



GENERAL COMMENTS

Due to the revised *Australian History VCE Study Design*, the format of the 2005 the examination paper was considerably different from previous years. Students were examined on a range of historical skills including depth of knowledge, critical analysis, reflective scrutiny and essay writing. The marking scheme reflected these skills and assessors worked diligently to ensure that all students were rewarded for what they had learnt during the year.

Overall, the quality of the papers presented was reasonably good. Clearly, there were many highly skilled young historians who studied Australian History Units 3 and 4 in 2005, and the revised course provided an exciting and challenging opportunity for students. Teachers appear to have embraced the changes to the course and most had prepared their students well for the requirements of the new examination format.

Unfortunately, in several of the short-answer questions, students were not awarded maximum marks because they did not meet the requirements of the question. Students must read the questions carefully and teachers should provide them with strategies to assist in unpacking the various components of a question before they prepare a response

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section A

Question 1

Document chosen	none	A	B
%	0	75	25

i.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	2	12	86	1.9

ii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	5	22	38	33	3.0

iii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	2	5	12	20	25	33	4.5

iv.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	4	2	5	8	15	16	23	15	12	5.2

Document A

This question was by far the more popular in this section and, given the changes to the 2005 Study Design, the examiners were not surprised by its popularity.

i.

Students were rewarded for their ability to relate information presented to them in the written piece to the question asked. The maximum score of two marks was awarded if the student was able to identify two reasons to explain the rapid decline of the Aboriginal population. These included the Aboriginal way of life; 'gradual extinction...mode of life'; examples of western civilisation ('introduction...vices') and/or changes in food and clothing.

ii.

Students responded to this question reasonably well. Students needed to explain that La Trobe's words reflected values of the time in regard to 'different' being synonymous with 'peculiar', and/or identify differences/peculiarities in property



ownership, dress, food, family patterns and reciprocity. Specific evidence should have included reference to Katherine Kirkland.

iii.

Again, this was a reasonably well answered question. Students were required to identify two examples of European influence that impacted on Aboriginal numbers. References to alcohol, food, disease, violence, dispossession of hunting grounds, and/or exploitation of women were rewarded. One mark was awarded for each example and two marks were given for each explanation.

iv.

In this question, marks were awarded based on three areas: response to the question, level of knowledge and information; and the relevance and sophistication of the evidence used. The majority of responses agreed with the view expressed in the question, though there were several students who took the alternate view. The best answers covered both views, suggesting that with more knowledge and understanding, and less greed and arrogance, etc., the impact could have been less severe for some. Specific evidence cited included actual events, statistics of the number of Aboriginals killed and references to individual people (Aboriginal and European).

Document B

i.

Students were rewarded for their ability to relate the information presented to them in the written piece to the question asked. The maximum score of two marks was awarded if the student was able to identify one idea that underpinned the settlement and briefly explain its meaning. Such ideas came from early Victorian Britain and were based on selfish aspirations about improving personal prosperity and position and/or a desire to return to Britain with higher status and better lifestyles.

ii.

This question required students to make a statement concerning their view of the contention presented. They were then rewarded for the strength of their argument and the significance of the evidence used in their narrative.

Interestingly, students were divided in their opinions on this issue. Some agreed with the statement by referring to the many ways in which Port Phillip society mirrored British society in areas such as social classes, architecture, legal and political institutions, churches, theatre and entertainment, styles of dress, sport, etc. Others challenged the second part of the quote by suggesting that some settlers became extremely wealthy as a result of wool and the large amounts of land they acquired. In this regard, they claimed that there was not extreme poverty. Evidence cited included references to assisted immigration and ex-convicts, labourers, shepherds, etc. on properties and to Aborigines.

iii.

Unfortunately, some students did not score as well as they could have on this question because they failed to give **two** examples of individuals or groups. Students were given one mark for each individual or group named, and two marks for each explanation of how their hopes and motivations were bred. Groups and individuals cited included those who:

- came over from Van Diemen's Land with flocks of sheep; for example, John Batman, John Pascoe Fawkner, the Hentys, the Learmonth brothers, the Winter brothers and George and Phillip Russell
- brought flocks overland from NSW; for example, Joseph Hawdon, John Gardiner and John Hepburn
- were men of capital who migrated directly from the British Isles; for example, the Black Brothers, Cecil Cooke, Alexander Russell and William Stuart
- settled in Melbourne and Geelong and set up businesses or professional practices; for example, George Arden, the a'Beckettes, William Stawell and Redmond Barry, J Graham, Henry Dendy, JB Were and F Dalgety
- came out as assisted immigrants who were looking for a better life.

iv.

