



ANCIENT HISTORY

General course

Year 11 syllabus for teaching from 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Important information

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) has revised the course rationale and aims, and updated the General Capabilities to create clearer connections with the syllabus content.

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2026.

Users of this syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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Rationale

The Ancient History General course explores early civilisations through the analysis of material and written remains, providing insight into the development of human societies across the world. Students gain an understanding and appreciation for the development and lasting impacts of ancient societies, while building historical skills which can be applied to the analysis of reliable evidence, enabling them to develop their curiosity and historical arguments.

In the course, students study ancient societies and the groups and individuals who impacted them. They investigate the motivations and values of the chosen society and the systems and structures of these communities. Students learn how communities evolved and impacted modern civilisations. They also learn about significant individuals within these societies and what motivated them, their actions and how these people created change which can still be seen today.

Students learn historical skills that underpin the knowledge and understandings of the course. They develop source analysis skills to evaluate and interpret sources for reliability, message and perspective. Students use this analysis of sources to develop evidence-based arguments when communicating their perspectives of ancient societies and significant individuals. As students progress through the course, their skills and confidence will improve in their knowledge and understanding, leading to more mature and articulate arguments and analysis.

Students use historical skills, knowledge and understandings to identify patterns and similarities within societies, both ancient and modern. These comparisons allow students to appreciate and critically view current issues and benefits of their society, supporting informed decision-making and media literacy.

The Ancient History General course provides a strong foundation for careers in research, journalism, archaeology, history, anthropology, law, politics, consulting and education. The skills taught in the course are valuable in areas such as heritage management; public policy; state, federal and local government; archaeological consulting firms; mining and resource corporations; land councils; museums and universities. This course prepares students for academic and professional pursuits requiring strong interpretive and literacy skills, which benefit students looking at university pathways.

Aims

The Ancient History General course aims to develop students':

- ability to apply research, source analysis and critical questioning to investigate the past and effectively communicate historical findings
- ability to critically evaluate historical sources, recognise reliability, perspectives and evolving interpretations of events, people and societies
- understanding of the political, social, economic and cultural structures of ancient societies and their ability to analyse the influence of ideas, values and beliefs in shaping historical contexts
- understanding of the forces that drove continuity and change in the ancient world and their ability to apply historical knowledge to understand its relevance to contemporary societies.

Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

Structure of the syllabus

The Year 11 syllabus is divided into two units, each of one semester duration, which are typically delivered as a pair. The notional time for each unit is 55 class contact hours.

Unit 1 – Ancient civilisations and cultures

This unit enables students to investigate life in early civilisations, including the social, cultural, political, economic, religious, and military structures, and the significant values, beliefs, and traditions that existed. They discover how the world and its people have changed, as well as the significant legacies that exist into the present.

Unit 2 – Power in the ancient world

In this unit, students learn that in ancient societies key individuals have acted as agents of change, interacting with groups and institutions, and using their power to shape their society. They investigate key individuals' motives, the methods they used to achieve power, the ways they used their power, the responses of others to their use of power, and their impact and influence on society.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- electives – an elective in which the unit content could be taught
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

Organisation of content

The Ancient History General course continues to develop student learning in history through the two interrelated strands of Historical Knowledge and Understanding, and Historical Skills. This strand organisation provides an opportunity to integrate content in flexible and meaningful ways.

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

In order for students to make meaning of the past, they examine a range of ancient historical narratives to develop understandings about the chronology of a time period. They examine the defining characteristics of a society at the start of the period; the key people, ideas and events that were forces for continuity and change during the period; and the effects of continuity and change on a society and/or upon other societies. Through the study of a range of ancient historical narratives, they develop a growing awareness that ancient historical narratives are set within a defined period of time, reflect a particular view of history that may be similar to, or different from, other ancient historical narratives, and that the narratives are supported with evidence.

Historical Skills

This strand presents historical skills, including skills that are used in historical inquiry. There are five skill areas that build on those learned in the Year 7–10 History curriculum, and that continue to be developed in the Year 11 and Year 12 Ancient History General syllabuses. These are chronology, terms and concepts; historical questions and research; analysis and use of sources; perspectives and interpretations; and explanation and communication. There is an emphasis through this strand on the development of informed and defensible responses to inquiry questions through a critical use of sources.

