



ANCIENT HISTORY

ATAR course

**Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: Rationale and Aims
For teaching in 2027**

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.

Background

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment for reviewing the nomenclature of courses, the Authority has updated the rationale and aims of each syllabus.

The revised rationale and aims are aligned with the mapping of the general capabilities to provide clear connections between the rationale, aims and syllabus content. The rationale outlines what the subject is about and why it is important. It describes what students can expect to study in the course, along with the knowledge, skills and understandings they will develop throughout the course. It also explains how these can be applied in everyday life and references potential future pathways, outlining how students might connect what they learn in the course to further education, training and employment opportunities.

Important information

WACE Refreshment: Reviewing the nomenclature of courses

This document contains information that will be included in the syllabus effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of the 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 ATAR course explores early civilisations through the analysis of material and written remains, providing insight into the development of human societies. It examines social structures, governance and cultural achievements, fostering curiosity and appreciation for the legacy of ancient societies and their influence on the modern world. The course focuses on the development of early human communities to the end of late antiquity 650 CE, particularly the ancient societies of Europe, the Near East and Asia.

The course stimulates students' curiosity and imagination and enriches their appreciation of humanity and the value of the ancient past. It investigates life in the ancient world by studying the social, political, economic, military and religious institutions of one ancient society. It explores significant features such as slavery, technology, engineering, religious beliefs, funerary practices and warfare within the broader historical narrative. The course enables students to engage with surviving evidence from the ancient past, addressing challenges related to authentication and reliability, and analyse evidence about individuals, events and societal developments, considering how these have been interpreted and represented over time.

Students develop critical literacy skills, including the ability to analyse, interpret and synthesise historical evidence. They construct reasoned arguments, evaluate a variety of sources for reliability and bias, and develop historiographical skills to understand representations of the ancient world. Students enhance and grow increasingly sophisticated research and communication skills, developing analytical thinking and cultural awareness.

The knowledge and skills gained in the course are applicable in daily life, helping students critically evaluate information, engage in informed discussions and understand historical influences on contemporary societies. By recognising patterns of continuity and change, students gain a broader perspective on global issues and human civilisation.

The Ancient History ATAR 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 ATAR course aims to develop students’:

- knowledge and understanding of the ancient past, including key individuals, institutions, structures and features of ancient societies
- capacity to undertake historical inquiry, including skills in inquiry and research, interpretation using sources, evidence-based arguments and communication
- analytical and critical thinking using key historical concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy, perspectives, interpretations and representations
- appreciation of the origins, impact and legacy of ideas, beliefs and values of the ancient world.