



2007

Australian History GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

This was the third year of the revised *Australian History VCE Study Design*. Students appeared to be more familiar with the exam layout, produced answers that demonstrated an awareness of all areas of the course and displayed appropriate knowledge and understanding of the topics. A pleasing aspect this year was that most students used the space provided in the exam paper itself and did not require the extra space at the back of the booklet.

A common weakness of this year's responses was that many students demonstrated knowledge but their answers were not relevant to the question asked. Students need to read the question carefully and answer the question that has been asked, not one they were expecting to see. It was evident that some students were trying to use responses from past exams or prepared answers that did not fit the questions on this year's paper. Many students did not argue their responses adequately when the question asked them to consider 'to what extent'. There was excellent use of quotations from sources, particularly in the essay questions.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section A

Document chosen	None	A.	B.
%	0	79	21

i.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	2	18	80	1.8

ii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	3	5	20	35	37	3.0

iii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	3	8	18	31	22	16	4.0

iv.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	4	3	5	11	17	18	20	12	10	4.9

Document A

This was by far the more popular document chosen by students.

i.

Students scored full marks by providing two of the following responses:

- killing a servant
- destroying sheep
- attacking others
- a lack of aggression.

Students who gave only one correct response were unable to gain full marks.

ii.

Students needed to explain what Learmonth meant by 'vices introduced by the white man' and give one example of this. Two marks were awarded for the explanation and two for an appropriate example, such as alcohol, disease, theft, certain crimes and venereal disease. Discriminating factors were the quality and sophistication of each response.

iii.

Students needed to address the question and challenge the statement by arguing that there were other causes for 'the disappearance of native tribes'. References to dispossession of their land, loss of traditional food and water resources as



well as cultural misunderstandings were some of the arguments that could have been used. Better answers showed a high level of knowledge and information, with evidence that was varied and remained relevant.

iv.

This question acted as a reasonable discriminator of students' ability to write about this Area of Study. Many students recognised that Learmonth's views were not typical of most settlers at the time as very few would have this type of understanding and empathy for their situation – they were too busy trying to make money and succeed to consider their impact on the native population. Evidence here could have come from other settlers' views and experiences that were negative towards Aborigines.

Some students recognised that there were squatters and landowners who held similar views to Learmonth and were able to argue this position. Again, better answers showed knowledge, evidence and relevance to the question.

Document B

i.

Students were rewarded here for being able to relate the information presented in the written piece to the question asked. The maximum score of two marks was awarded if the student was able to identify what the settlers expected on arrival at Port Phillip District/Colony of Victoria and where this would take place. The responses therefore should have been along the lines of 'Every man expected to be "his own master" and this would happen on the "diggings" (goldfields).'

ii.

Two marks were awarded for mentioning two changes in social relationships and giving a brief explanation of each. The changes in social relationships could have included:

- no touching of hats
- meeting on equal terms
- a spirit of independence
- former positions were no longer recognised
- no old fashioned customs.

iii.

Students needed to identify two ideas brought by migrants between 1835 and 1860. One mark was awarded for identifying each idea and two marks for explaining each idea. Possible example of ideas brought by migrants included:

- equalitarianism
- democracy
- self improvement
- universal education
- independence from Britain
- parliamentary representation
- equality of opportunity.

Students' explanations of these needed to show how each idea contributed to the growth of the colony by citing examples of each idea, such as self government, the Eureka rebellion and establishment of the University of Melbourne in 1854.

iv.

Unfortunately many students did not adequately argue their point of view as to what extent the gold rushes changed the aspirations, hopes and motivations of those who came to the colony. Students must realise that questions of this nature require them to **argue** their case.

Students talked about expansion of the colony, the possibility of land ownership and a less structured society. Some made the point that after the gold rushes there were more possibilities in relation to employment, establishment of trades and more social opportunities. Also, it was recognised that most people hoped to improve their position but the discovery of gold changed their aspirations. Students argued that population growth after the gold rushes changed circumstances not necessarily personal views or ideas. Better answers commented on all three terms – hopes, aspirations and motivations – as well as provided knowledge, evidence and relevance to the question.

