

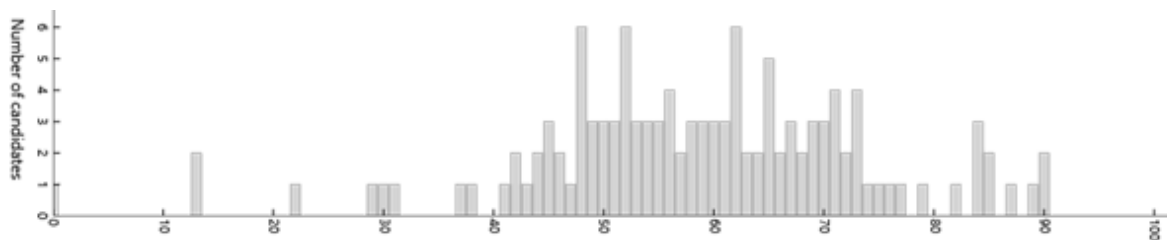


Summary report of the 2020 ATAR course examination: Ancient History

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2020	122	2
2019	138	4
2018	133	3
2017	152	7

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

Examination score distribution–Written



Summary

Attempted by 122 candidates	Mean 58.42%%	Max 90.21%	Min 0.00%
Egypt	Mean 60.24%		
Attempted by 25 candidates	Mean 60.24(/100)	Max 84.79	Min 45.73
Greece	Mean 61.42%		
Attempted by 69 candidates	Mean 61.42(/100)	Max 90.21	Min 12.83
Rome	Mean 49.39%		
Attempted by 27 candidates	Mean 49.39(/100)	Max 77.10	Min 0.00

The structure of the examination, which covered three distinct electives (Egypt, Athens and Rome), remained the same as the 2019 examination. The improved overall layout of the examination paper (whereby each context has its own separate section in the paper) has proven successful over two years now. Despite the challenges presented by 2020, there was reasonable continuity in means between previous years and 2020. However, a higher than usual number of errors were made in responses that were also more generalised than usual. Candidates' responses to some sections of the syllabus were confused and/or unclear and/or very basic in nature.

Section means were:

Section One: Short answer – Unit 3

Egypt	Mean 61.33%		
Attempted by 25 candidates	Mean 15.33(/25)	Max 19.79	Min 8.33
Greece	Mean 62.68%		
Attempted by 69 candidates	Mean 15.67(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 4.69
Rome	Mean 52.68%		
Attempted by 27 candidates	Mean 13.17(/25)	Max 21.35	Min 0.00

Section Two: Source analysis – Unit 4

Egypt	Mean 62.60%		
Attempted by 25 candidates	Mean 15.65(/25)	Max 22.50	Min 8.75
Greece	Mean 59.28%		
Attempted by 68 candidates	Mean 14.82(/25)	Max 23.75	Min 0.00
Rome	Mean 49.32%		
Attempted by 26 candidates	Mean 10.58(/25)	Max 18.12	Min 0.00

Section Three: Essay

Part A: Unit 3

Egypt	Mean 60.72%		
Attempted by 25 candidates	Mean 15.18(/25)	Max 22.50	Min 11.00
Greece	Mean 62.90%		
Attempted by 69 candidates	Mean 15.72(/25)	Max 24.00	Min 1.50
Rome	Mean 51.00%		
Attempted by 27 candidates	Mean 12.75(/25)	Max 19.50	Min 0.00

Part B: Unit 4

Egypt	Mean 56.32%		
Attempted by 24 candidates	Mean 14.08(/25)	Max 20.00	Min 0.00
Greece	Mean 60.84%		
Attempted by 69 candidates	Mean 15.21(/25)	Max 23.00	Min 0.50
Rome	Mean 51.57%		
Attempted by 26 candidates	Mean 12.89(/25)	Max 20.00	Min 0.00

General comments

Generally, candidates demonstrated fair knowledge of the syllabus. However, they were not always able to provide enough specific detail, particularly in the essay sections, despite a lot of the essay responses being extremely long. Candidates should know the key themes, data, terms, people and places that are the examinable content in the syllabus and be able to provide and apply this content accurately and concisely. The source analysis section was in its second year of the new format, and elicited reasonable responses. In the essay sections, candidates needed to ensure that they were responding directly to the question, using their knowledge and understanding of the modern and ancient sources and the historical context effectively, rather than relying on prepared answers, and/or extensive but vague summaries which formed many essay introductions and conclusions. Candidates should also refer to accurate evidence from ancient and modern sources in their essays.

Advice for candidates

- Avoid writing generalised narratives in essay sections. Generic responses do not attract marks.
- When offered a choice of individuals, groups or events to write about, in the essay section particularly, more depth of analysis (and therefore better marks) is likely to be achieved by choosing one or two areas of focus rather than several, if the question allows this.
- Choose your argument and evidence to support it carefully. Examples of good answers to previous examination questions are useful for developing this skill. Questions do not require candidates to recount everything they know about an event or individual.
- Use accurate references to ancient sources/genuine quotes from ancient sources to support your ideas. Accurate paraphrasing of written source evidence is acceptable. Making up quotes is not acceptable.
- Pay close attention to the action word/s in the question. Think carefully about what these words require in a response. 'Assess', for example, does not mean 'describe'.
- Ensure that responses include the specific requirements of each question attempted. The questions are complex. Identify and address all the key words of each question before

beginning the response. Use a plan and an introductory sentence or paragraph to frame a response. This is particularly important for extended responses.

Advice for teachers

- Explicitly teach essay structure – especially essay conventions, such as what constitutes an introduction, and how to use evidence to support an argument. Candidates' ability to write effective paragraphs will assist their responses in all sections of the examination.
- Explicitly teach appropriate responses to instruction word/s in questions. Your students should be familiar with the *Years 11 and 12 Glossary of key words used in the formulation of questions* available on the course page of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority website.
- Develop your students' knowledge of, and competence in addressing, the source analysis skills identified by the syllabus such as *reliability, perspective, and contestability*.
- Expose students to good answers from previous examinations in all contexts. Much can be learned from analysing how good responses have been constructed in contexts which are unfamiliar.
- Remind your students that 'individuals' in the syllabus can be addressed by any Unit 3 section of the examination.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Short answer – Unit 3

Most candidates dealt with this section well. The questions were accessible, clear in focus and linked to the syllabus. The 'individuals' identified by the syllabus were addressed effectively in responses across all contexts. However, there was less effective use of evidence and candidates did not use their wider knowledge of the period of study as effectively to support their answers as in previous years, particularly in the Egypt context.

Section Two: Source analysis – Unit 4

Sources were chosen for their clarity and accessibility. Candidate responses were a little inconsistent, evident in responses that included a variety of approaches and structures. This year, questions were written without the addition of supporting scaffolding, which resulted in more confident and appropriate overall engagement with questions. Weaker responses tended to recount what was in the source rather than analysing it using the skills identified in the syllabus.

Section Three: Essay

Part A: Unit 3

Overall, candidates demonstrated understanding of the Unit 3 syllabus. Coherent narratives were provided but these were often quite generalised in nature. Many essays included prepared responses that did not satisfy the question requirements. A greater than normally expected incidence of factual errors (in relation to historical narrative) occurred. Those who used accurate, authentic evidence from ancient sources received more marks. Removing the 'individuals' essay question seems to have resulted in a number of stronger responses.

Part B: Unit 4

Performance in the essay section of Unit 4 was largely consistent with the performance seen in Unit 3 essays.