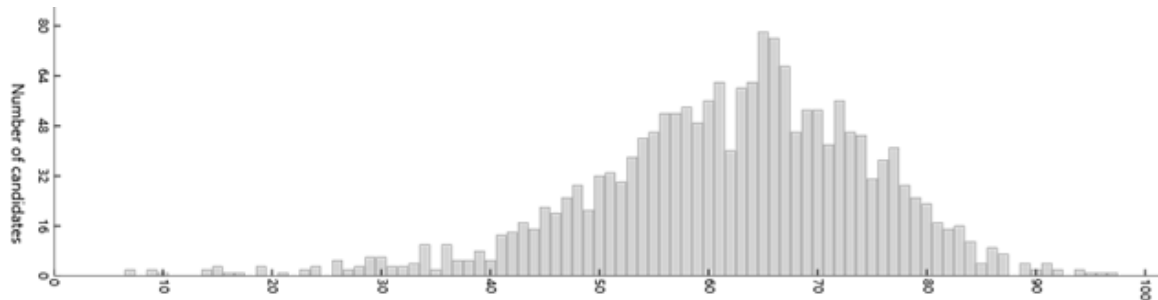




Summary report of the 2019 ATAR course examination: Modern History

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2019	1828	125
2018	2004	28
2017	2178	23

Examination score distribution–Written



Summary

The standard demonstrated across scripts showed a sound grasp of the two syllabus strands of *Historical Knowledge and Understanding* covered in Units 3 and 4. Most candidates attempted all questions and completed most of the paper. Compared to the 2018 examination, the slightly lower mean in Section Three, and Section Four, highlights time management skills as an area of concern. A number of candidates did not attempt the source analysis for either Unit 3 or Unit 4. ‘Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–1945’ and ‘The changing European world since 1945’ remain by far the most popular electives studied in Units 3 and 4 respectively.

Attempted by 1828 candidates Mean 61.72% Max 96.50% Min 6.50%

Section means were:

Section One: Source analysis–Unit 3	Mean 67.30%		
Attempted by 1827 candidates	Mean 16.83(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00
Section Two: Essay–Unit 3	Mean 62.22%		
Attempted by 1812 candidates	Mean 15.55(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00
Section Three: Source analysis–Unit 4	Mean 60.00%		
Attempted by 1824 candidates	Mean 15.00(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00
Section Four: Essay–Unit 4	Mean 58.86%		
Attempted by 1804 candidates	Mean 14.72(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00

General comments

Candidates performed well in 2019 with an increase in the overall mean compared to 2018. Improvement was most noticeable in Section One. The sources and essay questions were accessible to candidates. Straightforward essay questions meant less able candidates were able to engage with the question, demonstrate some level of understanding of the narrative, and construct some element of argument.

Advice for candidates

- Read the question carefully to ensure you answer all components.
- Ensure time management is a focus. If you run out of time in the last section, it will affect your overall mark adversely.
- When writing in additional pages, state on which pages your answers are continued and label these additions with the question number.
- Check that you are using the appropriate questions for the relevant source sets. Question 1 is linked to sets 1–3, Question 11 is linked to sets 4–6.

Advice for teachers

- Give your students essay writing practice under timed conditions with a focus on formulating sustained arguments throughout an extended piece of writing.
- Administering three-hour-long examinations in Year 11 can provide your students with more practice in managing their time.

Comments on specific sections and questions

The source analysis sections showed improvement in addressing *perspective* compared to previous years, something which was identified last year. Candidates more consistently applied a workable structure to their source analysis responses that was more likely to ensure that both parts of the question were addressed. The concepts of *purpose* and *contestability* were performed poorly compared to last year, and the final question in each source analysis continues to be problematic for many candidates. There were fewer brief essay responses this year with candidates showing an understanding of the narrative.

Section One: Source analysis–Unit 3 (25 Marks)

Compared to previous years, candidates dealt with *perspective* with more skill, especially in the Russia and China contexts, and had a clearer structure in their responses. Across all three electives, there seemed to be a greater number of candidates this year reverting to a simplistic exploration of usefulness for Question 1(b): that the source is useful because it shows 'x', but limited because it does not show 'y' or 'z'. Some candidates stated that a source is strong/weak because it is either a primary or secondary source, but don't go into more detail as to why this is the case. For Question 1(e), the multiple elements (not just leadership, but its significance, and then how well the sources give an insight into that significance) proved challenging for candidates to address using a logical structure while working to a time limit. Candidates summarised what each source showed, or commented on the accuracy of each source individually, rather than considering them as a set. Some candidates focused too much on what is omitted from the sources.

Section Two: Essay–Unit 3 (25 Marks)

While Russia was studied by the largest number of candidates, the China elective produced the highest mean for this section. The full range of marks were awarded across this section, with at least one candidate in each section achieving a perfect score.

Section Three: Source analysis–Unit 4 (25 Marks)

In Question 11(b), many candidates struggled to articulate or effectively compare and contrast the purpose of the sources. Instead, many discussed the message of the sources. Many did not consider purpose beyond simply getting the message across. For Question 11(e), many candidates recognised how to structure their answer; the need to identify the changing political circumstances, but more importantly to articulate their importance in some way. There was a tendency to discuss the accuracy of the sources, or merely describe what is in the sources, rather than explore the importance of what is in them. While many candidates were able to articulate the importance of the topics covered in the sources, there

was often limited reference to the changing political circumstances that the sources actually referenced.

Section Four: Essay–Unit 4 (25 Marks)

There were a number of outstanding responses, though generally shorter than responses for Section Two. A number of well-written responses did not address the specifics of the question, possibly writing prepared answers. This was particularly evident in Questions 13 and 16, 'Assess the impact' where numerous candidates quickly dismissed the importance of the Marshall Plan or World War II and focused more on other factors. In Questions 14, 17 and 20 many candidates focused on discussing other events that they considered more significant, making only passing reference to the event identified in the question.