Relationship between the strands

The two strands are interrelated and the content enables integration of the strands in the development of a teaching and learning program. The Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand provides the contexts through which particular skills are to be developed. The same set of historical skills is included in each of the units to provide a common focus for the teaching and learning content in the Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand.

Progression from the Years 7–10 curriculum

This syllabus continues to develop student understanding and skills from the Years 7–10 Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) History curriculum, particularly the Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand, which includes a wider range of concepts and contexts for historical study. It continues to develop students' historical inquiry skills, with a greater focus on critical thinking, analysis of sources and historical interpretation. This syllabus provides opportunities to study world history in the ancient period in more depth. This includes contexts related to Egypt, the Near East, Greece, Rome and Asia.

Representation of the General Capabilities

The General Capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully now and into the future. They are not assessed unless identified within the specified unit content. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following General Capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Ancient History ATAR course.

Critical and creative thinking

Students use critical and creative thinking to engage with the past and develop informed perspectives. They analyse and assess information against clear criteria such as examining the reliability and relevance of sources, identifying bias or gaps in evidence and constructing logical arguments. Students develop creative thinking to view historical situations from fresh perspectives and explore innovative ways to present and interpret the past. These skills support students in evaluating evidence, questioning assumptions and reflecting on their interpretations, fostering a commitment to thoughtful inquiry. Using critical and creative thinking skills developed in the course, students understand historical events and develop their curiosity, intellectual flexibility and open-mindedness.

Ethical understanding

Students develop ethical understanding through investigating ancient societies and interpreting material and written remains. They explore the motivations, actions and values of individuals and groups, examining how these shaped political, religious, social, economic, military and cultural systems. Students critically assess evidence, consider reliability and bias, and reflect on ethical issues in reconstructing the past. By studying concepts such as justice, leadership and civic duty in historical contexts, students develop empathy, critical thinking and ethical reasoning. These understandings foster students to become informed, responsible citizens and highlights the enduring influence of ancient values on contemporary society.

Intercultural understanding

Students explore diverse cultural practices, beliefs and institutions by analysing physical and written remains. They examine how roles and perspectives changed over time and reflect on their own and others' cultural viewpoints. Through historical inquiry, students develop empathy, respect for cultural diversity and an appreciation of ancient legacies. These skills support them in understanding the complexities of past and present cultures and becoming responsible global citizens.

Literacy

Students access historical content through a variety of print, oral, visual, spatial and electronic forms, including inscriptions, reliefs, accounts of the past by ancient writers, photographs, films, artefacts, sites and archival material. They learn to interpret and extrapolate meaning from a variety of sources to identify evidence. Students analyse and evaluate texts for authority, reliability, relevance and accuracy. They have opportunities to create a wide range of texts to communicate, explore, discuss, explain and argue a point of view, and to express their thoughts and ideas logically and fluently, supported by evidence. Students learn to monitor their own language for accuracy in the use of historical terms, clarity of ideas and explanations, and conciseness of expression. They learn to use language effectively to articulate a position.

Addressing the other General Capabilities

Although the following General Capabilities have not been identified as a focus in the Ancient History General Year 11 syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program.

- Digital literacy
- Numeracy
- Personal and social capability

Such opportunities may occur through the application of different contexts, pedagogical practices and/or assessment strategies that relate to the syllabus as part of the teaching and learning program.

Summary representation of the General Capabilities in the Ancient History General course

The unit content and assessment types for this course provide students with the opportunity to develop the General Capabilities summarised in the table below.

Year	Course	Course type	General Capabilities						
			CCT	DL	EU	IU	L	N	PSC
Year 11	Ancient History (GEHIA)	General	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Year 12	Ancient History (GTHIA)	General	✓		✓	✓	✓		

Key

CCT: Critical and creative thinking, DL: Digital literacy, EU: Ethical understanding, IU: Intercultural understanding, L: Literacy, N: Numeracy, PSC: Personal and social capability

Representation of the Cross-curriculum Priorities

The Cross-curriculum Priorities address contemporary issues that students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program for the Ancient History General course. The Cross-curriculum Priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority is addressed in this subject through the opportunity to investigate sites of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and to study the peoples of ancient Australia.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia is addressed in the Ancient History General course through opportunities to study India and China in the ancient period through the study of physical remains, the nature of those sources, and the beliefs and practices of Indian and Chinese society. The subject also includes the role of individuals in society, and key developments in particular historical periods of India and China in ancient times.

