

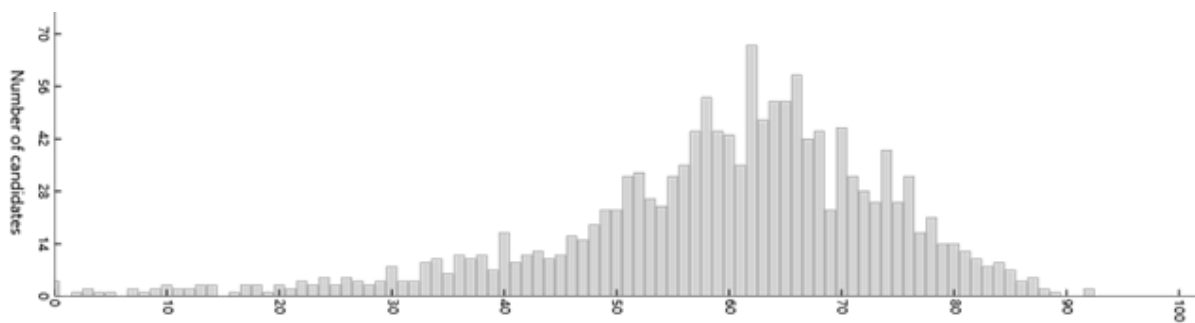


Summary report of the 2023 ATAR course examination report: Modern History

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2023	1456	33
2022	1527	47
2021	1681	38
2020	1731	31

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

Examination score distribution



Summary

The examination structure was unchanged from 2022 and consisted of four sections, with candidates being required to attempt all questions in Sections One and Three and choose one of three questions available in Sections Two and Four appropriate to the elective they studied.

Attempted by 1456 candidates Mean 58.82% Max 92.00% Min 0.00%

Section means were:

Section One: Source analysis—Unit 3	Mean 59.56%		
Attempted by 1448 candidates	Mean 14.89(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00
Section Two: Essay—Unit 3	Mean 61.06%		
Attempted by 1421 candidates	Mean 15.26(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00
Section Three: Source analysis—Unit 4	Mean 59.12%		
Attempted by 1439 candidates	Mean 14.78(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00
Section Four: Essay—Unit 4	Mean 55.56%		
Attempted by 1386 candidates	Mean 13.89(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00

General comments

The examination was generally well-received, with the inclusion of unfamiliar sources ensuring the majority of candidates were analysing new content. Candidates performed consistently across the examination paper with similar means for Sections One and Three. However, there was a lower mean for Section Four, most likely due to the high number of incomplete or not attempted essays. Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–1945 was the most popular choice of elective for Unit 3 with 80% of candidates attempting it. For Unit 4, attempted by 60% of candidates, The changing European world since 1945 was the most popular elective.

Advice for candidates

- In the Source analysis sections, read the questions carefully as wording and mark allocations may change from previous years. Make sure you keep focused on the skill being assessed. For example, when considering the purpose of sources, be careful not to write about the message.
- Make sure you read the accompanying text above each source that includes its provenance (who produced it, when and where) as this will often help with your analysis of the purpose, contestability, and perspectives of the sources.
- Try to allocate your time equally across all sections to maximise your results by providing complete answers to all questions. Furthermore, manage your time appropriately in the Source analysis sections.
- When writing introductions to your essays, provide a succinct proposition/answer to the question that highlights the key points of your argument. Introductions should not be taking up a whole page or retelling the broad history/extensive background to the topic.
- Ensure you focus on the key terms of essay questions. For example, if the instruction is 'debate', then you should provide a sufficient counter argument.
- It is not necessary to cite references to facts included in essays, and when including quotes, ensure they are relevant and assist your analysis and evaluation.

Advice for teachers

- Remind students to spend time deconstructing the sources, considering the supporting text, title, and captions, so they fully engage with the sources in order to write specific analysis of perspectives and usefulness, rather than only providing generic comments, such as simply stating that a source 'is biased'.
- Encourage students to respond to the directional/key terms in essay questions, for example, noting the difference between 'impact' and 'transform'. Furthermore, where an examination question requires multiple angles/content to be discussed, candidates should plan and include this in their responses. For example, by referring to 'reasons for' as well as 'consequences of' and by providing a counter argument of reasonable depth in 'debate' questions.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Generally, the Source analysis sections, the topics and question structure were well-received. The electives were considered comparable in terms of the similarity of source and essay types.

Section One: Source analysis – Unit 3 (25 Marks)

Attempted by 1448 candidates Mean 14.89/(25) Max 25.00 Min 0.00

For Question 1 part (a) across all three electives, candidates generally answered well, although there were a number of responses that compared topics/content of the sources rather than the messages. There was also often excessive description of elements within the sources, resulting in unnecessarily long responses, thus adversely affecting the time left to complete subsequent question parts. Many candidates were relying on 'bias' as their assessment of the usefulness of sources for Question 1 part (b), or they produced lists of what the sources did not show. Across all electives, candidates failed to explore the sources in greater depth, for example, the propaganda element of speeches from Lenin and Mao, and Billy Hughes' speech being driven by his desire for re-election. The majority of responses considered both elements of Question 1 part (d). However, there were some candidates not accounting for the perspectives of the sources. For part (e), a focus on leadership seemed to be accessible to many candidates. However, numerous responses referred only to the leader evident in each source and then provided a list of leaders who were omitted. Stronger answers engaged specifically with the question by considering the insight of the leaders provided by the source set.

Section Two: Essay – Unit 3 (25 Marks)

Attempted by 1421 candidates Mean 15.26(/25) Max 25.00 Min 0.00

The responses for Russia and the Soviet Union elective were evenly distributed over all three questions. The Australia and China electives saw the majority of candidates answer the 'Examine the impact' question.

Section Three: Source analysis – Unit 4 (25 Marks)

Attempted by 1439 candidates Mean 14.78(/25) Max 25.00 Min 0.00

Several issues were identified with questions in Section Three, that were common to all three electives. For Question 11 part (a), many answers provided general rather than specific information on the context of the sources with too much focus on events, people and ideas that occurred after the time of the source, rather than more exploration of the period before and/or during the time of the source. For Question 11 part (b), candidates often compared and contrasted what the sources 'showed' or 'depicted', discussing the message rather than the purpose of the sources. For part (d), there was often a reliance on identifying contestability by merely stating the source was biased, with no argument explaining what the bias was and why this made the argument contestable. Candidates often restricted their comments to new leadership, government or a new policy direction when analysing the sources for Question 11 part (e), rather than 'political changes' in general. Many candidates did not secure higher marks due to answers describing what was shown in each source or commenting on how well the source depicted political changes, as per the Question 1 part (e) question structure. Higher marks were awarded to candidates who identified political changes represented in the sources and then evaluated their importance across the whole period of study.

Section Four: Essay – Unit 4 (25 Marks)

Attempted by 1386 candidates Mean 13.89(/25) Max 25.00 Min 0.00

Question 13 was by far the most popular choice of essay with 60% of The changing European world since 1945 elective candidates attempting it. There was a reasonable distribution of candidates attempting all other questions suggesting all questions were deemed accessible, apart from Question 15, attempted by just 4% of the Australia's engagement with Asia elective candidates.