# Government of South Australia LogoSACE Board Logo2023 Modern History Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2023 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.

School Assessment

Teachers can improve the online moderation process by:

* uploading a Learning and Assessment Plan and a copy of each task sheet
* including marked/annotated rubrics for each task
* ensuring the uploaded tasks are legible and in an acceptable format
* providing detailed reasoning for any special provisions/adjustments given for individual students
* ensuring that the grades indicated on the Performance Standards Record (PSR) match the grades given on included rubrics
* removing a task for the entire class, rather than just for individual students (if choosing to access subject adjustments).

Assessment Type 1: Historical Skills

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* providing variation in task types to enable students to exhibit their application of historical skills (such as, creating source analysis broadsheets, obituaries, advocacy speeches, magazine articles, podcasts, source trails, curating museum exhibits, live interviews, empathetic letter writing, and evaluating historiographical approaches to different periods)
* allowing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability to meet performance standards
* designing assessment tasks that focus on (3 or 4) specific performance standards
* designing tasks which foster motivation, engagement, and offer opportunities for personal creativity
* including the language of the performance standards within the task sheet to guide student response. This is particularly helpful in tasks that specifically askstudents to analyse short-term and long-term impacts and/or internal and external forces and challenges
* featuring tasks that showcase the use of historical conventions
* ensuring that tasks require clear engagement with the topic, comprehensive explanation and discussion of highly relevant evidence, and conclusions drawn from the evidence presented
* ensuring that empathy tasks include a depth of understanding and integration of evidence.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated interconnection between people, ideas, and events
* included clear and thoughtful counterarguments
* included reliable sources, quotes, and statistics from different points of view to support arguments
* were responses to tasks such as source analysis, atlas creation, museum exhibitions, and primary source trails which focused on analysis and evaluation of sources
* utilised strong structure in argument, providing evidence to support their position with analysis, evaluation, and signposting back to the original thesis or main point of argument
* explored ideas, people, and events through a relevant social, political, or economic lens
* included consistent referencing and inclusion of a bibliography
* synthesised a range of sources, and points of view, rather than relying on generic online sources
* clarified key terms and ideas before analysing and evaluating
* directly engaged with key concepts by presenting clear definitions connected to ideas, people, and events, and specified which aspects would be examined in the task
* used the language of the performance standards to signpost where they were addressed
* analysed both internal and external forces
* analysed both short-term and long-term impacts
* showed proficiency in applying subject-specific language when addressing concepts such as source origin, nature, bias, perspective, and reliability
* integrated student voice and ideas rather than an overreliance on quotes
* acknowledged and explored alternative viewpoints (often seen in empathetic writing tasks where students write from two or three different perspectives)
* acknowledged and explored different historical schools of thought evaluating different historian’s conclusions
* stayed within the parameters set (word/time limits).

The less successful responses commonly:

* were based on tasks that assessed too many assessment design criteria and therefore tended to demonstrate uneven and superficial evidence against some performance standards
* narrated, discussed, or recounted chronologically
* were sped up oral responses to meet time limits
* were completed under such limited time restraints that it was difficult to avoid superficial responses
* included emotive language, judgment, statistics, and provided inadequate use and acknowledgement of appropriate sources
* did not include a bibliography where required
* lacked proper structure to provide a counterargument when required
* included historically inaccurate information about ideas, events, and people
* lacked strong conclusions displaying student insight
* exceeded word/time limits
* lacked application of historical conventions in essays and sources analysis tasks.

Assessment Type 2: Historical Study

Students undertake an individual historical study based on an aspect of the world since 1750. Students inquire into, explore, and research a historical idea, event, person, or group in depth. They interpret and synthesise evidence to support their argument and draw conclusions.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* working with students to formulate and develop a question that will set them up to meet the performance requirements
* guiding students to explore specific historical arguments rather than allowing students to provide an overview of an idea, person, or event. The most effective historical studies have a clear and specific focus, including time frame and place
* providing multimodal options
* having students focus on meeting performance standard A1 or A2
* ensuring students adhere to word count or time allocated.

