



## **Ancient History**

### **General Course Year 12**

**Old Kingdom Egypt, Dynasty 3–6 c. 2686–c. 2181 BC**

**Selected Unit 3 syllabus content for the**

**Externally set task 2026**

This document is an extract from the *Ancient History General Course Year 12 syllabus*, featuring all of the content for Unit 3. The content that has been highlighted in the document is the content on which the Externally set task (EST) for 2026 will be based.

All students enrolled in the course are required to complete an EST. The EST is an assessment task which is set by the Authority and distributed to schools for administering to students. The EST will be administered in schools during Term 2, 2026 under standard test conditions. The EST will take 50 minutes.

The EST will be marked by teachers in each school using a marking key provided by the Authority. The EST is included in the assessment table in the syllabus as a separate assessment type with a weighting of 15% for the pair of units.

# Unit 3 – Societies and change

## Unit description

In this unit, students examine the evolving nature of societies and the various forces for continuity and change that exist. They also learn that values, beliefs and traditions are linked to the identity of a society. Students learn that in any period of change there are those individuals and/or groups that support change, but others that oppose it, and that there are different interpretations of the resultant 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, 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, usefulness and contestability 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** of the following electives, which is to be taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit.

The elective studied must not be the same as those electives studied in Unit 1 or planned for Unit 4.

- Old Kingdom Egypt, Dynasty 3–6 c. 2686–c. 2181 BC

The 2026 EST will focus on changes in burial practices.

- Egypt, Dynastic change, Dynasty 17–18 c. 1560–c. 1504 BC (the wars against the Hyksos to Amenhotep I) and Dynasty 18–19 (Ay to Rameses II) c. 1327–c. 1213 BC
- The establishment of Rome from the beginning of the Republic to the end of the Punic Wars c. 509–146 BC
- Rome, the Late Republic to the Lex Manilia c. 133–66 BC

The following themes should be considered, where appropriate, throughout the elective:

- military
- political
- social
- cultural
- religious
- economic.

Students investigate the chosen elective using the following framework:

### Elements of a society at the start of the period

- broad overview of the historical context for the ancient society
- key political, social, religious, cultural, military and economic structures of the society at the start of the period
- values, beliefs and traditions that have evolved and/or become integral to the society
- individuals and groups who hold power and those who do not

### **Key people, ideas and events of the period**

- key people, ideas and/or events and their influence on society
- the role of people, ideas and events as forces for change in the period
- examples of change in the period (political, social, religious, cultural, military and/or economic)
- examples of continuity in the period (political, social, religious, cultural, military and/or economic)
- methods and strategies used by leaders, individuals and/or groups seeking change
- leaders, individuals and/or groups that supported change and their reasons (motives) for doing so
- leaders, individuals and/or groups that resisted change and their reasons (motives) for doing so

### **Effects of continuity and change in the period**

- short-term and long-term effects of change in the period
- evidence and impact of change on the lives of individuals and/or groups
- short-term and long-term effects of continuity in the period