



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

MODERN HISTORY

ATAR Course
Year 12 syllabus

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

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2025.

Users of this syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

Copyright

© School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2023

This document – apart from any third-party copyright material contained in it – may be freely copied, or communicated on an intranet, for non-commercial purposes in educational institutions, provided that the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) is acknowledged as the copyright owner, and that the Authority's moral rights are not infringed.

Copying or communication for any other purpose can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with prior written permission of the Authority. Copying or communication of any third-party copyright material can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with permission of the copyright owners.

Any content in this document that has been derived from the Australian Curriculum may be used under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence](#).

Contents

Rationale	1
Aims	2
Organisation	3
Structure of the syllabus	3
Organisation of content	3
Representation of the general capabilities	4
Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities	6
Unit 3 – Modern nations in the 20th century	7
Unit description	7
Unit content	7
Unit 4 – The modern world since 1945	12
Unit description	12
Unit content	12
Historical Knowledge and Understanding	13
Assessment	17
School-based assessment	18
Assessment table – Year 12	19
Grading	20
ATAR course examination	20
Examination design brief – Year 12	21
Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12	23
Appendix 2 – Glossary	24

Rationale

The Modern History ATAR course enables students to study the forces that have shaped today's world and provides them with a broader and deeper comprehension of the world in which they live. While the focus is on the 20th century, the course refers back to formative changes from the late 18th century onwards and encourages students to make connections with the changing world of the 21st century.

Modern history enhances students' curiosity and imagination and their appreciation of larger themes, individuals, movements, events and ideas that have shaped the contemporary world. The themes that run through the units include local, national and global conflicts and their resolution; the rise of nationalism and its consequences; the decline of imperialism and the process of decolonisation; the continuing struggle for the recognition of human rights; the transformation of social and economic life; the regional shifts in power and the rise of Asia; and the changing nature and influence of ideologies.

The Modern History ATAR course begins with a study of key developments that have helped to define the modern world, with special attention given to important ideas and their consequences. This provides a context for a study of movements for change in the 20th century that have challenged the authority of the nation-state, the principal form of political organisation in the modern world. Students then investigate crises that confronted nation-states in the 20th century, the responses to these crises and the different paths nations have taken in the modern world. The course concludes with a study of the distinctive features of world order that have emerged since World War II and that are central to an understanding of the present.

The Modern History ATAR course continues to develop the historical skills and understandings taught in the Years 7–10 Humanities and Social Sciences: History curriculum. Students pose increasingly complex questions about the past and use their historical inquiry skills, analytical skills and interpretation of sources to formulate reasoned answers to those questions. The opportunities to apply these skills are sequential and cumulative so that students develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the different and sometimes conflicting perspectives of the past.

Students are introduced to the complexities associated with the changing nature of evidence, its expanding quantity, range and form; the distinctive characteristics of modern historical representation; and the skills that are required to investigate controversial issues that have a powerful contemporary resonance. Students develop increasingly sophisticated historiographical skills and historical understanding in their analysis of particular events and close study of the nature of modern societies.

Aims

The Modern History ATAR course enables students to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of particular events, ideas, people, movements and developments that have shaped the modern world
- undertake historical inquiry, including skills in research, evaluation of sources, synthesis of evidence, analysis of interpretations and representations, and communication of findings
- apply historical concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy and perspectives
- be informed citizens with the skills, including analytical and critical thinking, to participate in contemporary debates.

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 12 syllabus is divided into two units which are delivered as a pair. The notional time for the pair of units is 110 class contact hours.

Unit 3 – Modern nations in the 20th century

In this unit, students examine the ‘nation’ as the principal form of political organisation in the modern world; the crises that confronted nations in the 20th century; their responses to these crises, and the different paths they have taken to fulfil their goals.

Unit 4 – The modern world since 1945

In this unit, students focus on the distinctive features of the modern world that emerged in the period 1945–2001. It aims to build their understanding of the contemporary world; that is, why we are here at this point in time.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned
- electives – the content is delivered through one of three electives, each of which focuses on a particular nation state or development.

Organisation of content

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

The unit content that is listed after ‘e.g.’ is provided as suggested examples to guide teachers on relevant topics, which could be used to teach the content descriptions; teachers are not restricted to just the listed examples. Unit content that is referred to in a content description after ‘including’ is examinable content.