Sustainability

Sustainability is addressed in the Ancient History General course through opportunities to study the use of technology in ancient times to access resources and control the environment.

Unit 1 – Ancient civilisations and cultures

Unit description

In this unit, students investigate life in early civilisations, including the social, cultural, political, economic, religious, and military structures, and the significant values, beliefs, and traditions that existed. They discover how the world and its people have changed, as well as the significant legacies that exist into the present. Students are able to trace the development of some of the distinctive features of contemporary societies, for example, social organisation, systems of law, governance and religion, through an examination of ancient civilisations.

Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Historical Skills

The following skills will be developed during this unit.

Chronology, terms and concepts

- identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, continuity and change over time
- use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding

Historical questions and research

- formulate, test and modify propositions to investigate historical issues
- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of ancient and modern sources
- identify and practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

Analysis and use of sources

- identify the origin, message, purpose and context of historical sources
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an historical argument
- evaluate the reliability and usefulness of sources to develop informed judgements that support an historical argument

Perspectives and interpretations

- analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past
- evaluate critically different historical interpretations of the past, how they evolved, and how they are shaped by the historian's perspective
- evaluate contested views about the past to understand the provisional nature of historical knowledge and to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions

Explanation and communication

- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to support and refute arguments
- communicate historical understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to the purpose and audience
- apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Students study **one** or **two** of the following electives, which are taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit.

The electives studied must not be the same electives as those planned for Year 12 (Unit 3 or Unit 4).

- Ancient Australia and the First Peoples
- Vinca civilisation (Old Europe) c. 5500–c. 4500 BC
- Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Egypt, Dynasty 0–6 c. 3100–c. 2181 BC
- Minoan and Mycenaean civilisations c. 2700–c. 1150 BC
- Mesopotamian societies (Sumer, Assyria and/or Babylonia) c. 2600–c. 600 BC
- Mesoamerican societies 2000 BC–AD 250 (Olmec, Mayan)
- New Kingdom Egypt, Dynasty 18–20 c. 1550–c. 1069 BC
- Late Bronze Age Greece and Troy c. 1500–c. 1050 BC
- The Celts 800 BC–AD 43
- Classical Greece c. 490–c. 323 BC
- The Qin and Han Dynasties in China 221 BC–AD 220
- Pompeii and Herculaneum and the Roman world 80 BC–AD 79
- Roman Britain 55 BC–c. AD 410
- The Kushan Empire in India and Afghanistan AD 30–c. AD 350
- The Vikings of the Early Medieval period c. AD 790–c. AD 1050

Students investigate the chosen elective(s) using the following framework:

Ancient civilisations and cultures

Chronological and geographical context of the ancient civilisation

- broad overview of the historical context for the ancient civilisation
- the geographic location, including the nature of the environment and its influence on the ancient civilisation

Features of the ancient civilisation (as applicable)

- key social structures of the ancient civilisation, including:
 - the main social hierarchies, for example, elites, workers, slaves, ethnic groups and foreigners
 - role and status of women
 - role and treatment of children
- key political structures of the ancient civilisation, including:
 - political organisation, for example, monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy/oligarchy, republic
 - legal structures

- key military structures of the ancient civilisation, including:
 - military organisation, weaponry, tactics
 - role and function of the military
- key economic activities, for example, agriculture, trade, commerce, industry
- key values, beliefs and traditions characteristic of the ancient civilisation, for example, origin stories, religious beliefs, funerary customs
- key features of the culture of the ancient civilisation, for example, art, music, architecture
- key events and developments of the time period
- key people of the ancient civilisation, including mythic figures

Representations of the ancient civilisation

- representations of the ancient civilisation and the contribution of these to our understanding of the civilisation

Unit 2 – Power in the ancient world

Unit description

In this unit, students learn that, in ancient societies, key individuals have acted as agents of change, interacting with groups and institutions, and using their power to shape their society. They investigate key individuals' motives, the methods they used to achieve power, the ways they used their power, the responses of others to their use of power, and their impact and influence on society. Students also learn that individuals, groups, and institutions have a variety of types of power, and that power is not distributed evenly throughout the society.

Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Historical Skills

The following skills will be developed during this unit.

Chronology, terms and concepts

- identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, continuity and change over time
- use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding

Historical questions and research

- formulate, test and modify propositions to investigate historical issues
- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of ancient and modern sources
- identify and practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

Analysis and use of sources

- identify the origin, message, purpose and context of historical sources
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an historical argument
- evaluate the reliability and usefulness of sources to develop informed judgements that support an historical argument

Perspectives and interpretations

- analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past
- evaluate critically different historical interpretations of the past, how they evolved, and how they are shaped by the historian's perspective
- evaluate contested views about the past to understand the provisional nature of historical knowledge and to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions

Explanation and communication

- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to support and refute arguments
- communicate historical understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to the purpose and audience
- apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Students study **two** or **three** of the following electives, examining how the selected individuals used their power to shape their society, and the way they are viewed by history. The electives are taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit.

- Hatshepsut, Egypt, regnal years c. 1473–c. 1458 BC
- Tutmosis III, Egypt, regnal years c. 1479–c. 1425 BC
- Akhenaten, Egypt, regnal years c. 1352–c. 1336 BC
- Rameses II, Egypt, regnal years c. 1279–c. 1213 BC
- Sennacherib, Assyria, died c. 681 BC
- Cleisthenes, Athens c. 570–c. 508 BC
- Darius the Great, Persia 549–486 BC
- Xerxes, Persia c. 518–465 BC
- Pericles, Athens 495–429 BC
- Demosthenes, Athens 384–322 BC
- Alexander the Great, Macedonia 356–323 BC
- Ashoka, India c. 304–232 BC
- Hannibal, Carthage 247–c. 182 BC
- Pompey the Great, Rome 106–48 BC
- Julius Caesar, Rome 100–44 BC
- Vercingetorix, Gaul/Celt c. 82–46 BC
- Cleopatra, Egypt, regnal years c. 51–30 BC
- Tiberius, Rome 42 BC–AD 37
- Agrippina the Younger, Rome AD 15–AD 59
- Boudicca, Britain/Celt, died c. AD 61
- Hadrian, Rome AD 76–AD 138
- Cao Cao, China c. AD 155–AD 220
- Liu Bei, China AD 161–AD 223
- Constantine the Great, Roman Empire AD 272–AD 337

Students investigate the chosen electives using the following framework:

Elements of the selected individual's society at the start of the period

- overview of the broader historical context
- key political, social, religious, cultural, military and economic structures/institutions of the society
- values, beliefs and traditions that are linked to the society
- different kinds of power that exists within the society
- structures and processes of power in the society

Selected individual

- the background of the selected individual, including:
 - family background
 - key events in their lives
 - significant early influences
- the career of the selected individual, including:
 - change of role or status over time
 - possible motivations for actions
 - methods used to achieve aims
 - relationships with other individuals, groups, structures/institutions; for example, military or religious
 - significant events in their career
 - ways they shaped and/or changed their society
 - the manner and impact of their death
- challenges presented by other individuals, groups and structures/institutions
- motivation and actions of the other individuals, groups and structures/institutions, seeking to influence structures of power within the society
- the legacy of the selected individual, including:
 - assessment of their life and career
 - the ways they shaped and/or changed their society
 - their longer-term impact and legacy

Representations of the key individual

- depictions of the individual during their lifetime
- interpretations of the individual after their death

Selected individual's effect on continuity and change

- indicators of continuity and change in the period
- how and why aspects of society change while other aspects remain unchanged

School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual* contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The table below provides details of the assessment types for the Ancient History General Year 11 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

