

# 2023 VCE Ancient History external assessment report

## General comments

The new examination format introduced in 2022 seems to be one that students have responded to confidently.

In Section A, responses used most or all of the available lines, indicating that students were able to express a substantial amount of information. However, there was a strong reliance on the sources; more ‘own knowledge’ was needed to score higher than medium for most of these answers. This was particularly evident when comparing the two ‘explain’ questions: the one that was linked to a source generated a high average mark overall.

In Section B, students generally composed thoughtful and relevant responses. There were few very short essays. Students tended to show a strong general understanding of the civilisations, which provided a good basis for essay writing. However, the use of specific historical details is essential for obtaining the highest scores.

Some general advice based on common issues is as follows:

- Students need to use dates. Many answers included no dates at all. Dates help to locate specific events and emphasise change, continuity and the relationships between historical factors.
- Students need to quote, paraphrase or otherwise draw on primary sources and historians. Many responses to the ‘analyse’ questions and essays contained no references of this kind at all. Such references are part of the criteria, and the highest marks are only awarded to students who meet all the criteria.
- Students should carefully read all parts of the questions. Some questions referred to specific time periods (‘Amarna Period’, ‘Eighteenth Dynasty’, ‘Archidamian War’) or multiple requirements (‘analyse the influence of Amenhotep III, both as pharaoh and in comparison to ...’, ‘the tribunes of Tiberius Gracchus and Gaius Gracchus’). Students should aim to address all aspects of the question.
- Students should avoid counterfactuals, especially when trying to show the significance of historical events (e.g. ‘Someone other than Cleisthenes could have made significant changes, like Hippias or Hipparchus if they had not been killed ...’).
- Students should be cautious about words and phrases such as ‘inevitably’ and ‘of course’. Part of history writing is to interpret events of the past; their significance is not self-evident.

## Specific information

### Section A

This report will consider the various command words (‘outline’, ‘explain’, ‘evaluate’ and ‘analyse’) first and then discuss the specific questions that used those command words.

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers, or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding, resulting in a total of more or less than 100 per cent.

## Outline

An outline question appeared in Questions 1 (Egypt), 2 (Greece) and 3 (Rome) and in each case was worth 3 marks. The main requirement of these questions was for students to demonstrate comprehension of a specific source by giving a brief summary of whatever features were specified in the question (e.g. 'how tribute and trade contributed to social and political change in New Kingdom Egypt' or 'the democratic features of the Spartan constitution' or 'the relationship between patrons and clients').

Students only needed to use the material in the source provided. There was no need for them to show their own knowledge for this question or to try to interpret the significance of the material in its historical context. Doing so did not gain students any extra marks. The best way to show comprehension of the source was to quote directly (although clear paraphrasing was in most cases accepted).

Almost all students organised their response into a single coherent paragraph, and the highest scoring responses identified at least three distinct points, with each of those points supported by at least one relevant quotation.

Dot points made up only of isolated quotations were not usually a sufficient way to gain full marks because dot points of this kind do not provide an overview of the material or demonstrate comprehension of the source.

Most students scored highly for the 'outline' questions.

### Egypt, Question 1a.

| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 3 | 11 | 34 | 53 | 2.4     |

This source looks at Egypt's contact with the outside world, and the question asks the student to outline the impact of trade and tribute on social and political change in Egypt. Appropriate phrases to quote are: 'to obtain rare or exotic materials and products'; 'to bolster the power base of individuals or groups'; the development of 'large sectors of royal bureaucracy and military power' which were involved in 'obtain[ing] taxes and conscripted labour'; an 'efficient national economic system' suited for 'exact[ing] tribute and spoils'; the ideological and economic importance of 'conquering and ruling' for 'absorb[ing] new wealth' for the king and cults. Some students evidently felt the question wanted them to add additional explanation for how these changes occurred, but this was not required for an 'outline'-type question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Tribute and trade contributed to the increasing wealth of Egypt as 'power and prestige' was accumulated through 'rare or exotic materials and products' which could 'bolster the power base' of nobles and other Egyptians. Through 'obtaining taxes and conscripted labour' from the provinces, Egypt was able to absorb new wealth to enrich the 'estates of the kings and the major religious cults'.*

