

HSC HISTORY EXTENSION

Frequently Asked Questions and their Answers

Teachers of HSC History Extension: Attention is drawn to the Official Notice clarifying project requirements in the April Board Bulletin Vol 10 No 2, Official Notices page 2.

◆ Who is the course for?

The History Extension course is designed to enable interested and capable students to build on the outcomes of the Stage 6 Ancient History and Modern History courses in relation to historiography and historical enquiry and communication. History Extension, while designed to enhance the development of critical and reflective thinking skills, is a course designed for Stage 6 students and should be programmed accordingly.

The course builds on the knowledge and skills students are developing through the Stage 6 Ancient and Modern History courses, which in turn build from the students' study of History in Years 7 – 10. It extends student understanding of historiographical issues by exploring how historians work, and provides an opportunity for them to apply their learning by designing and conducting their own historical investigation.

The course has been designed so that all potential students, regardless of their circumstances, can access it. Achievement of course outcomes is not dependent on access to expensive, sophisticated resources.

◆ How do I teach the course when there is so much scope for individual choice within it?

The course may require teachers to assume more of a tutoring/facilitating role than in other History courses because students may be working across a range of topics instead of one specific area. At different times, students will need guidance, stimulus and direct teaching from their teacher, but students with strong independent learning skills are likely to gain the most from the course.

Course delivery is intended to be flexible with no particular sequence of learning required. Feedback from teachers indicates that different delivery modes are occurring:

- teachers and students are studying a selection of readings from the Source Booklet before commencing one case study for the whole group
- teachers and students explore the readings before undertaking a variety of case studies, depending on the interests and History backgrounds of the students
- teachers and students working on the readings and case study/ies concurrently, before beginning the Project

- teachers and students working on readings, case study/ies and project concurrently

◆ **How many of the readings should be covered?**

The readings should be selected to give the students an experience of the range of views represented. Teachers and students should focus on those most appropriate for their case study/ies or the historiographical issues under study. No student is expected to demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of all the readings contained in the Source Book.

Some students and teachers may choose to expand their reading base – this is optional and will depend on their choice of case study, and whether there are historians whose work is central to the case study but who have not been included in the Source Book. Students will be rewarded in the exam for their **understanding about** key historiographical questions, not on detailed knowledge of the readings themselves. As well as the readings contained in the Source Book, students can look at other ways that history has been constructed, for example, film, video and artefacts. The focus remains constant – how history is constructed in different ways, for different purposes, from different viewpoints and from different eras.

◆ **How much do we have to do in the case study?**

Students can, theoretically, read as widely as they wish. However, to gain an understanding of the range of viewpoints about case study material, students would need to familiarise themselves with at least three sources in some depth. These sources should be selected on the basis of how different they are from each other. For example, one could be contemporaneous with the study, and the others from more recent times. One could be a film version or play etc to give the student a different perspective altogether. While choice of potential source material is broad, the focus should be clearly on the subject of the case study and should allow maximum opportunity to explore the key questions.

The aim of the case study is to enable students to develop an understanding of how and why the sources they have accessed have constructed their versions of history. Students will be rewarded for constructing their own coherent argument based on this understanding, not on how much they know and can retell about the specific case study topic.

◆ **What topics can students choose for their projects?**

The range of topics for the project is broad. However, there is not to be significant overlap between the content of the project and content that students would cover in the course of normal classwork studying the examinable content of any other School Certificate or HSC course. The project must be developed from one or more of the areas listed on page 26 of the syllabus. Students can use 2 unit material as a springboard for their choice of project topic, providing that they choose an aspect of

historiographical debate that differentiates their project from content covered in class. For example, a student could undertake a Project of varying views on Stalin's motives for his peace with Germany. This has a different emphasis and depth from anything a student would do in the National Study of 20th Century Russia. The focus is the historiographical debate about the event, rather than the actual event itself.

The project proposal is very important, allowing students to refine the focus of their investigation into something manageable, clearly specific to the historiographical issues of the course, and not too broad or vague. The project proposal will also provide the student with a strong direction for carrying out the investigation.

◆ **How do I mark the project? How do I know my “standard” is right?**

Information about the presentation and certification of the project is contained in the syllabus, pages 23 – 28, and in the support document, pages 19 – 27. The draft performance bands are also useful indicators to assist teachers in their judgement of student achievement of the outcomes of the course. Lastly, there are sample marking guidelines for selected questions from the 2001 HSC Specimen Paper to assist teachers.

Projects should be marked using the common criteria for all projects in the syllabus (page 23). Teachers will need to create marking guidelines related to the criteria so students know how and why marks were allocated. School assessment will be moderated against the cohort's exam performance as is currently the case.

◆ **HSIE contacts at the Board of Studies**

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