The more successful responses commonly:

* had well considered, precise questions that allowed for historical analysis and a clear argument
* were clearly defined within a timeframe
* included ‘to what extent’, a thesis was accurate
* showed a sophisticated use and engagement of historiography
* had a clear and well-structured question that allowed for a balanced and academic response
* had a clear, well thought out structure
* provided a clear introduction which included the question’s context, explained key terms, and clearly outlined the argument
* covered four or more points (two or more paragraphs arguing for the proposition, followed by at least one counter argument) to demonstrate a wider understanding
* used connecting sentences to synthesise arguments
* concluded with a thorough summary that directly answered the question and encapsulated the primary arguments
* kept within the formalities of the selected media
* clarified key terms and ideas throughout the study
* made extensive use of an appropriate range of primary and secondary sources
* considered and included multiple historian’s perspectives where appropriate
* considered and evaluated different perspectives and points of view
* used effective topic sentences which provided clear context and supported the argument
* synthesised evidence
* included a clear, reasonable, and well-articulated counter argument
* were referenced accurately and consistently
* demonstrated a range of historical skills
* were within the Historical period (1750 - early 2000s)
* adhered to the word/time limits
* focused on specific features A1 or A2.

The less successful responses commonly:

* had a poorly considered question that was either too vague, too broad, or too generalised
* chose topics that lacked historical significance or tried to cover too large a timeframe
* did not provide the scope to analyse and evaluate from a social, economic, and/or political lens
* narrated, recounted, or described rather than analysed and evaluatedthe ideas, events and thoughts, motives, and actions of individuals or groups
* lacked structure
* lacked a counterargument
* lacked historian’s perspectives
* offered conclusions that were not based on any provided evidence
* included speculation, opinion, sweeping statements, and non-historical arguments
* relied on generic online evidence
* lacked engagement with primary and secondary sources
* often did not use the word count/time limit effectively, which impacted their ability to meet each performance standard adequately
* were assessed against both A1 and A2
* included limited referencing (this was often seen on multimodal submissions)
* included a bibliography rather than providing referencing throughout the submission
* focused outside the historical period (1750-early 2000s)
* focused on contemporary history, limiting availability of adequate primary and secondary sources
* investigated a conspiracy theory or popular perspective of a major historical figure, impacting the scope to develop an argument
* did not explicitly answer the thesis.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

There was a noticeable improvement in the standard of student responses to Parts A and B in this year’s exam. In Part A, more students at least attempted to propose an argument and provide at least one counter argument. While the proportion of high-end responses remains disappointingly low, there were significantly fewer low-end answers. The majority of essays reflected students’ strong ability to understand and explore historical concepts and the role of ideas, people and groups relevant to the proposition. Most students were also able to develop coherent and well-reasoned arguments and counter arguments using relevant evidence to support them.

Overall, students engaged strongly with the Haitian Revolution sources as demonstrated by their responses in Part B. A small but significant number of students seemed to struggle with the nature of Source 2, confusing an etching with other forms of art. It is apparent that many students still have difficulty with the skill of drawing a conclusion from a source. Once again, responses to question (f) continued to show more sophistication and better structure than in previous years.

Markers’ overall observations were that:

* questions 7 and 8 continue to be by far the most popular questions
* successful students incorporated key terms from the question/proposition into their responses in Parts A and B
* only a very small proportion of essays were in the high-grade band
* students overall were more successful in their responses in Part B of the exam than they were in Part A.

Part A

More successful essays responses commonly:

* addressed the wording of the proposition and used it to drive their topic sentences and analysis
* provided breadth of exploration in their argument and counter argument
* incorporated short-and long-term features and factors
* integrated social, political, and/or economic aspects where relevant
* considered internal and external forces related to the proposition where appropriate
* used the introduction to clarify their meaning of key words and terms in the proposition and summarise their argument and counter argument
* connected factors and forces to strengthen their argument and counter argument
* displayed an understanding of historical concepts without naming them (e.g. cause and effect, continuity and change, significance, evidence)
* effectively used topic sentences to signpost the aspect of argument to be developed in each paragraph
* contained comprehensive conclusions that summarised the key points made in the preceding paragraphs
* integrated the counter argument into the whole essay, adding depth and balance to their argument
* applied relevant and accurate evidence to illustrate the points being made
* made detailed, direct, and nuanced connections and judgements about ideas, events and/or people and their impacts in relation to the proposition.

