2022 Ancient Studies Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2022 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

Across the Assessment Types for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is the equivalent of 1000 words. Students should not speed-up the recording of their videos excessively in an attempt to condense more content into the maximum time limit.

From 2023, if a video is flagged by markers/moderators as impacted by speed, schools will be requested to provide a transcript and markers/moderators will be advised to mark/moderate based on the evidence in the transcript, only considering evidence up to the maximum word limit (e.g. up to 2000 words for AT3).

If the speed of the recording makes the speech incomprehensible, it affects the accuracy of transcriptions and it also impacts the ability of markers/moderators to find evidence of student achievement against the performance standards.

School Assessment

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* thoroughly checking that all grades entered in schools online are correct.
* ensuring all student materials are uploaded in schools online
* ensuring the uploaded tasks are legible
* ensuring that audio files/recordings are audible before uploading to Schools Online. Where no written support material was also provided, it was difficult to identify evidence of students’ achievements against the standards

Assessment Type 1: Skills and Applications

Students produce at least four skills and applications tasks, with at least two of the tasks completed under supervised conditions. These tasks, taken together, comprise a maximum of 4000 words, or equivalent in oral or multimodal form. Students should use a variety of forms to present evidence of their learning.

Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of texts, artefacts, ideas, events, and/or people while reflecting on the political, social, cultural, and/or economic diversity within the ancient world.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* using fewer specific features in each task. Narrowing of task scope allows greater depth in student response
* allowing greater flexibility in how students can respond to or present the task
* ensuring task design is clear and aligned with specifically chosen performance standards
* to support students in delving into the complexities of ancient societies and explore critically and from multiple perspectives, students must have access to good quality primary and secondary sources. Teachers are encouraged to seek out primary source materials and academic materials to support their teaching programs
* the more successful timed responses enabled students to critically analyse material, not just simply recount information. Task design that encouraged one or two sentence answers in response to a set source, included multiple choice questions, or asked students to respond briefly to extensive text, limited students’ abilities to engage in detail with the material and demonstrate in-depth and critical understanding.

The more successful responses commonly:

* utilised primary and secondary source material to support analysis and develop ideas
* utilised both in-text references and a reference list to support depth of research
* examined a range of primary sources to support arguments and conclusions. Students considered both written and archaeological sources in their responses
* analysed and evaluated primary sources throughout their responses, including the nature of these sources as evidence (A3)
* used subject-specific language, including correct terminology for literary, historical and/or archaeological concepts
* had comprehensive knowledge and understanding across all KU standards, especially evident in timed tasks
* recognised and reflected on the diversity within the ancient world through a thorough examination of the political, social, cultural, and economic landscape
* communicated their points and arguments clearly and persuasively using fluently integrated subject-specific language and primary and secondary sources
* demonstrated evidence of extensive and insightful research which allowed for the inclusion of evidence from high-quality primary and secondary sources
* discussed ideas, concepts and topics from multiple perspectives and were critical in their interrogation of information
* took the opportunity to provide visual material and analysis on PowerPoint slides which supported but was different to the information presented on the slides. These students were able to maximise time limits for presentations and generally gave a more a sophisticated response as opposed to students who just read the same information from their slides

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided a range of quotes from ancient writers and literature without any critique of the nature of these sources (A3), or authentic application in context. These quotes appeared in assessment work as knowledge but without understanding or discussion of relevance or context
* had a heavy reliance on secondary sources with little, to no, synthesis of evidence from primary sources
* relied on recount of information and were more narrative in nature without engaging in meaningful critical analysis of ideas, events, or people
* made big claims/generalisations without supporting these claims with evidence from primary and/or secondary sources
* did not include any referencing/bibliography, or there were inconsistencies in referencing style
* did not communicate their points clearly throughout their responses
* did not consider the quality of secondary sources they were using in their responses. Websites such as Grade Saver were used for analysis of drama or other literary texts, and Wikipedia was overly relied on for presentation of knowledge and understanding
* were unable to discuss diversity or multiple perspectives

Assessment Type 2: Connections

Students produce at least two connections tasks, exploring connections between different ancient societies, between an ancient society and a contemporary society, between an ancient society and another society, or within an ancient society. All tasks together comprise a maximum of 2000 words, or equivalent in oral or multimodal form, and at least one task should focus on the ideas and/or innovations that emerged from the ancient world and include consideration of their influence.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* designing tasks that allow students to undertake a deep and authentic exploration of ideas or innovations from the ancient world
* designing tasks that support students to define a clear and specific focus for their connections tasks
* supporting students to move beyond just examining similarities and differences
* ensuring that at least one task covered RA2, as required in the subject outline.