## Greece, Question 2a.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|---------|
| %     | 2 | 2 | 18 | 78 | 2.7     |

The question was addressed effectively by most students and the source lent itself well to finding and presenting the relevant democratic features. These included ‘the educational system’ (where the sons of the rich and of the poor are raised the same way); ‘no outward mark of distinction between rich and poor’ when grown up; ‘the same arrangements for feeding in communal messes’; the rich and the poor wearing the same clothing; ‘the people choose the members of the council of elders’ and ‘are eligible for the ephorate’. Some students included additional information about the Spartan constitution, but this was not needed and contributed no additional marks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The democratic features of Sparta include indications of equality, such as an education system, ‘where the sons of the rich are raised in the same way as sons of the poor’, arrangements for clothing that mark no ‘distinction’ between classes and dining in ‘communal messes’, as well as this political elements of democracy including the fact that people ‘choose the members of the council of elders’, and were eligible for the position of the ephorate.*

## Rome, Question 3a.

| Marks | 0 | 1  | 2  | 3  | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 3 | 10 | 29 | 58 | 2.4     |

Most students responded effectively to this question and reworked the material in the source to summarise the relationship between patrons and clients. Pertinent information included the distinction between those of ‘superior rank from their inferiors’; the placing of plebeians ‘as a trust in the hands of the patricians’; ‘allowing every plebeian to choose for his patron any patrician whom he himself wished’; protection of the poor being given the ‘handsome designation’ of ‘patronage’ and both groups being assigned ‘friendly offices’. Some students went beyond the source and provided additional information about the relationship between patrons and clients (such as the political support offered by clients) but this was not required by the question and did not add any marks to the result.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The patron-client relationship was founded on Romulus placing ‘the plebeians as a trust in the hands of the patricians’. Conversely, he allowed ‘every plebeian to choose for his patron any patrician whom he himself wished’. There were ‘friendly offices [assigned] to both parties’ which formed ‘a bond of kindness befitting fellow citizens’.*

## Explain

There were two ‘explain’ questions for each civilisation, one requiring the use of a source and one not requiring the use of a source.

An ‘explain’ question required students to give an account of something (why it happened, how it was important) with particular emphasis on causes, effects, change, continuity and the relationship between relevant elements.

Where a source was provided, many students essentially summarised the entire source and provided no substantial additional information; such answers received medium scores. Indeed, by far the greatest limitation observed in these responses was the failure to go beyond the sources. This led to generic claims about art, slavery or conflict that could have been applied to almost any historical context.

It might be useful for students to ask themselves, ‘If there was no source provided, what would I have to say about this thing?’ The highest scoring responses included meaningful additional historical knowledge. Historical knowledge may include dates, names, people, places, events, statistics and other numbers. It can also be useful for a student to define any subject- or civilisation-specific terms in the question; this can help to focus the response. A student can quote from a historical person or historian; this will add to the explanation if it is relevant but is not required for full marks in these questions.

## Egypt, Question 1b.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6 | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|---------|
| %     | 5 | 8 | 17 | 25 | 21 | 16 | 7 | 3.3     |

To effectively respond to this question, students had to consider three elements – references to specific elements in the visual source, an awareness of changes in artistic styles, and a discussion of the crisis of the Amarna Period. Many responses commented on the unique art style associated with Akhenaten (such as the body shape, the family grouping and the prevalence of the sun disc) and made appropriate references to specific elements in the image. Some students then claimed that these changes in art proved that there was a crisis going on at that period. Lower scoring responses tended to describe aspects of the image without discussing what made them significant. The best responses made a clearer link between social and political changes introduced by Akhenaten (especially in terms of conflict with the Amun-Re cult) and the way the changes in art reflected this context.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The changes to art during the Amarna Period reflect the radical shift in religion made by Akhenaten (1353 to 1336 BCE) who changed the state religion, previously dominated by the Amun-Re cult, to the monotheistic worship of Aten, the sun-disc. The change to religion and the shift of the capital to Amarna were radical changes for Egypt which is why the period is often referred to as a time of crisis. Depictions of the Aten were originally anthropomorphic, as shown on Pylon X where the sun God takes the form of a falcon-headed god, but became increasingly unorthodox. The Aten was generally depicted as the sun from which rays emanated ending in hands which extended the ankh, the symbol of life, to the king as shown in Source 2. Akhenaten himself was also depicted in an ‘increasingly grotesque’ (Wilkinson style), also shown in Source 2, with apparently feminine features, large hips and drooping belly, along with more intimate depictions of Akhenaten and his family. This grotesque style may also have been an attempt to make the change of religion more human and relatable.*