Less successful essay responses commonly:

* did not address the complete proposition
* lacked any counter argument
* included information from outside the time frame of proposition or focus area
* did not clarify their understanding of key words or terms from the proposition
* contained unsupported generalisation
* lacked an argument or provided a cursory one.

Part B

More successful essays responses:

* were well structured
* provided appropriate detail
* contained relevant evidence from sources when required.

Less successful essay responses:

* provided responses without reference to any evidence from the source
* stated that sources are limited without reasoning
* did not address the nature of sources clearly
* did not explain how the nature and origin of the sources were a strength or limitation.

Essays

Question 1

There were insufficient responses to this question to provide meaningful feedback.

Question 2

There were insufficient responses to this question to provide meaningful feedback.

Question 3

There were insufficient responses to this question to provide meaningful feedback.

Question 4

There were few responses to this question.

More successful responses:

* provided context for the policies put into place.

Less successful responses:

* did not identify why it was impractical.

Question 5

There were few responses to this question.

More successful responses:

* provided evidence of strong understanding of the short-term and long-term causes of the Great Depression.

Less successful responses:

* provided a general description without responding to the proposition
* explained greed in the context of a consequence of the Great Depression rather than a cause
* discussed events following the Great Depression and Roosevelt's New Deal
* did not draw connections to how greed either did or did not contribute towards the Great Depression.

Question 6

More successful responses:

* showed a clear understanding of the term ‘superpower’
* demonstrated why the power of the USA was under threat and by whom
* illustrated the features of a superpower that the USA already possessed (e.g. economic, military, technological, diplomatic).

Less successful responses:

* considered USA only as an economic superpower and failed to identify the role that the atomic bomb had in developing its political or military superpower status
* contained largely irrelevant information that bore little relation to the specifics of the question
* used information outside the scope of the question and its time period (e.g. post-war).

Question 7

More successful responses:

* considered political, social, and cultural issues that also overwhelmed the Republic
* identified clear ‘economic problems’ that existed between 1919 and 1933
* argued the role that the Treaty of Versailles and economic mismanagement in the early 1920s had in overwhelming the Republic
* identified what the term ‘overwhelmed’ meant
* identified the role of Public Works, the Dawes Plan, and the Golden Years as evidence that the Republic wasn’t always overwhelmed and that these solutions actually assisted the economy to recover
* clearly identified economic, political, and social factors that contributed to the Weimar Republic’s struggle to remain effective
* provided evidence from historians and/or statistical evidence to support their arguments
* showed a very good understanding of the relationship between economic problems and the tensions and difficulties (e.g. social and political unrest) which characterised the Weimar Republic during that period.

Less successful responses:

* described the economic factors that existed at the time but did not explain how or why they overwhelmed the Weimar Republic
* spoke about the impact of the Great Depression in the mid/late 1930s outside of the scope of the proposition
* linked hyperinflation of the 1920s to the Great Depression of the 1930s. There was no indication that these events were almost a decade apart, and in some cases suggested that the Great Depression caused hyperinflation in the 1920s
* provided no counter argument
* were predominantly narrative
* provided only detailed arguments supporting the proposition
* raised the issue of art and culture but failed to connect them to the Weimar Republic being overwhelmed
* discussed events after the fall of the Weimar Republic
* focussed on the rise of the Nazi Party rather than the overwhelming of the Weimar Republic
* lacked topic sentences to maintain their focus on the proposition.