Assessment table – Year 11

Type of assessment	Weighting
Historical inquiry Students use the relevant historical skills to plan, conduct and communicate an inquiry related to the elective they are studying. The inquiry proposition is devised by the teacher. The final presentation can be: a written report that includes timelines, flow diagrams, photographs; an analysis of sources used in the inquiry; a multimodal presentation that could include a poster, museum display, re-enactment, PowerPoint, video and/or website that can be presented individually or in a group. Typically one historical inquiry is completed for each unit.	20–30%
Explanation A response in the form of: a short answer or a set of short answers; an extended answer which can be scaffolded or sectionalised essay questions, and can contain timelines, flow diagrams; an oral presentation which can include a debate, hypothetical, group presentation and/or re-enactments for one or more closed or open questions. An explanation can involve: responding to propositions or points of debate; interpretations, explanations and/or evaluations of historical evidence. At least two explanation tasks should be administered under test conditions.	20–30%
Source analysis A number of sources are interpreted, analysed, synthesised, and/or evaluated. Questions typically require students to use evidence from the sources when commenting on: origin, purpose and context; reliability and usefulness of the evidence; perspective; and relevance to the context. The teacher can select the sources and provide the questions, or a student (or group of students) can select a range of sources to respond to questions provided by the teacher. Sources can include: • ancient materials ▪ written sources (such as: extracts from historical narratives, biographies, constitutional treatises, drama, poetry, contracts, treaties, speeches, letters) ▪ archaeological sources (such as: photographs of inscriptions, coins, statues, ostraca, wall paintings, artefacts, buildings, human remains) • maps and diagrams • modern materials • written sources (such as: extracts from historical narratives, biographies, historiographical texts) • reconstructions • maps and diagrams. At least two source analysis tasks should be administered under test conditions.	20–30%
Test Can be conducted during the unit or at the end of each semester and/or unit. Typically a combination of closed and open questions which are elective specific.	20–30%

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units (or for a single unit where only one is being studied).

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least once over the year/pair of units. In the assessment outline where a single unit is being studied, each assessment type must be included at least once.

The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes. For example, student performance for an historical inquiry could be validated by a student/teacher interview, a declaration that all reference material is cited according to the school protocols, a learning journal and/or a research organiser.

Grading

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

Grade	Interpretation
A	Excellent achievement
B	High achievement
C	Satisfactory achievement
D	Limited achievement
E	Very low achievement

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units (or for a unit where only one unit is being studied). The grade is based on the student's overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Ancient History General Year 11 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au.

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 11

A	Historical skills Selects some relevant ancient and modern sources and assesses for one or more of the following: origin, message, purpose, context, reliability, usefulness, differences in perspectives and interpretations. Responds effectively to key words in research or essay tasks and is mostly accurate in applying evidence and historical understandings from acknowledged sources. Uses appropriate historical terms and concepts and develops a coherent response which is largely narrative. Historical knowledge and understanding Explains the key social, political, economic, military and religious structures and features of an ancient civilisation or culture. Explains how key individuals have acted as agents for change, using their power to shape their society.
B	Historical skills Selects a limited range of relevant ancient and/or modern sources and assesses for one or more of the following: origin, message, purpose, context, reliability, usefulness, differences in perspectives and interpretations. Responds to key words in research or essay tasks, applying limited evidence and historical understandings from acknowledged sources. Uses appropriate historical terms and develops a structured response which is largely narrative. Historical knowledge and understanding Outlines the key social, political, economic, military and/or religious structures and features of an ancient civilisation or culture. Describes how key individuals have acted as agents for change, using their power to shape their society.
C	Historical skills Selects a limited range of ancient and/or modern sources that generally relate to the topic and makes a limited assessment of one or more of the following: origin, message, purpose, context, reliability, usefulness, differences in perspectives and interpretations. Responds to some aspects of research or essay tasks; selects and acknowledges limited sources, and uses little supporting evidence. Recounts most of the major features of the historical narrative, and develops a limited structure for the response. Historical knowledge and understanding Describes some of the social, political, economic, military and/or religious structures and features of an ancient civilisation or culture. Describes some ways that key individuals have acted as agents for change, using their power to shape society.

D**Historical skills**

Selects ancient and/or modern sources, which may or may not be relevant, from a narrow range. Makes simple statements about one or more of the following: origin, message, purpose, context, reliability, usefulness, differences in perspectives and interpretations.