## Egypt, Question 1c.

| Marks | 0  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6 | Average |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---------|
| %     | 20 | 12 | 18 | 16 | 13 | 14 | 7 | 2.6     |

In the absence of a source to work with in this question, students simply had to know who Thutmose III was and what he did. Students who knew Thutmose III well were able to present thoughtful and detailed responses. The best of these included references to the number of military campaigns, some of the specific campaigns he fought, the scope and scale of the campaigns and the notion that he expanded New Kingdom Egypt to its greatest extent. Some students discussed his relationship with Hatshepsut, although this was not strictly relevant to the question. Lower scoring responses tended to make broad claims (‘he defeated many enemies’, ‘he gained territory and resources’) that could have been generically applied to any military leader in any historical context.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Thutmosis III's 17 military campaigns across 20 years were extremely beneficial to Egypt. Through Thutmosis III's extensive campaigns he 'beat the Asiatic dynasties into submission' (Breasted). As a result Thutmosis III's reign (1479 to 1425 BCE) established Egyptian dominance from the Euphrates river (north) to the fourth cataract in Nubia (south) extending New Kingdom Egypt to its greatest size. Thutmosis III's military campaigns brought back valuable resources from areas such as Syria-Palestine, such as timber, precious stones, pottery, livestock, and exotic animals that bolstered Egypt's economy. Furthermore, Thutmosis III's military campaigns established lucrative system of vassal towns that 'paid tribute to Thutmoses's greatness' (Redford) and helped to indoctrinate other lands in Egyptian culture. Thutmosis III's military campaigns bolstered Egypt's economy, ensured continued submission from Asiatic dynasties and provided peace and security for Egypt.*

## Greece, Question 2b.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 2 | 2 | 11 | 32 | 24 | 19 | 11 | 3.8     |

Most students were able to make effective use of the source to demonstrate a clear understanding of the conditions that helots faced in Sparta. The higher marks for this question were awarded to those students who could bring in some additional information. This could include fairly obvious points such as the work that helots actually did (such as farming) and the relative size of the helot population (outnumbering Spartiates seven to one). The best responses included some discussion of the effect the helots had on Spartan foreign policy (i.e. that Spartans preferred to stay close to home because of the possibility of a helot revolt).

Example of a high-scoring response:

*The significance of helots in Spartan society lies in the fact that their presence and the constant threat of revolt maintained Sparta's status as a military state. The helots consisted of 'conquered Messenians', captured in the First Messenian War (743–724 BCE) and reconquered after revolt in the Second Messenian War (c. 650 BCE). The Spartans came to depend on the helots for production and agriculture but since the helots outnumbered them seven to one, constant vigilance was required to suppress any threat of revolt. This also meant 'brutal' treatment towards the helots, such as being 'attacked or killed with impunity', by groups of young men, as well as the yearly declaration of war on the helots that added to Sparta's reputation as a force to be reckoned with other such humiliations, including being forced to wear dogskin caps. Sparta's foreign policy was also influenced by their fear of helot revolt and this prevented them from taking in part in long campaigns away from Sparta.*

## Greece, Question 2c.

| Marks | 0  | 1  | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6 | Average |
|-------|----|----|---|----|----|----|---|---------|
| %     | 32 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 17 | 13 | 9 | 2.5     |

Many students evidently did not know what the Ionian Revolt was (as suggested by the high number of students who did not attempt this question or who wrote completely irrelevant things in their responses). The Ionian Revolt is explicitly listed in the Study Design and, like all such points, should be treated as essential knowledge in preparing for the examination. Many students confused it with the revolt of allies of the Delian League. That said, those who did know what the Ionian Revolt was were usually able to present a reasonable sequence of events connecting the Ionian Revolt to the Greco-Persian Wars and the rise of Hellenic identity and unity (and sometimes carrying through to the rise of Athens and the Delian League).