Question 8

More successful responses:

* provided other reasons for the consolidation of power by the Nazis
* remained within their self-imposed timeframe to determine the month/year by which the Nazi Party had consolidated their power
* considered the political results of pre-1933 elections compared to the post-Reichstag Fire
* discussed the removal of Communist threats during 1933 through arrests and imprisonments
* identified the meaning of consolidate
* argued how the threat of Communism did not just assist the Nazis into power, but also allowed them to strengthen their authority once in power
* articulated clearly and with intelligence the way fear of communism strengthened support for Nazism among many of Germany's elite, especially after 1933
* linked the social turmoil to the rapid actions the Nazi government took in 1933 to remove their opponents from German politics
* discussed connections between the use of propaganda and acts of terror with the consolidation of Nazi power.

Less successful responses:

* considered events and factors from other time periods (e.g. nullification of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact)
* did not seem to understand the word ‘consolidate’
* disregarded the proposition
* focussed primarily on the rise of the Nazi Party through the use of force and propaganda
* considered Russia as the only communist threat
* did not specifically discuss or give examples about communism in Germany
* discounted economic and political failures
* overestimated the role of communism.

Question 9

More successful responses:

* considered a range of diverse factors (e.g. the shifting roles of women in the workforce and society, the changing face of manufacturing industries, rationing and the nation changing to a war footing)
* addressed the basic features and systems within Germany that did or didn’t change during the war years
* drew connections between those changes and Germany’s fortunes during the war.

Less successful responses:

* did not clarify or seem to understand the term ‘Total War’
* described external factors (e.g. loss of the Battles of Britain and Stalingrad, Allied bombing, D-Day) without connecting them to the proposition
* only discussed changes that were not fundamental
* considered the impact of Total War on Germany during the Great War rather than World War Two
* considered the Treaty of Versailles the Weimar Republic, and Post-World War 2 division of Germany into zones.

Question 10

There were few responses to this question. They were limited in their success.

More successful responses:

* clearly explained other factors that helped the Communist Party reinforce its power immediately following the Second World War.

Less successful responses:

* identified economic policies of the 1920s, not paying attention to the time period of the focus area
* showed little understanding of the mechanisms of Soviet repression and control.

Question 11

There were few responses to this question.

More successful responses:

* provided multiple examples of how art improved nationalism especially through propaganda and developing a sense of unity across multiple communities, ethnic groups and language groups
* provided counter arguments including how the role of women, technology and sport expanded nationalism
* made specific links between the attempts at spreading nationalism and their success in fostering nationalism.

Less successful responses:

* tended to be more descriptive and focussed solely on culture
* did not address the political dimensions which contributed to the expansion of Soviet nationalism at this time.

Question 12

More successful responses:

* considered the role of the reforms alongside issues related to the physical war in the Afghanistan and the continued ideological war with the West.
* considered the role of the two policies independently from each other and demonstrated their combined impact.

Less successful responses:

* did not argue or consider whether perestroika and glasnost created or exacerbated the divisions
* discussed only perestroika and glasnost
* did not engage with the nature and dynamics of other factors which accounted for the Soviet Union's 'fatal divisions' during these years (e.g. the impact of the War in Afghanistan, living standards)
* endeavoured to argue how perestroika and glasnost were responsible for the fall of the Soviet Union
* did not demonstrate a clear understanding of perestroika or glasnost.

Question 13

There were insufficient responses to this question to provide meaningful feedback.

Question 14

There were insufficient responses to this question to provide meaningful feedback.

Question 15

There were insufficient responses to this question to provide meaningful feedback.

Question 16

There were few responses to this question. They were generally well answered.

More successful responses:

explained the way a range of factors (e.g. China's tense relationship with the Soviet Union, the fear of neighbouring Muslim republics and their influence on China's borders, the desire for Mao's China to gain from the mineral and other resources of the region, suppression of the Uyghur population) contributed to this forced migration

identified why the Soviet Union was a threat and therefore why increased migration was necessary.

Question 17

There were few responses to this question.

More successful responses:

* showed clear understanding of the sources of power in China in the 1960s and 1970s
* linked China's experience of the Cultural Revolution, and its legacy, to the Gang of Four.

Less successful responses:

* were general in nature
* did not explore the impact of the Gang of Four, instead focused on other people
* did not identify the Gang of Four
* did not explain how the Gang of Four destabilised the political system.