Responds to tasks, but with a limited and/or inaccurate interpretation of the question and source material.

Displays a limited knowledge of the historical narrative and structural conventions in responses.

Historical knowledge and understanding

Identifies that there are social, political, economic, military and/or religious structures and features of an ancient civilisation or culture.

Lists some ways that key individuals have acted as agents for change or how they have used their power.

E

Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.

Appendix 2 – Glossary

This glossary is provided to enable a common understanding of the key terms in this syllabus.

Ancient

As defined in this syllabus, the Ancient period covers history from the development of early human communities to the end of late antiquity (around AD 650).

Ancient sources

Ancient sources are any written or non-written materials created up to the end of late antiquity (around AD 650) that can be used to investigate the past. Ancient sources include written materials, such as extracts from historical narratives, literary works, biographies, letters; archaeological materials, such as photographs of archaeological sites, inscriptions (epigraphic sources), coins (numismatic sources), tombs, buildings, reliefs and artwork, statues, weapons, tools and artefacts; and maps or diagrams. These sources are analysed by the historian to answer questions about the past. (Sources created between AD 650–1500 may also be important to the study of some ancient societies.)

Cause and effect

Used by historians to identify chains of events and developments over time, short-term and long-term.

Continuity and change

Aspects of the past that remained the same over certain periods of time are referred to as continuities. Continuity and change are evident in any given period of time and concepts, such as progress and decline may be used to evaluate continuity and change.

Concepts

A concept (in the study of history) refers to any general notion or idea that is used to develop an understanding of the past, such as concepts related to the process of historical inquiry (for example evidence, continuity and change, perspectives, significance).

Empathy

Empathy is an understanding of the past from the point of view of a particular individual or group, including an appreciation of the circumstances they faced, and the motivations, values and attitudes behind their actions.

Evidence

In History, evidence is the information obtained from sources that is useful for a particular inquiry (for example, the relative size of historical figures in an ancient painting may provide clues for an inquiry into the social structure of the society). Evidence can be used to help construct an historical narrative, to support a hypothesis, or to prove or disprove a conclusion.

Historical authentication

A process of verifying the origins of an artefact or object and establishing it as genuine.

Historical inquiry

Historical inquiry is the process of investigation undertaken in order to understand the past. Steps in the inquiry process include posing questions, locating and analysing sources, and using evidence from sources to develop an informed explanation about the past.

Hypothesis

A tentative statement or proposition that can be tested by asking questions and analysing evidence.

Interpretation

An interpretation is an explanation of the past, for example, about a specific person, event or development. There may be more than one interpretation of a particular aspect of the past because historians may have used different sources, asked different questions and held different points of view about the topic.

Modern sources

Modern sources are any written or non-written materials created after the end of the late Middle Ages (around AD 1500) that can be used to investigate the ancient past. These sources are often accounts about the past, that use or refer to ancient sources, and present a particular interpretation. Modern sources include written materials, such as extracts from historical narratives, literary works, biographies, historiographical texts; reconstructions; documentaries; maps; diagrams; and websites. (Sources created between AD 650–1500 may also be important to the study of some ancient societies.)

Perspective

A person's perspective is their point of view; the position from that they see and understand events going on around them. People in the past may have had different points of view about a particular event, depending on their age, gender, social position and their beliefs and values. Historians also have perspectives and this can influence their interpretation of the past.

Reconstruction

A process of piecing together evidence from sources to develop an understanding or explanation of the past.

Representation

A picture or image of the past that may be a popular portrayal within society (past or present) or that may be created by historians.

Significance

The importance that is assigned to particular aspects of the past (for example, events, developments, and historical sites). Significance includes an examination of the principles behind the selection of what should be investigated and remembered and involves consideration of questions, such as: How did people in the past view the significance of an event? How important were the consequences of an event? What was the duration of the event? How relevant is it to the contemporary world?

Source

Any written or non-written materials that can be used to investigate the past (for example, coins, letters, tombs, buildings). A source becomes 'evidence' if it is of value to a particular inquiry.

Terms

A word or phrase used to describe abstract aspects or features of the past (for example, imperialism, democracy, republic) and more specific features, such as a pyramid, gladiator, and temple.