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The Ionian Revolt (499-493) had great consequences in Ancient Greece, the greatest of which was the Persian Wars. The initial Ionian Revolt against Persian control was helped by the mainland Greek states of Athens, and Eretria and included the burning of the Persian king Darius' temple in Sardis in 498. This angered him so much that he ordered his servant to remind him every dinner, 'Master, Remember the Athenians' three times in order to get revenge on Athens. An attempt to invade Greece in 492 failed but this did not stop Darius. His second attempt ended in defeat in 490 at Marathon and the Greeks saw this victory for democracy. Xerxes, the next Persian king, continued this assault on the Greeks but despite gaining ground in central Greece and burning many cities, including Athens, the Persians were defeated after losses in 480 at Salamis and in 479 at Plataea and Mycale. Panhellenic unity in the wake of these wars led to the rise of Athens as the hegemon of Greece and the great conflict of the Peloponnesian War.*

### Rome, Question 3b.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6 | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|---------|
| %     | 3 | 6 | 25 | 28 | 18 | 13 | 7 | 3.2     |

A significant number of students wrote about slaves in a very generic way ('they were owned by citizens', 'they had no rights', 'they had to do demeaning work') that could have been applied to the most general concept of slavery in any historical context. Some students also borrowed from the source on helots, making comparisons that were not really useful. Better responses understood that slavery increased with the growth of Rome's territorial control and slaves were often captured in war. Roman slaves were often highly skilled professionals (such as teachers) and the relationship between slaves and owners could be positive or even familial, especially in the case of slaves gaining their freedom. Most students made appropriate references to the image to support claims of slaves' domestic roles, although admittedly the descriptive text accompanying the image did much of the work of interpreting the image. The best uses of the image included identifying the slaves on the basis of their relatively smaller size and their roles in supporting or serving guests.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Slaves in Rome were an important aspect of the economy and society. As Source 8 shows, household slaves often served the nobility in dining and leisure. Their relatively small size, despite probably being adults indicates their subordinate status. Conflicts like the Punic Wars saw slaves made of those captured in war. As Rome expanded, there was an influx of slaves into the Republic (150,000 slaves were taken from Epirus in 167 BCE alone). Slaves of 'barbarian' origin were often employed on large estates of the nobility for the production of cash crops or employed in state-run mines located in regions like the Iberian Peninsula. Other slaves were raised as gladiators, such as Spartacus. The possession of slaves was a status symbol of the rich (Pompey reputedly owned over 800). Greek or other educated slaves were often employed as tutors or artisans. Manumission was offered to some slaves and freedmen could rise to become wealthy and important members of Roman society in their own right.*

### Rome, Question 3c.

| Marks | 0  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
|-------|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|---------|
| %     | 38 | 18 | 13 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 1.7     |

A large number of students did not know what the Second Samnite War was or why it was important (this was reflected in the large number of blank or irrelevant responses). The Second Samnite War is explicitly mentioned in the Study Design and students should be prepared to write about everything in the Study Design. Some students attempted to address the question with very broad comments about hard-fought battles and territorial gain that did not show any knowledge of this specific conflict. A number of students relied on anecdotes about the Caudine Forks or the evolution of the manipular legion. The best responses

recognised that the war was significant for the manipular legion, the control of territory in central Italy, the importance of loyal allies and the creation of the Via Appia.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The Second Samnite War occurred between 326 and 304 BCE and provided Rome with some of the fundamental attributes that made it so successful in subsequent centuries. A reform in the army occurred in this period, adapted from the Samnites themselves. A transition from hoplite warfare to a manipular system allowed Rome to 'mobilise the manpower of its allies' (Potter). The three line system of maniples made the army more flexible and able to adjust to whatever the situation might be. In addition, Rome learned the power of its 'expanding web' (Gwynn) of an alliance system. Rome acquired many men from other Italian areas, half of which made up the army according to Goldsworthy, allowing them to recover from great setbacks like the humiliating Battle of Caudine Forks in 321. The alliance system allowed the 'defeated enemies of the past to win the wars of the present' according to Goldsworthy. Rome's need for efficient movement through Italy during this period of conflict also led to the creation of the Via Appia, the earliest part of their extensive road network.*