In this question, marks were awarded based on three areas: response to the question, level of knowledge and information, and the relevance and sophistication of the evidence used. Better responses considered the values and aspirations behind the colony's development (ideas about egalitarianism, democracy, a white society, a well-educated population, etc.) and examined some of the writings and speeches that reflected these changed visions. The best responses suggested that the

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underlying visions about wealth, self-improvement and white, male superiority did not change substantially as a result of gold – they were simply given more opportunity to flourish. A number of students argued that the idea of self-government and separate identity was indeed a shift from earlier views. Middle-range responses talked about actual changes brought about by gold: the growth of the population; the growth of wealth; the development of internal population centres; the building of grand Victorian cities such as Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong; and the emergence of institutions such as the University, the public library, the museum, Mechanics' Institutes, etc. without attempting to compare these with earlier visions

Section B

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	6	19	24	45	2.9

This was a straightforward knowledge question taken directly from the dot points in the Study Design. Students were awarded one mark for each idea and one mark for an explanation of each idea. Although most students were able to identify one idea, again a considerable number of students did not score maximum marks because they did not consider two ideas. High-scoring responses referred to the emerging concept of national identity; White Australia; increasing inter-colonial contact and the desire to remove trade barriers; defence fears; the desire for uniform laws relating to the exclusion of non-whites; and the fear of foreigners.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	6	4	8	17	26	25	15	3.9

Although this question once again called for knowledge specifically related to the dot points outlined in the Study Design, many students were unable to make valid statements about such a key concept from this Area of Study. Clearly the framers of the federation viewed Australian citizenship as a right, but only for white Australians of British or European origin. Citizenship brought democratic rights (including votes for women in some states), but only within a framework of loyalty and allegiance to the British crown.

There were notions that this new nation was to be a working man's paradise, free from the ills of the old world, young, forward-looking and egalitarian. Two marks were awarded for such an explanation. Groups included in this view of citizenship included Australian born people of British origin; British born people; mothers and families; workers; and elderly people. Excluded groups included people of Asian origin; Aborigines; and South Sea Islanders. Students who referred to members of these groups in their discussion about citizenship were awarded the remaining four marks.

Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	10	3	4	5	8	11	13	15	14	8	8	5.7

Again, students' responses were assessed based on three areas: response to the question, level of knowledge and information, and relevance and sophistication of the evidence used. The very best answers reflected an understanding of the complexity of federation, compared the nation in 1914 with the views of the constitution framers of the late 19th century and were able to discuss specific pieces of legislation.

In general, many of the hopes of the new nation were on the way to being realised by 1914 but the fears were less likely to have materialised. The overall concept of Australia as a British nation in the antipodes was largely realised so that Australia's enthusiastic entry into World War I in 1914 was seen as automatic. Groups that could be discussed include workers, women, mothers, soldiers, the Chinese and Aborigines.

Hopes about equality and welfare were realised by legislation such as the *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902*; the various excise and tariff Acts from 1902 that gave protection to local production; the *Invalid and Old-Age Pension Act 1908*; and the *Maternity Allowances Act 1912*. These, combined with the *Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904* and judgments such as the *Harvester Judgment* in 1907, generally created a standard of living that was among the highest in the world. Many students were able to state that these benefits were not extended to Aborigines.

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Fears about French, German, Japanese and Russian ambitions in the area proved to be unfounded. The *Defence Act 1909* established compulsory military training which was to prove the basis of the first AIF (Australian Imperial Force) in 1914. Fears about larger and more populous states dominating the federation were largely resolved by the creation of the Senate.

Section C

Question chosen	none	a.	b.	c.
%	1	30	37	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	2	1	2	3	3	4	4	8	5	8	8	12	11	8	7	7	3	4	12.8

Students were assessed according to argument, relevance, evidence and knowledge gained from a variety of sources. It was pleasing to note that there were few essays that were not awarded marks for knowledge and relevance. However, teachers are once again urged to encourage students to challenge the quotes presented in these types of questions. The very best essays were those which considered the contention from a range of perspectives. It is also interesting to note that the three essay topics were tackled by roughly the same number of students.

Assessors rewarded responses that presented a coherent argument, provided evidence to support the contention and remained relevant to the question asked. There were no set responses expected in this section.

Question 3a.

This question asked students to examine the extent to which Australian society was cohesive during World War I and whether that cohesion was redefined by the experience of the war. Students tended to struggle with the definition of cohesion, which, in the light of its prominence in the Study Design, was a little disappointing. Better students took notice of the word 'significantly' and dealt with different phases of the war, explaining that cohesion was strong early in the war but weakened significantly later in the campaign. Middle-range and weaker answers merely listed changes that occurred in Australia because of World War I and ignored the issue of cohesion.

With varying degrees of sophistication, many students mentioned factors such as a previously united society split apart during World War I due to war weariness; divisions between those who enlisted and those who didn't; resentment by women who wanted to play a more active role; perceptions that there was inequality of sacrifice between the working and middle classes; political upheavals; and the bitter conscription debate. Few students adopted the approach that there was still strong cohesion within groups (for example, soldiers, women campaigning against conscription, etc.).

Question 3b.