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Historical knowledge refers to key events, ideas, movements, developments and people that have shaped the modern world.

Historical understanding is developed through applying concepts that define history as a discipline, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy and perspectives.

Historical Skills

This strand presents historical skills, including skills that are used in historical inquiry. There are five key skills areas that build on those learned in the Years 7–10 Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum and which continue to be developed in the Modern History ATAR course. There is an emphasis through this strand on the development of informed and defensible responses to inquiry questions through a critical use of sources.

These key skills areas are:

- chronology, terms and concepts
- historical questions and research
- analysis and use of sources
- perspectives and interpretations
- explanation and communication.

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 of content in the Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand.

Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the 21st century. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Modern History ATAR course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Literacy

Literacy is of fundamental importance in the study of the Modern History ATAR course. Students access historical content through a variety of print, oral, visual, spatial and electronic forms, including letters, speeches, biographies, photographs, films, artefacts, and archived material. They learn to interpret and extrapolate meaning from a variety of sources to identify evidence. They analyse and evaluate texts for authority, reliability, relevance and accuracy. Students have opportunities to create a wide range of texts to communicate, explore, discuss, explain and argue a point of view, selecting and employing text structure and language knowledge to express their thoughts and ideas logically and fluently, supported by evidence. They learn to monitor their own language use 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.

Numeracy

Numeracy is useful in the historical inquiry process, which requires students to recognise patterns and relationships chronologically and spatially through the use of scaled timelines and maps. Students have opportunities to support their views with data, some of which is numerical in nature. They develop numeracy capability when they analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from statistical information, for example, in relation to change over time.

Information and communication technology capability

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability is important in the historical inquiry process, particularly in relation to investigation, analysis and communication. Students use digital tools and strategies to locate, access, process and analyse information. They use ICT skills and understandings to investigate and identify the provenance and credibility of evidence and to communicate historical information. Students have opportunities to scrutinise websites and the interpretations and representations of the past they convey, including how and why such sites are constructed, the audiences they serve and their goals in, for example, commemoration, preservation, education and scholarship. They develop an understanding of the issues involved in the use of ICT when practising ethical scholarship as part of the historical inquiry process.

Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking is integral to the historical inquiry process. There are opportunities for students to delve deeply and broadly into the implications of any missing or questionable information in their investigation of historical topics. The demands of historical inquiry include the ability to pose intelligent questions, interrogate, select and cross-reference sources, and develop interpretations based on an assessment of the evidence and reasoning. Students identify possible weaknesses in their own positions, and analyse, evaluate and synthesise alternative interpretations and representations of the past.

Personal and social capability

Personal and social capability skills are developed and practised in the Modern History ATAR course by students enhancing their communication skills and participating in collaborative investigative group work. Students have opportunities to work, both collaboratively in teams and also independently, as part of their learning and research in the course. Students develop advanced research, and presentation skills to express and justify their views effectively to others. Through the study of individuals and groups in the past and their source work in particular, students develop their ability to appreciate the perspectives and experiences of others through the practice of empathy. Students develop increasing social awareness through the study of relationships between individuals and diverse social groups in the modern world.

Ethical understanding

Ethical understanding provides opportunities for students to explore and understand the diverse perspectives and circumstances that shaped the actions and possible motivations of people in the past, compared with those of today. Students have opportunities, both independently and collaboratively, to explore the values, beliefs and principles that were the basis for the judgements and actions of people in the past.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding is a vital part of historical learning in the Modern History ATAR course. Students explore the different beliefs and values of a range of cultural groups, and develop an appreciation of the diversity in the modern period. They have opportunities to develop an understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of conflict, dispossession and interdependence. Students develop an understanding of different contemporary perspectives, the historical contexts for those perspectives, their historical influence on the relationships between different groups within society, and how they contribute to individual and group actions in the contemporary world.

Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities

The cross-curriculum priorities address contemporary issues which students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the priorities into the teaching and learning program for the Modern History ATAR 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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures includes study of the ideas that have influenced movements for change, the impact of government policies, the progress towards recognition and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, and the focus of continued efforts.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia includes the paths of development taken by Asian nations (and how they differ from the European experience), the distinctive and changing character of Asia, the growing influence of Asia in the world, and how Australia's engagement with Asia in the modern period has changed over time socially, economically and politically.