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Section B

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	9	5	23	22	41	2.8

This question was not as straightforward as in other years, and many students discussed Acts introduced after Federation was achieved. Students needed to identify two issues that needed to be addressed **before** Federation was achieved in 1901. One mark was awarded for identifying an issue and one mark explaining each idea. Possible issues included:

- the location of a capital city
- protection versus free trade
- franchise – who would be considered a citizen
- the Constitution
- state rights versus national rights
- defence.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	4	7	15	27	24	18	4.0

Again, many students did not address the question of 'to what extent'. To achieve full marks, students needed to do this and provide answers that remained relevant. The best answers argued that some legislation did not exclude groups from participating in the Australian nation and gave examples of the *Invalid and Old Age Pension Act 1908*, the *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902* and the *Maternity Allowance Act 1912* and then argued that some Acts did exclude some groups from participating in the Australian nation, such as the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, the *Pacific Island Labourers Act 1904* and the *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902* because it excluded Aborigines. Again relevance, knowledge and evidence were used as discriminators when marking.

Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	8	3	5	6	9	12	13	16	13	8	7	5.7

This question saw a range of responses that demonstrated students' ability to write about this Area of Study. Students needed to show some understanding of what national identity was and how it had come about. Some students referred to the bushman mythology using the *Bulletin*, writers and painters. Mateship, a fair go and loyalty to Britain were also points made in answering this question. Better answers provided varied evidence, demonstrated students' knowledge and remained relevant by arguing their point of view soundly. A few answers went beyond 1914. Teachers and students need to be aware this is outside the Area of Study, 1888–1914, and no marks were awarded for this.

Section C

Question chosen	None	a.	b.	c.
%	1	37	30	32

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	6	5	7	9	11	10	9	8	7	3	4	12.9

The quality of responses to the essay question depended on the depth of knowledge displayed, evidence applied and the argument used.

Question 3a.

This question asked students to consider the divisions in society during World War I; had they virtually disappeared and was society united in a common cause? Better students did not accept the contention posed by this question. Many argued that society was united over some things and divided over others. Divisions identified included conscription, the Catholic Church, Labour split, waterfront strikes and union strikes.

Middle range and weaker responses only discussed the war without directing their responses to the question and considering the extent to which the people were united.



Question 3b.

This question asked students to consider the response of Australians to the Great Depression and whether everyone suffered during the Great Depression. Better students acknowledged the two parts of the question and argued the extent to which they agreed. Students argued that many factors determined responses to the Great Depression, such as class, location, occupation, gender, age, employment status and urban and rural situations; these factors determined the degree of suffering for the each group. Weaker responses did not challenge the concept that 'everyone suffered'.

Question 3c.

This question allowed students to agree or disagree with the contention that 'World War II led only to short-term change'. Better students were able argue to what extent this challenged old certainties. Some students argued that women in the workforce faced short-term change but after the war men came back to the same circumstances, although some suggested this was not entirely accurate. Another argument used was that Australia's alliance with Britain was challenged and shifted to America, which was certainly different to what had occurred in the past. Some students noted that this new alliance with America remained after the war. Student's answers varied depending on whether the student considered the period up to 1945 or up to 1950, which was reasonable under the guidelines of the study guide.

Section D

Question chosen	None	A.	B.	C.	D.
%	3	2	80	3	12

Identification

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	8	23	30	32	2.8

Evaluation

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	8	5	9	10	15	14	17	12	10	4.5

Analysis

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	14	4	6	9	14	15	16	13	9	4.4

This year students were provided with written representations for all four areas of study. By far the most common representation chosen by students in this section was 'Attitudes to the Vietnam War', option B. It is important to note that the same marking process was applied for all sections, no matter what representation the student had chosen.

Some students presented their answers in essay form, while others framed their answer under the dot points provided and wrote their response as three short answers. Students who adopted the second approach were often better able to keep their responses relevant and to the point. However, teachers and students should be aware both methods are acceptable and can gain full marks.