This question suggested that although the Great Depression caused short-term changes, it did not have a significant impact on Australian society. Better responses examined a range of short-term consequences such as business failure; unemployment and its consequences, such as family break-up and homelessness; emergence of the *susso* and assistance from private charities; political instability; and the emergence of extremist groups. The very best responses then argued that the fundamentals of Australian society – the family, the welfare state, the role of churches and the rural lifestyle as the backbone of the economy – barely changed and in some ways became stronger. Strong responses made much of the term 'significantly' in their arguments.

A number of students argued that for some there was little change at all, even in the short term. They cited examples of those who remained in work (such as government employees and teachers), those who owned businesses unaffected by the downturn (such as cinema owners and large retailers) and referred to the fact that although wages fell, prices for most commodities fell even more.

Middle-range and weaker answers simply listed a range of changes that occurred because of the Great Depression with little attempt to comment on the significance of the change.

Question 3c.

This question presented a very positive view of the Australian response to World War II and, as expected, most students supported the statement given. These responses discussed a range of examples of unity and mutual support, including

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enlistment, involvement of women in the services and the workforce, 'equality of sacrifice' in terms of rationing, manpower, cooperation of schoolchildren, and political cooperation. Some students wrote about the reasons for unity; for example, the threat of invasion and previous experience of war.

The most perceptive and best responses suggested there were some tensions and divisions during this time, involving strikers, pacifists, 'enemies in our midst', and women's involvement in the war. These answers commented that the level of unity changed according to different phases of the war. Some students even suggested that unity and cooperation were only obvious in the bleakest years of war – 1942 and 1943 – and presented evidence to show that at other times the level of unity could be questioned. Students were aptly rewarded for using a variety of sources and historians.

Section D

Representation chosen	none	A	B	C	D
%	1	5	78	3	13

Identification

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	3	4	23	44	27	2.9

Evaluation

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	5	6	11	11	17	15	17	10	8	4.4

Analysis

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	11	5	6	8	13	14	18	14	11	4.5

Unfortunately, many students failed to score well here because they did not refer to the **other** significant point in time in their analysis of the document. This may merely reflect an initial uncertainty about the intent of this Area of Study, but teachers need to ensure that **both** points in time are covered sufficiently. The key element here is that students must be able to evaluate the extent of changes in attitudes over time. Thus, they need to have adequate knowledge and understanding of the issues and evidence from both time periods.

Many students dealt with each of the dot points in a separate paragraph. While this can be a useful teaching tool, it should be noted that the very best students were able to integrate their analysis of the three requirements throughout their response. This also ensured that they addressed both points in time from the beginning of their answer.

Question 4

Attitudes to Indigenous rights

Only a small number of students responded on this representation. As there were two views shown, the general attitudes to this issue were reflected to some degree and most students were able to identify these. Most responses referred to the reasons behind the protest (land rights) and gave further evidence of people who supported the tent embassy and why. They also provided evidence of the general attitude of the white Australian community and of politicians (Liberal and Labor), who tended to be critical and unsupportive of the embassy.

Most students suggested that attitudes to Aboriginal rights had changed since 1967, when over 90 per cent of Australians voted to remove discrimination against Aborigines in the Constitution. The best responses questioned whether this reflected a true change, suggesting that this was merely a token decision which did not indicate a real change of Australians' attitudes towards Indigenous rights. The Australian people were prepared to support changes to Aboriginal rights on paper, but were not ready to effect true reform.

Attitudes to the Vietnam War

This was the most popular question in this section, and nearly all students who selected it were able to discuss the attitude of Menzies, the communist threat and the domino theory.

Students commented that the rather negative attitudes reflected in this cartoon were not widespread in the community in 1965, when most Australians either supported the commitment to the war or were ignorant or indifferent about it. Reference

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was made to other representations that echoed the attitudes in the cartoon and also to those that showed a more positive view of Australia's involvement in the war.

The majority of responses argued that attitudes had changed significantly by 1970 but many were unable to provide specific evidence of this. The better answers offered a variety of evidence – newspaper articles, cartoons, photographs (especially of protests) and statistics – to support their contention. The very best students cited the 1969 election result as evidence that, although opposition to the war had grown, many Australians still supported the war.

Most students did not identify the scepticism in this representation

Attitudes to the environment

This was the least popular question in this section and few students attempted to respond to this representation. Those who did commented on the extent to which this representation reflected general attitudes. The best responses showed evidence of the division in Australian society (between politicians, the green movement and members of the Tasmanian public) concerning this issue.

Most responses suggested that attitudes had changed since 1972 merely because the dam was not built in 1983. Better answers cited evidence to support this: attitudes of politicians, the formation of the Green Party and the general public's opinion. Several students suggested that despite the Franklin victory, public opinion still remained indifferent to environmental concerns, which may indicate a lack of definable change.

Attitudes to immigration

This was the second most popular question in this section. Most responses showed that some sections of the community held negative views towards boat people. The better answers identified that the document reflected a sense of compassion and responsibility towards people who had survived such a dangerous journey. These responses compared the attitudes reflected in 1977 with those that were shown in the 1960s as the 'White Australia' policy was dismantled.

The very best answers 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 were able to cite examples of attitude change as reflected in the media of the time, many of which lagged behind government policies.