Sustainability

Sustainability provides opportunities to study the effects of developments, such as the Industrial Revolution on the environment, the anti-nuclear movement, and movements for environmental sustainability in the modern period.

Unit 3 – Modern nations in the 20th century

Unit description

This unit examines the characteristics of modern nations in the 20th century; the crises that confronted nations, their responses to these crises and the different paths nations have taken to fulfil their goals. Students study the characteristics of **one** nation. Students investigate crises that challenged the stability of government, the path of development that was taken and the social, economic and political order that was either established or maintained. Students examine the ways in which the nation dealt with internal divisions and external threats. They emerge with a deeper understanding of the character of a modern nation.

The key conceptual understandings covered in this unit are the reliability and usefulness of evidence; cause and effect; continuity and change; significance; empathy; and changing representations and interpretations.

Unit content

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

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 inquiry

- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of primary and secondary sources
- acknowledge and reference sources, as appropriate

Analysis and use of historical sources

- identify the origin, purpose and context of historical sources
- analyse and synthesise evidence from different types of historical sources
- evaluate the reliability and usefulness of historical sources

Perspectives and interpretations

- analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past

- evaluate different historical interpretations of the past and how they are shaped by the historian's perspective
- evaluate the significance of ideas, events and people

Explanation and communication

- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to sustain an argument
- communicate historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms

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.

- Australia 1918–49 (the end of World War I to the 1949 election)
- Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–45 (World War I to the end of World War II)
- China 1945–89 (the end of World War II to the Tiananmen Massacre)

The impact of the following forces should be considered, where appropriate, throughout the unit

- economic
- international relations
- leadership
- political
- social.

Elective 1: Australia 1918–49 (the end of World War I to the 1949 election)

- the economic, political and social conditions in Australia in 1918
- the management of national priorities in the 1920s, including
 - the tensions between urbanisation, industrialisation and rural development
 - the challenges of returned soldiers and the Soldier Settlement Schemes
- the significant political developments of the period, including
 - the rise of the Country Party
 - 'Men, money, markets'
 - the growth of unionism
 - the 1931 Labor Split
 - the formation of the Liberal Party
- the experiences of particular groups throughout the period, including
 - women

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- the causes of, and the political responses to the Great Depression and its impact on different groups within Australian society
- the changing nature and significance of Australia's foreign policy from 1918–39, including
 - the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the role of Billy Hughes
 - membership of the League of Nations
 - the 1926 Imperial Conference and the Statute of Westminster
 - relations with Japan
- the nature of and response to Australia's involvement in World War II in Europe, Asia and the Pacific (1939–45) and the experiences on the home front, including
 - the wartime leadership of Robert Menzies and John Curtin
 - the alliance with the United States of America
 - austerity and total war
 - Australia's role in the United Nations Organisation (UNO)
- the key features of post-World War II reconstruction, including
 - the leadership of Ben Chifley
 - industrialisation, urbanisation and immigration
 - the provision of social welfare
- the key factors influencing the election of Robert Menzies and the Liberal-Country Coalition in 1949
- the significant ideas of the period, including
 - egalitarianism
 - assimilation
 - communism
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activism
 - nationalism

OR

Elective 2: Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–45 (World War I to the end of World War II)

- the economic, political and social conditions in Russia in 1914
- the internal divisions and crises within Russian society, including
 - the impact of World War I
 - the leadership of Tsar Nicholas II

- the causes and events of the February and October Revolutions in 1917, including the leadership of Vladimir Lenin
- the causes, events and outcomes of the Russian Civil War, including
 - the initial reforms and decrees of the Bolsheviks
 - the nature of the opposition
 - the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
 - the leadership of Leon Trotsky
 - the Red Terror
 - the creation of the USSR
- the significance of Josef Stalin's rise to power and the reasons for his success by 1929
- the economic changes that transformed Russia/USSR to 1945 and the impact on peasants and factory workers, including
 - War Communism
 - the New Economic Policy (NEP)
 - the Great Turn, collectivisation and the industrialisation of the Soviet Union
- the social impact of communist policies to 1945 on women, education and the Russian Orthodox Church
- the methods employed by the Stalinist regime to control society, including
 - propaganda and the arts
 - repression
 - the Purges
 - Show Trials
 - the Great Terror
- the factors that enabled the USSR to secure victory in the Great Patriotic War
- the significant ideas of the period, including
 - autocracy
 - communism
 - Leninism
 - Stalinism