## Analyse

For 'analyse' questions, students are expected to identify important historical elements and discuss the implications of those elements and the relationships between them. The 'analyse' questions in this examination all required references to a source. The wording of these questions was relatively complex, but if parsed correctly provided a sort of 'checklist' for students to work through (e.g. for Egypt, students had to identify Amenhotep III's influence, then the influence of other kings, then compare these influences). As with the explain questions, students often relied heavily on the source and in many cases did not bring in much additional knowledge. The 'other evidence' phrase in the question indicates that students must quote from historical persons or historians (full marks cannot be given for these questions without those quotations). About 40% of these responses included such quotations.

### Egypt, Question 1d.

| Marks | 0  | 1 | 2  | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
|-------|----|---|----|---|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|---------|
| %     | 11 | 9 | 13 | 9 | 13 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 3  | 4.2     |

This question required students to discuss Amenhotep III's influence (with appropriate references to the source) and then compare it to other kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Most students were able to parse the source quite well, observing that Amenhotep III was able to demonstrate his power by withholding his daughters from marriage to other kings while also receiving tribute. This was a good effort considering the fragmentary nature of the material. Most students drew either on this source or their own knowledge to discuss Amenhotep III's diplomatic skills. More knowledgeable students also discussed Amenhotep III's building program and stable reign. The most obvious kings to compare Amenhotep III to are Hatshepsut and Thutmose III since they are the ones named in the Study Design. Relevant points of comparison were to Hatshepsut's diplomacy (such as in her expedition to Punt) and the contrast between Thutmose III's militarism compared to Amenhotep III's diplomacy. Many responses also pointed out the continuity of kingly roles and responsibilities (such as the maintenance of Ma'at). Note that the reference to 'other evidence' in the question indicates the need for historical knowledge and quotations from historians or historical persons (other than the source). These sorts of quotations were only used in about 40% of responses.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Amenhotep III's reign (1391-1353 BCE) was peaceful and prosperous. Although the earlier part of the 18th Dynasty was predominantly characterised by militarism, as shown by kings such as Ahmose I, Thutmose I and III, Amenhotep III's Egypt was secured as peace and diplomacy. As shown in source 3, Amenhotep secured peace with Babylonia through diplomatic marriage which help to bolster Egypt's*

*economy and the king's status with 'greeting gifts' of 'fine horses', 'gold' and 'lapis lazuli'. Although Amenhotep III was not the first to pursue diplomatic marriages, his marriage to the Mitanni, the Babylonians and Assyrians guaranteed Egypt unprecedented wealth and power. Through various connections with allies, Amenhotep III's Egypt 'never had been, nor would be again in such a position of absolute power in the world' (Aldred). As a pharaoh, Amenhotep III strategically secured peace with those who warrior king, such as Thutmose III, had once fought, such as the Mitanni. The benefits of such actions are evident in the monumental building projects of the time such as the temple of Luxor. However, Amenhotep III also influenced significant religious change. Traditionally kings of the 18th dynasty, such as Hatshepsut and Thutmose, donated to and revered the Amun priesthood extensively. Conversely, Amenhotep III sought to quell the power of the priesthood by stressing the multiplicity of deities in Egypt. Amenhotep III's favouring 'diplomacy over militancy' (Dodson) stands in contrast to the earlier 18th century dynasty kings but helped to create an Egypt at the zenith of wealth and power.*

## Greece, Question 2d.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|---------|
| %     | 6 | 6 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 2  | 4.6     |

