will demonstrate that they have formed and communicated historical knowledge. While students will record notes evaluating sources in their record of research, this thinking should transfer through to the final presentation where the discussion, evaluation and use of sources are integral to developing and supporting an historical argument.

Where a choice of presentation formats is offered, students will need specific guidelines for the mode and medium selected. The syllabus gives examples of what should be included in a presentation for particular genres, some of which are discussed below (Ancient History Syllabus, p. 56, and Modern History Syllabus, p. 51):

- A non-written assignment: seminar, debate or formal speech
  In these types of presentation the student develops an historical argument that includes discussion and evaluation of historical sources that is integrated throughout the seminar or speech.
- A dramatic presentation followed by an out-of-role account and rationale for the script with accompanying key items of evidence
In the out-of-role account the student should explain the historical argument that underpins the dramatic presentation and discuss the key items of evidence that led to the development of that argument. Both the dramatic presentation and the out-of-role account form the whole presentation, and evidence for Criteria 2 and 3 is drawn from both parts of the presentation.

- **A presentation involving any of the visual or performing arts, e.g. sculpture, dance, artwork or music, with rationale and key items of evidence**
  
  For example, if an artwork is the chosen format, the student would present the artwork with a rationale that explains the historical argument represented in the piece and a discussion of the key items of evidence that led to the development of that argument. This “rationale with key items of evidence” could be presented in a number of ways. For example, it could be a podcast designed to be listened to as you view the artwork, or a short prepared speech or an informal talk about the artwork. In all cases the visual or performing arts piece and the rationale with key items of evidence form the whole presentation. Evidence for Criteria 2 and 3 is drawn from both parts of the presentation.

- **A computer simulation that is interpretive and interactive**
  
  In this type of format the student may produce, for example, a website. The syllabus stipulates that the presentation is interpretive, i.e. not narrative, but an interpretation of an historical event based on the results of the student’s inquiry. Links to varied sources of evidence that support the student’s argument would fulfil the requirement that the website is interactive.

Where a “rationale with accompanying key items of evidence” is required with a presentation involving any of the visual and performing arts, it is important to remember that this is part of the whole presentation, and not another separate assignment.

Teachers are not required to record multimodal presentations in Ancient and Modern History, but evidence must be retained to substantiate judgments. For Criteria 2 and 3, this might include a printout of a PowerPoint presentation with an accompanying script, or evidence of a response involving the visual and performing arts (e.g. a photograph of an artwork, a drama script or song lyrics) with a script (or point-form notes) of the rationale that was presented. Referencing should be appropriate to the format chosen, including a bibliography or reference list.

**Further advice**

For further advice see the documents listed below, available at the Ancient History [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/2047.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/2047.html) and Modern History [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/2055.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/2055.html) subject pages at the QSA website, or contact the Senior Education Officer at [seo@qsa.qld.edu.au](mailto:seo@qsa.qld.edu.au).

- **Category 2 and 3: Assessment design guide**
- **Sample assessment task 1** (Modern History)
- **Keeping a reflective log**
- **Criterion 3: Communicating historical knowledge (Standard A only) — Refer to the evaluation process without disrupting the argument**
- **Quality assuring senior assessment instruments: a tool for schools**
- **Designing effective assessment.**