OR

Elective 3: China 1945–89 (From the end of World War II to the Tiananmen Massacre)

- the economic, political and social conditions in China in 1945
- post World War II developments in China that led to the change in regime in 1949, including
 - the conflict between the Guomindang (GMD) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)
 - the leadership of Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi
- the establishment and development of the communist state (1949–66), including
 - initial social and economic reforms (1950–57)
 - the Hundred Flowers Movement
 - the Anti-Rightist Movement
 - the characteristics and impact of the Great Leap Forward (1958–61), including the role of communes, methods of production, and the difficulties faced by workers and peasants
- the causes and significance of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) as a continuing attempt to organise Chinese social and economic life and to suppress dissent, and the implications for groups within China, including rural peasants and political dissidents
- the nature and practice of China’s international relations from 1949 to 1978
- the significance of the death of Mao; leadership changes and the ‘Gang of Four’
- the emergence of Deng Xiaoping as paramount leader in the post-Mao era, including
 - ‘Socialism with Chinese Characteristics’/socialist market economy
 - social and economic reforms after 1978 and the Open Door Policy
 - Democracy Wall, student protests and the Tiananmen Massacre 1989
- the significant ideas of the period, including
 - nationalism
 - communism
 - Maoism
 - Dengism

Unit 4 – The modern world since 1945

Unit description

This unit examines some significant and distinctive features of the modern world within the period 1945–2001 in order to build students' understanding of the contemporary world – that is, why we are here at this point in time. These include changes to the nature of the world order: shifting international tensions, alliances and power blocs; the emergence of Asia as a significant international political and economic force, and the nature of engagement by and with Australia; the nature of various conflicts and regional and international attempts to create peace and security. Students study one of these features. As part of their study, they should follow and make relevant connections with contemporary events.

The key conceptual understandings covered in this unit are: causation; continuity and change; historical significance and changing perspectives and interpretations of the past.

Unit content

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

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 inquiry

- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of primary and secondary sources
- acknowledge and reference sources, as appropriate

Analysis and use of historical sources

- identify the origin, purpose and context of historical sources
- analyse and synthesise evidence from different types of historical sources
- evaluate the reliability and usefulness of historical sources

Perspectives and interpretations

- analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past

- evaluate different historical interpretations of the past and how they are shaped by the historian's perspective
- evaluate the significance of ideas, events and people

Explanation and communication

- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to sustain an argument
- communicate historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Students study one of the following electives, with a focus on the period 1945–2001, which is to be taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit.

- The changing European world since 1945
- Australia's engagement with Asia since 1945
- The struggle for peace in the Middle East since 1945

The impact of the following forces should be considered, where appropriate, throughout the unit:

- economic
- international relations
- leadership
- political
- social.

Elective 1: The changing European world since 1945

- the origins and early development of the Cold War to 1949, including
 - the ideological and political differences between the United States and the Soviet Union
 - the emergence of the Communist Bloc
 - the significance of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and Berlin Blockade
- the evolving nature and character of the Cold War in Europe from 1949 through to 1991, including
 - the impact of the arms race
 - the 1956 invasion of Hungary
 - the Berlin Wall
 - the Prague Spring and the Brezhnev Doctrine
 - détente
 - the new Cold War of the 1980s

- the collapse of the Communist Bloc 1989–91
- the break-up of the Soviet Union
- the reunification of Germany
- significant developments that followed the end of the Cold War, including
 - the break-up of the former Yugoslavia
 - the creation and expansion of the European Union and the Eurozone
- the significant ideas of the period, including
 - communism
 - capitalism
 - democracy
 - containment
 - peaceful co-existence
 - glasnost and perestroika
 - nationalism
- the role of significant political leaders throughout the period