Most students recognised that the plague had an impact on Athens because it killed a lot of people (typical estimate is one third), which depleted military strength and morale. Students tended to make only passing references to the visual source, observing that the mass grave diagram indicates both the scale of the deaths and the disorder in which they were buried – this was a reasonable application of the source and no more was expected. Many students understood that the death of Pericles in the plague changed Athens' strategy, leading to the rise of the demagogue Cleon and the expansion of conflict until the Peace of Nicias. Note that this question is really asking for a focus on the plague and the Archidamian War; some students commented briefly on the plague but then argued for the importance of other factors (such as Nicias or the battle of Amphipolis) to explain the outcome of the Archidamian War. The question is not asking whether the plague was the decisive factor – it is asking for analysis of the plague's impact. Some students apparently did not know what exactly the Archidamian War was and conflated it with the Peloponnesian War generally, leading to largely irrelevant comments such as the role of Alcibiades or the Spartan alliance with Persia. Again, quotations were required for this question (only about 40% of responses included these).

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Despite its seemingly drastic consequences, the plague of Athens, early in the Archidamian War, did not have a major impact on the outcome of the first ten years of conflict, mostly because of the tenacity of Athens. The plague itself killed around 30% of Athens population which had been crowded inside the Long Walls due to Pericles' vision of a 'fortress Athens'. Thucydides states that around 5000 hoplites and 300 cavalry were killed. Certainly these losses had an impact on Athens' ability to conduct the war, but at this point, offensive actions were mostly limited to superficial raids on the coast of the Peloponnesus. The haphazard arrangement of bodies seen in the mass grave at Kerameikos, speaks to the brutal impact of the plague on the Athenian people however, given that Athens continued to fight (for the most part effectively) for 25 years is evidence in itself that morale was not fatally harmed by the plague. Another explanation for the continuance of Athens' war effort was that Pericles was killed by the plague, the only potential scapegoat the Athenians could have placed the blame for the pestilence, and the death of Pericles was the most significant factor that the plague had on the outcome of the Archidamian War. Pericles had for his fifteen years as strategos (444-429) pursued an aggressively expansionist policy in the Aegean and urged the demos to refuse peace with Sparta and continue 'to suffer in her [Athens] name' (Thucydides). With the death of Pericles, the raucous democratic nature of Athens took over once more, churning through commanders, each with a different view of how the war should be conducted. The demos 'abnormally susceptible to oratory' (Toynbee) gave first Cleon, then Demosthenes, then Nicias the reins of command. The eventual outcome of the Archidamian War was the Peace of Nicias in 421, which was only possible once Cleon, the greatest obstacle to peace, was killed.*

## Rome, Question 3d.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9 | 10 | Average |
|-------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|---------|
| %     | 5 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 16 | 14 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 5 | 4  | 5.1     |

This question asked students to consider the careers of both of the Gracchi brothers and most students could at least use the source to summarise the most salient points. Students were not required to give equal space to each brother as long as both were discussed in a reasonable way. The best responses built on the material in the source and then added specific historical information about each brother, considering the significance of the historical context (such as the inequalities in landownership and the traditional authority of the Senate). Many students assumed that it was about the role of the Gracchi in the fall of the Roman Republic, and so tried to also discuss the role of individuals such as Sulla, Marius, Caesar, Pompey, Augustus and Antony. This was not what the question was asking and perhaps suggests students were trying to adapt a prepared essay to this question. Numerous responses assumed that the social distinction between patricians and plebeians persisted throughout the entire Roman period, which led to inaccurate arguments about the source of the issues that the Gracchi were addressing.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The tribunes of Tiberius (130 BCE) and Gaius (123 and 122 BCE) Gracchus would contribute to immense political changes in the Republic. Tiberius grounded his position on the doctrine that 'the will of the People was sovereign'. Indeed, he believed that it superseded that of the Senate, demonstrated when he bypassed it with his land bill, proposing it directly to the Council of the Plebs, 'shattering the stability of the state' (Cicero). By exploiting political tensions between the aristocratic Optimates and the demagogic Populares, Tiberius believed that he could use 'the People's assemblies for legislation on any subject'. He proposed the revival of the Licinian-Sextian Laws which would limit the amount of public land senators could own, attempting to break their monopolies and 'strike at the roots of the security of the oligarchy'. He proposed that the land of southern Italy be divided into allotments for the urban mob, garnering their support as clients and changing the Republic with populism and political violence, which would ultimately result in his death at the hands of the senators.*

