Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

Summary report of the 2024 ATAR course examination report:
Modern History

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2024	1406	21
2023	1456	33
2022	1527	47
2021	1681	38

The number of candidates sitting and the number attempting each section of the examination can differ because of non-attempts across sections of the examination.

Examination score distribution
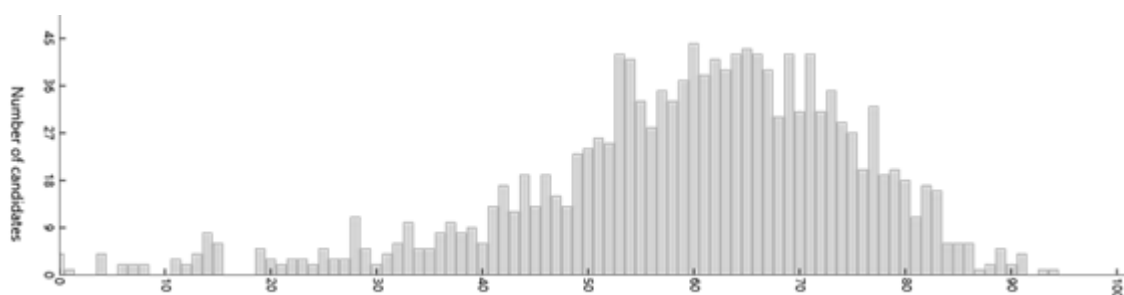
Summary
The examination structure was unchanged from 2023 and consisted of four sections, with candidates being required to attempt all questions in Sections One and Three and choose one of three questions in Sections Two and Four appropriate to the elective studied.

Attempted by 1406 candidates   Mean 58.99%   Max 94.00% Min 0.00%

Section means were:
Section One: Source analysis -– Unit 3   Mean 63.24%
Attempted by 1400 candidates   Mean 15.81(/25)   Max 25.00   Min 0.00
Section Two: Essay -– Unit 3   Mean 60.54%
Attempted by 1377 candidates   Mean 15.14(/25)   Max 25.00   Min 0.00
Section Three: Source analysis -– Unit 4   Mean 57.50%
Attempted by 1385 candidates   Mean 14.37(/25)   Max 25.00   Min 0.00
Section Four: Essay -– Unit 4   Mean 54.69%
Attempted by 1338 candidates   Mean 13.67(/25)   Max 25.00   Min 0.00

General comments
The means for the Unit 3 sections were similar; the Unit 4 sections also had similar means, although they were lower than the Unit 3 means. This is most likely due to candidates not completing or attempting all questions required in Sections Three and Four. Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–1945 was the most popular choice for Unit 3. The Changing European World Since 1945 was the most popular elective for Unit 4. There was consistency among the different electives, both in terms of source types and essay questions for Unit 3.

Advice for candidates
- Make sure that you read the accompanying text above each source, that includes its provenance (who produced it, when and where) as this will often help you with your analysis of the purpose, contestability and perspectives of the source.
- When articulating the purpose of a source, just saying it 'shows' 'depicts', 'demonstrates', or 'tries to get across a message' is not enough for high marks. Also, when comparing and contrasting, make sure you stay focused on the similarities and differences of the purpose and not on other aspects of the sources.
- When using bias as a basis for establishing contestability, you need to explain what the bias is and why that makes the interpretation presented contestable, rather than simply stating that the source is biased and therefore contestable.
- Try to allocate your time equally across all sections to maximise your results; in particular, manage your time in the source analysis sections.
- Read the essay questions carefully to deconstruct all the components of the questions and plan effectively. If the question is asking about the 'consequences' of something or an event being a 'catalyst,' for example, do not just write a narrative about a person or period referenced in the question.
- It is not necessary to cite references to facts included in essays and, when including quotes, make sure they are relevant to your evaluation and/or analysis.

Advice for teachers
- Remind students to spend time deconstructing the sources, especially when analysing usefulness or perspective.
- Encourage students to respond to the directions/key terms in essay questions, such as 'significance' or 'catalyst'. Furthermore, when a question requires multiple angles/content to be discussed, students should plan and include this in their answer.
- Make students aware of the ideas that are specific to their elective.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Source analysis -– Unit 3 (25 Marks)
Attempted by 1400 candidates   Mean 15.81(/25)   Max 25.00   Min 0.00
The electives were considered comparable in terms of the similarity of source types. The sources in all three electives were generally interpreted well.

Section Two: Essay -– Unit 3 (25 Marks)
Attempted by 1377 candidates   Mean 15.14(/25)   Max 25.00   Min 0.00
Many questions required candidates to cover more than one syllabus element in their answer, for example, Stalinist methods of controlling social and cultural life, and candidates often either only touched on one aspect or their treatment of the two was very imbalanced. Candidates did not always pick up on all the key terms, instead giving a general narrative on the person or period referenced in the question. For Australia, Most candidates answered about the Bruce-Page and Curtin government source. The answers for Russia and the Soviet Union were evenly distributed. The China elective saw most of the candidates answering the question about the Long March.

Section Three: Source analysis -– Unit 4 (25 Marks)
Attempted by 1385 candidates   Mean 14.37(/25)   Max 25.00   Min 0.00
More candidates attempted the Unit 3 Source analysis than the Unit 4 Source analysis. Candidates struggled to articulate the purpose of each source and to compare and contrast those purposes. They struggled to identify the key argument present in Source 4 across all three electives. The nature of the text sources, which often had nuanced arguments, seems to have presented a challenge to candidates under examination pressure. Instead of

identifying and evaluating the significance of economic forces, many candidates resorted to simple description.

Section Four: Essay -– Unit 4 (25 Marks)

Attempted by 1338 candidates   Mean 13.67(/25)   Max 25.00   Min 0.00

Fewer candidates attempted Section Four than Section Two. The means for the Australia and Middle East electives were similar, while the mean for the Europe elective was lower. There was an equal distribution of essay topics chosen in all three electives, suggesting that all topics were accessible to the candidates.