OR

Elective 2: Australia's engagement with Asia since 1945

- the origins and developments of Australia's engagement with Asia by 1949, including
 - the political and social impact of the war with Japan on Australia
 - the increasing regional involvement of the United States
 - movements towards decolonisation
- the influence of the policy of forward defence and the leadership of Robert Menzies on the nature of Australia's response to key developments in international relations, including
 - the success of the Communists in China
 - the Korean War
 - the Malayan Emergency
 - the Vietnam War
- the reasons for, and impacts of the formation of formal alliances, treaties and forums, including
 - the Colombo Plan (1951)
 - Australia, New Zealand and the United States Treaty (ANZUS)
 - Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO)
 - Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
- the influence of the significant concepts of powerful friends and regional security
- the evolving nature and role of Australia as a peacekeeping nation, including
 - post-World War II Japan
 - Cambodia
 - East Timor/Timor Leste
- the significance of Australia's policy of multiculturalism to regional relationships, including
 - the transition from the White Australia Policy to multiculturalism
 - the leadership of successive governments
 - the acceptance of refugees from Asia
 - family reunions
 - debates on Asian immigration
- the changing nature and importance of Australia's trade with Asia
- the political impacts in Australia of changing regional relationships throughout the period
- the significant ideas of
 - Humanitarianism
 - Asylum and exclusion
 - Communism
 - Decolonisation
 - Nationalism
- the role of significant individuals during the period

OR

Elective 3: The struggle for peace in the Middle East since 1945

- factors between 1945 and 1948 leading to the establishment of the state of Israel and the immediate consequences for relations between Jews and Arabs
- reasons for, and consequences of key conflicts between Arabs and Israelis, including
 - the Arab-Israeli War (1948–49)
 - the Suez War (1956)
 - the Six-Day War (1967)
 - the Yom Kippur War (1973)
 - Israeli military intervention in Lebanon (1978, 1982)

- the nature and consequences of Palestinian reactions to Israel, including the Intifada (1987–1993) and the beginning of the 2nd Intifada (2000)
- reasons for, and consequences of, other conflicts in the Middle East, including
 - the Iran/Iraq War (1980–88)
 - Iranian Revolution (1979)
 - the First Gulf War (1990–91)
- the attempts to settle conflicts between Arabs and Israelis, including
 - the 1949 Armistice
 - Security Council Resolution 242 (1967)
 - Camp David Accords (1978)
 - the 1979 Peace Treaty
 - the Oslo Accords (1993)
 - the Camp David Summit (2000)
 - the role of the United Nations
- the consequences of the involvement of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union in the Middle East over the period, in both the continuing conflict and the peace process
- the significant ideas of the period, including
 - imperialism
 - Arab nationalism
 - Zionism
 - Fundamentalism
 - terrorism
- the impact of significant individuals and groups both in working for and in opposing peace

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning that at the senior secondary years:

- provides evidence of student achievement
- identifies opportunities for further learning
- connects to the standards described for the course
- contributes to the recognition of student achievement.

Assessment for learning (formative) and assessment of learning (summative) enable teachers to gather evidence to support students and make judgements about student achievement. These are not necessarily discrete approaches and may be used individually or together, and formally or informally.

Formative assessment involves a range of informal and formal assessment procedures used by teachers during the learning process in order to improve student achievement and to guide teaching and learning activities. It often involves qualitative feedback (rather than scores) for both students and teachers, which focuses on the details of specific knowledge and skills that are being learnt.

Summative assessment involves assessment procedures that aim to determine students' learning at a particular time, for example when reporting against the standards, after completion of a unit/s. These assessments should be limited in number and made clear to students through the assessment outline.

Appropriate assessment of student work in this course is underpinned by reference to the set of pre-determined course standards. These standards describe the level of achievement required to achieve each grade, from A to E. Teachers use these standards to determine how well a student has demonstrated their learning.

Where relevant, higher order cognitive skills (e.g. application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis) and the general capabilities should be included in the assessment of student achievement in this course. All assessment should be consistent with the requirements identified in the course assessment table.

Assessment should not generate workload and/or stress that, under fair and reasonable circumstances, would unduly diminish the performance of students.