Responses to Section D were marked in the following manner.

- Identification of the attitudes reflected in the representation. Use evidence from the representation to support your answer.
Students were awarded two marks for identifying attitudes contained in the representation and two marks for evidence/explanation.
- Evaluation of the degree to which the representation reflects attitudes about the issues that you have studied at that particular point in time.
Students were awarded up to eight marks in this section, providing they wrote about the time the representation was taken from. Discriminating factors included the quality of the response in relation to knowledge, relevance and evidence.
- Analysis of changing attitudes in relation to this issue. To support your comments, use evidence from the other point in time that you have studied.
Students were awarded four marks for analysing the changing attitudes in relation to the issue and four marks for evidence from the other point in time.

A. Attitudes to Indigenous Rights

The document provided reflected the right of Aborigines to protest and the need for the government to take action, although in the political climate this may have been delicate. However, it was hinted that the protest was not really legitimate.



Students referred to the reason behind the protests as being land rights and gave evidence of people who supported the Tent Embassy and their reasons. They were also able to provide evidence of the general attitude of white people, particularly (Liberal) politicians who tended to be critical and unsupportive of the embassy. They also showed that political support was given by the ALP.

Better students argued that attitudes had changed since the 1967 referendum to change the Constitution was passed, and hence Aboriginal rights became an important issue in national politics. Some argued that the success of the referendum did not indicate a real support for Aboriginal rights but merely support for Commonwealth rights over citizens.

B. Attitudes to the Vietnam War

This document showed that Calwell (ALP) believed that participating in the Vietnam War was against Australia's best interests; the people should oppose it and the war was morally wrong.

Most students recognised that Calwell's ideas were not reflective of the time (1965) as most people were in support of the government's action. Students went on to talk about support for the war through newspapers, religious groups, the RSL and gallop polls, culminating in the decisive 1966 federal election victory for the Liberal Government. Better answers also pointed out that there was little challenge to the role of government and that the fight against communism was widely accepted.

The change of attitudes came between 1965 and 1970 by way of television, protest movements, the Tet offensive and My Lai massacre and the 1970s' moratoriums. Better responses used examples and polls to illustrate this. Some students suggested that Calwell's document was ahead of its time.

C. Attitudes to the Environment

Most students recognised that this document reflected such attitudes to the environment as the right of the government to intervene, the importance of conservation to the nation and the debate between state and federal rights.

Students commented that society at large supported the stopping of the Franklin Dam and the dominance of this issue in the public domain at the time. Good responses provided a range of evidence to support this – cartoons, polls, editorials and the like.

Many answers suggested that attitudes had changed significantly since the flooding of Lake Pedder in 1972. They referred to the attitudes of Tasmanian politicians at the time and the somewhat indifferent attitude of Tasmanians and many other Australians. They referred to the establishment of the Green party in 1972 to campaign to stop the dam. Better responses then went on to comment on how things had change by 1973, using a range of evidence from conservationists, politicians, economists and the general public. They also recognised that despite the Franklin Dam victory, public opinion was, in the main, indifferent.

D. Attitudes to Immigration

The representation reflected attitudes to immigration concerning the need to control numbers. It reflected the attitude that the government has the right to restrict numbers and inferred that the issue was still colour and race, rather than skills. The document reflected a negative attitude towards those coming from Vietnam.

Better students showed how these views towards boat people were supported by some sections of the community, especially in the Northern Territory and Queensland. They went on to show evidence of compassion and a sense of responsibility for the boat people, both for their dangerous journey and due to our connection with the Vietnam War.

Students compared the attitudes reflected in the 1970s with the attitudes that were shown in the 1960s as the 'White Australia Policy' was dismantled. Good responses commented on early moves to relax the policy under Menzies, and the more concerted effort of the Holt Government which saw moves to allow Middle Eastern and Asian immigration under certain conditions. They also referred to public opinion lagging behind government policies and argued that many of the attitudes associated with the 1960s had not changed by the 1970s, but they had moved away from assimilation to multiculturalism.