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Question 18

There were few responses to this question. They were limited in their success.

Less successful responses:

* discussed construction projects from the wrong time period (i.e. under Mao)

Sources Analysis

Question (a)

More successful responses:

* able to identify two ways that conditions in Haiti were extremely difficult prior to the revolution
* quoted the source
* provided an answer in one or two sentences.

Less successful responses:

* referred to the background statement instead of Source 1 as outlined by the question.

Question (b)

More successful responses:

* used the source to identify the impacts of the revolution on the residents themselves
* stated how the burning of buildings impacted on residents
* provided evidence of what they presumed were impacts on residents from the source (e.g. properties were destroyed, people were left homeless, people were trying to escape, people were despairing)
* multiple students interpreted the figure with their hands up in multiple ways, all of which were successful (e.g. celebration, distress, calling for help from the ships at sea).

Less successful responses:

* were too long
* repeated the same point
* did not include evidence from the source
* claimed that the people seemed ready to attack without stating what made them think this was the case
* used information from other sources.

Question (c)

More successful responses:

* were able to justify their conclusion by referring to an aspect of the source (e.g. groups of people leaving carrying their possessions, the city seemingly empty).

Less successful responses:

* provided responses instead of conclusions (e.g. France bankrupted Haiti, Haiti still relied heavily on France)
* failed to show how they drew a conclusion
* did not understand the meaning of contagion in that context.

Question (d)

More successful responses:

* qualified the extent to which one source supported the other by using appropriate terms (e.g. greatly, considerable, slightly)
* demonstrated at least one point of similarity and one point of difference
* justified assertions with evidence
* provided more points of similarity when claiming a strong level of extent (e.g. largely)
* provided more points of difference when claiming a low level of extent (e.g. slightly).

Less successful responses:

* did not state the extent to which the information in Source 4 supported the information in Source 5
* provided a meaningless qualifier (e.g. ‘some’, ‘an’, ‘certain’)
* only provided similarities or differences.

Question (e)

More successful responses:

* clearly identified the origin and nature of each source
* addressed the nature and origin of each source rather than their content
* provided clear responses by using separate paragraphs, each with a clear focus (e.g. strengths of each source, strengths and limitations of one source)
* provided examples/quotes from each source to support their claims.

Less successful responses:

* did not show strong understanding of the nature and origin of sources and how these impacted their strengths or limitations
* focussed more on the content of the sources rather that their nature and origin
* simplistically claimed that a source was strong or weak simply because it was primary or secondary without elaborating on the strengths or limitations of that source
* mentioned bias in a superficial way (e.g. claimed that the author or source could be biased) and did not provide detail or an example of the nature of the bias in one or both sources
* failed to understand the nature of an engraving (i.e. used to create multiple copies of the image, instead of being a single work of art, such as a painting)
* claimed that not knowing the author’s credentials was a weakness when the author’s details were provided
* made generalised statements without providing specific evidence from a source
* considered only one source
* students displayed a limited understanding of the strengths and limitations of a secondary source and assumed that secondary sources are poor value for historical inquiry because the person was not there
* lacked articulation and/or justification of the statements they made
* disregarded the authority of academics, especially those from outside of Haiti or France, as a valid source
* made assumptions about a source (e.g. bias, lack of knowledge) because of its origin
* attempted to draw conclusions rather than assessing strengths and limitations.

Question (f)

More successful responses:

* had clear structures with an introduction, argument, a counter argument, and a clear conclusion
* referred to all sources
* produced well-structured paragraphs with a topic sentence
* provided succinct and relevant evidence from the sources
* obviously took time to plan their response to ensure clarity and both an argument and counter argument
* used TEEL / PEEL / SEXT paragraph structures

Less successful responses:

* provided an extended single paragraph rather than separate, distinct paragraphs
* listed the sources in order with no clear construction of an argument
* provided an overview of the content of a source with no specific evidence and no clear connection to the proposition
* struggled to recognise how Source 1 supported or opposed the proposition (e.g. the Haitian revolution was successful because society was no longer divided or violent)
* failed to name or number the sources to which they were referring.