School-based assessment

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

School-based assessment involves teachers gathering, describing and quantifying information about student achievement.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. As outlined in the *WACE Manual*, school-based assessment of student achievement in this course must be based on the Principles of Assessment:

- Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning
- Assessment should be educative
- Assessment should be fair
- Assessment should be designed to meet its specific purpose/s
- Assessment should lead to informative reporting
- Assessment should lead to school-wide evaluation processes
- Assessment should provide significant data for improvement of teaching practices.

The table below provides details of the assessment types and their weighting for the Modern History ATAR Year 12 syllabus.

Summative assessments in this course must:

- be limited in number to no more than eight tasks for a pair of units
- allow for the assessment of each assessment type at least once over the year/pair of units
- have a minimum value of 5 per cent of the total school assessment mark
- provide a representative sampling of the syllabus content.

Assessment tasks not administered under test or controlled conditions require appropriate authentication processes.

Assessment table – Year 12

Type of assessment	Weighting
<p>Historical inquiry Students use relevant historical skills to plan, conduct and communicate an inquiry related to the elective they are studying. The final assessment must be an in-class validation administered under test conditions. Typically, one historical inquiry is completed for each unit.</p>	20%
<p>Explanation Students respond in the form of an essay for one or more closed or open questions or for a topic. The question can require students to respond to propositions or points of debate; explanations or evaluations of historical evidence; and interpretations and/or representations. Explanation tasks must be administered under test conditions.</p>	20%
<p>Source analysis Students work with a number of sources using interpretation, analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis. Questions typically require students to use evidence from the sources when commenting on: message; origin, purpose and context; reliability and usefulness of the evidence; perspective; and relevance to the context. Typically, the teacher selects the sources and provides the questions. Source material can include: photographs, cartoons, paintings, graphs, government papers, extracts from newspaper articles, letters, diaries, literary sources, and/or secondary sources. Source analysis tasks must be administered under test conditions.</p>	20%
<p>Examination Typically conducted at the end of each semester and/or unit and reflecting the examination design brief for this syllabus.</p>	40%

Teachers must use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units.

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).

Grading

Schools report student achievement, underpinned by a set of pre-determined standards, using the following grades:

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

The grade descriptions for the Modern History ATAR Year 12 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They are used to support the allocation of a grade. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, 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.

The grade is determined by reference to the standard, not allocated on the basis of a pre-determined range of marks (cut-offs).

ATAR course examination

All students enrolled in the Modern History ATAR Year 12 course are required to sit the ATAR course examination. The examination is based on a representative sampling of the syllabus content for Unit 3 and Unit 4. Details of the ATAR course examination are prescribed in the examination design brief on the following page.

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information.

Examination design brief – Year 12

Time allowed

Reading time before commencing work: ten minutes

Working time for paper: three hours

Permissible items

Standard items: pens (blue/black preferred), pencils (including coloured), sharpener, correction fluid/tape, eraser, ruler, highlighters

Special items: nil

Provided by the supervisor

A source booklet containing one set of three sources for each Unit 3 and Unit 4 elective.

Section	Supporting information
<p>Section One Source analysis – Unit 3 20% of the total examination One question Suggested working time: 35 minutes</p>	<p>The question consists of three parts, based on the Historical Skills which are structured as a series of open and/or partially open questions. Each part is of increasing complexity.</p> <p>This question is applicable to all Unit 3 electives.</p> <p>There are three sources for each elective which the candidate is required to interpret, analyse, evaluate and/or synthesise. The question requires candidates to use evidence from the sources.</p> <p>Source material can include: photographs; cartoons; paintings; graphs; and/or extracts from government papers, newspaper articles, letters, diaries, literary sources and/or secondary sources.</p> <p>The source material for each elective is comparable and is placed in the same order. One source shows broad perspectives, interpretations or historiography.</p>
<p>Section Two Explanation – Unit 3 30% of the total examination One question from a choice of three for each elective Suggested working time: 55 minutes</p>	<p>Questions are specific to the Unit 3 electives.</p> <p>Use of questions common to all electives is not precluded.</p>