The more successful responses commonly:

* explored concepts or ideas in detail without trying to cover multiple aspects of comparison
* were explicit in the connections being made in the work and explored these in depth
* directly addressed the influence of ideas or innovations from the ancient world, avoiding broad, sweeping generalisations
* moved beyond just examining the similarities and differences between societies and there was evidence of insightful analysis and evaluation of the connections between or within societies
* fluently embedded evidence from sources
* demonstrated evidence of effective research through the inclusion of a diverse range of primary and secondary material
* persuasively communicated their points and ideas using subject-specific language throughout their responses
* examined both written and archaeological sources to support their analysis
* could make authentic connections between the ancient and modern world
* could discuss sources rather than just cite them

The less successful responses commonly:

* made tenuous connections between the ancient and modern world that were not supported by research or evidence from sources
* focused solely on similarities and differences when drawing connections between or within societies which prevented students from making the leap to discussing ideas, concepts, or innovations in depth
* did not consider the influence of the ideas or innovations and forced a connection in a superficial way
* dealt with societies separately despite being asked to compare which resulted in an unbalanced discussion
* did not acknowledge sources, or there was limited use of sources and research to develop ideas
* relied heavily on recounting information with a linking sentence to either show a similarity or difference; this was especially prevalent when students chose to investigate how myths or stories have been treated across cultures and times
* did not fully utilise allocated word count for the assessment type which limited the ability to expand in a meaningful way on ideas
* attempted to identify too many connections from one ancient civilisation to compare with the modern world. For example, in a study of modern connections to ancient Rome, trying to cover architecture, games, dining, family structure, inventions, and agricultural practices all in the one response, limiting authentic engagement with the content.

External Assessment

Teachers can improve the marking process and the online process by:

* ensuring student work is de-identified, including student names and school names/numbers/logos
* ensuring file names do not include student names
* removing task sheets with marked rubrics.

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

Students produce one literary, societal, or historical inquiry, which is presented as an informed and persuasive argument. The inquiry gives students an opportunity to explore an area of specialisation of individual interest where they propose and develop a particular point of view about an issue, as negotiated with their teacher. At least 50% of the inquiry should be located in the period from c. 2000 BCE to 907 CE.

Students may produce their informed and persuasive argument in the form of a written essay to a maximum of 2000 words, or in multimodal or oral form to a maximum of 12 minutes or equivalent. All features of the assessment design criteria for this subject are assessed in the inquiry.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* verifying student work before submitting for marking
* supporting students to keep their piece structured and the argument focused
* encouraging students to play to their strengths and choose a mode of communication that best suits them. Students and teachers are reminded that the inquiry need not be a formal academic essay. Those who played to their strengths were often able to engage confidently with the more challenging assessment design criteria
* assisting students with the development of their inquiry questions with the specific features in mind. Some students were hampered by their question design/approach
* ensuring that students are choosing topics within the scope of the course (e.g. some investigations on Vikings sailed close to being outside of scope and discussed events in the 11th century CE)
* supporting students to locate relevant and reliable primary and secondary sources.

The more successful responses commonly:

* made use of good quality primary and secondary sources
* had well formulated and achievable questions that allowed students to address the specific features
* considered the perspective of primary sources and evaluated the nature of these sources as evidence
* constructed a strong and well-supported argument which had clear links back to the inquiry question
* spent considerable time evaluating sources while still maintaining balance in their argument. Inquiries that balanced source credibility, content and argument were best placed to present a synthesised response that fully answered the question
* integrated and discussed language of the ancient culture and used accurate and appropriate terminology throughout their piece
* cited sources accurately and consistently
* adhered to the word count/time limit
* made a genuine attempt to address RA2 in their work

paid attention to a range of sources, with some inquiries also making use of visual material and drawing on archaeological evidence to support arguments. Most inquiries provided both primary and secondary sources demonstrating a genuine effort by students to research widely and provide evidence of this via both intext referencing and by supplying a bibliography.

The less successful responses commonly:

* had poorly formulated questions or no specific question at all. These questions did not invite a reasoned historical argument and often led to historical recount of events
* had significant sections of plagiarism throughout the inquiry. Teachers need to ensure student work can be verified before submitting for marking
* did not evaluate the nature of sources as evidence
* had little to no evidence to support their points, making broad sweeping statements without evidence to back up their claims
* completed a narrative of historical events that did not include an argument or analysis of sources
* chose a comparative topic that led to rather trite or cursory comparisons without much detailed analysis
* had a topic so broad in scope it made it difficult for students to develop a worthwhile response
* lacked depth in their understanding of literary, historical and/or archaeological concepts
* quoted primary source material but did not consider that a primary source may give a particular perspective.

For further support on unpacking the Assessment Design Criteria, please see the following links:

* Understanding the ADC – Knowledge and Understanding <https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/1c90fca3-c7b3-5a89-ad51-cbf42684b3cb>
* Understanding the ADC – Research and Analysis <https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/03a916d0-e787-c120-96b1-65c1dad7d453>
* Understanding the ADC – Application <https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/ba9e5ade-bc39-0a0e-02cd-69b96ac88c22>