Section	Supporting information
<p>Section Three Source analysis – Unit 4 20% of the total examination One question Suggested working time: 35 minutes</p>	<p>The question consists of three parts, based on the Historical Skills which are structured as a series of open and/or partially open questions. Each part is of increasing complexity.</p> <p>This question is applicable to all Unit 4 electives.</p> <p>There are three sources for each elective which the candidate is required to interpret, analyse, evaluate and/or synthesise. The question requires candidates to use evidence from the sources.</p> <p>Source material can include: photographs; cartoons; paintings; graphs; and/or extracts from government papers, newspaper articles, letters, diaries, literary sources and/or secondary sources.</p> <p>The source material for each elective is comparable and is placed in the same order. One source shows broad perspectives, interpretations or historiography.</p>
<p>Section Four Explanation – Unit 4 30% of the total examination One question from a choice of three for each elective Suggested working time: 55 minutes</p>	<p>Questions are specific to the Unit 4 electives.</p> <p>Use of questions common to all electives is not precluded.</p>

Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12

A	<p>Analyses, interprets and evaluates sources for evidence.</p> <p>Responds to key words in research or essay questions, effectively applying analytical skills, accurate evidence and historical understandings from appropriately acknowledged sources.</p> <p>Constructs a coherent and logical structure for an argument by consistently using relevant details of the historical narrative</p> <p>Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of different perspectives and interpretations of history.</p> <p>Consistently uses appropriate historical terms and concepts.</p> <p>Evaluates the extent to which forces (including people, events, ideas and/or structures) have direct and indirect consequences.</p> <p>Evaluates the significance/impact of forces on continuity and change.</p>
B	<p>Analyses and interprets sources for evidence.</p> <p>Responds to key words in research or essay questions, applying detailed evidence and historical understandings from appropriately acknowledged sources.</p> <p>Constructs a logical structure for an argument by using relevant details of the historical narrative.</p> <p>Demonstrates a well-developed understanding of different perspectives and interpretations of history.</p> <p>Uses appropriate historical terms and concepts.</p> <p>Discusses the relationships between forces (including people, events, ideas and structures).</p> <p>Discusses the significance/impact of forces on continuity and change.</p>
C	<p>Begins to analyse and interpret sources for evidence.</p> <p>Responds to some aspects of the research or essay question and uses mainly accurate evidence to support statements or broad generalisations through well structured texts.</p> <p>Develops a structure for an argument by using some relevant details of the historical narrative</p> <p>Uses mostly relevant historical terms and concepts.</p> <p>Demonstrates a general understanding of different perspectives and interpretations of history.</p> <p>Describes the major features of the narrative</p> <p>Identifies simple relationships between forces (including people, events, ideas and structures).</p> <p>Demonstrates an understanding of continuity and change.</p>
D	<p>Attempts to analyse sources for evidence.</p> <p>Endeavours to respond to the research or essay question; displays limited application of evidence.</p> <p>Demonstrates minimal understanding of perspectives and interpretations of history.</p> <p>Identifies some features of the historical narrative.</p> <p>Identifies limited relationships between people, events, ideas and/or structures.</p> <p>Demonstrates a limited understanding of continuity and change.</p>
E	<p>Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.</p>

These grade descriptions will be reviewed at the end of the second year of implementation of this syllabus.

Appendix 2 – Glossary

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

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.

Concept

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

Contemporary world

As defined in this syllabus, the period of modern world history from 1945 to 2001.

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 the study of history, evidence is the information obtained from sources that is valuable for a particular inquiry. Evidence can be used to help construct an historical narrative, to support a hypothesis or to prove or disprove a conclusion.

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.

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 world

As defined in this syllabus, the period of time in the modern world between 1750 and 2001.

Perspective

A person's perspective is their point of view, the position from which 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.

Primary sources

In the study of history, primary sources are objects and documents created or written during the time being investigated, for example, during an event or very soon after. Examples of primary sources include official documents, such as laws and treaties; personal documents, such as diaries and letters; photographs; film and documentaries. These original, firsthand accounts are analysed by the historian to answer questions about 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.

Secondary sources

In the study of history, secondary sources are accounts about the past that were created after the time being investigated and which often use or refer to primary sources, and present a particular interpretation. Examples of secondary sources include writings of historians, encyclopaedias, documentaries, history textbooks, and websites.

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, newspaper articles, photos, and journal entries). A source becomes 'evidence' if it is of value to a particular inquiry.