*Gaius Gracchus changed Roman politics by demonstrating that 'the tribunate could be used as a weapon against the state' (Bradley). He weaponised the urban mob through cheap grain rations that could be used as a means of political bribery. This, coupled with his proposed establishment of colonies to settle them and provide employment, gave them 'the dangerous idea that they had a right to say in the government of the country'. Therefore, when Gaius 'an overreaching, open demagogue' (Fagan) proposed the franchise to Rome's Italian allies, he alienated the now-jealous urban mob from his political support. His successive tribunes, contrary to the Republican principle of limited tenure of office, further antagonised relations with the Senate, resulting in Gaius' death and the persecution of his followers.*

## Section B

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | Average |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| %     | 3 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 4  | 6  | 8  | 5  | 7  | 5  | 4  | 5  | 4  | 4  | 3  | 10.3    |

In Section B, there is one essay topic per civilisation and students are instructed to write one essay overall. These topics can cover any combination of items from one or both of the Areas of Study.

The topics in this examination all made contentious and absolute claims about the civilisations, and students were then instructed to 'discuss' them. The command term 'discuss' means to consider the claim carefully and not accept it too readily. The absolute terms in the topics ('same', 'solely', 'always') is a clue that there is a debate to be had. Students who pushed back against the premise tended to produce better arguments overall.

The lack of 'sources as evidence to support a historical argument' (as stated in the assessment criteria for Section B) continues to be an issue in these essays – only about 55% of responses included quotes from sources. Students should aim to include a range of relevant and meaningful references to primary sources and historical interpretations. Primary sources can include material culture (which is particularly useful for Egypt). Quotations from the authors of textbooks do not generally constitute historical interpretations.

## Egypt

There were relatively few of these essays (about 23% of responses) but they tended to be effectively structured. Most students discussed 'ordinary' women in Egypt in one paragraph, outlining their social roles and status but recognising that they had some rights such as divorce and landownership. This was then contrasted to one or two other paragraphs looking at elite women. The best of these essays recognised that elite women could occupy special roles (such as God's Wife) but that the likes of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti were exceptions to the rule and often had to express their power within masculine tropes or established political frameworks. A few students mentioned Tiye and Twosret as further examples of elite women. Less effective arguments tried to claim that the achievements of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti helped to make dramatic changes in the life and social status of New Kingdom Egyptian women.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Women in ancient Egypt were assigned the role of 'Mistress of the House', however, depending on their class and status, this role varied greatly in social and political terms. Most women in ancient Egypt were consigned to support the occupation of their husbands and their children. Even noble women's status was linked to the king. However, New Kingdom Egypt allowed women significantly more freedom than other ancient civilisations and there were exceptions to the typical roles of women.*

*The role of non-noble women in ancient Egypt was linked to that of their husbands, although they enjoyed significant, social and political freedom. Their status increased with marriage and again, with the birth of children, especially sons, and they were 'expected to support their husband in his profession' (Tyldesley). This similarly was not all women in the society experienced this in the same way. Women had significant legal and social freedoms in their roles. Women were able to appear in court as a plaintiff, defendant or witness showing that the Egyptians valued women's voice as much as men's. Women were allowed to buy and sell property and even file for divorce. The will of Naunakhte, for example, demonstrates her ability to assign 'the property of their father in one division' to her eight children. Women were also pictured in tombs, threshing grain, or hunting alongside their husbands as in the tomb of Rekhmire. However, there are also many paintings of women as musicians and dancers, dressed scantily and holding instruments. As such, while many women had the role of women of Mistress of the House and bearer of children and they enjoyed social freedom within Egypt, allowed to operate outside the wheel of their husbands, not all women had the same experience.*

*The noble women of New Kingdom Egypt also held the Role of Mistress of the house, although where they could afford slaves, this role was an entirely supervisory one. Women in the royal harem were linked in name and title to the king; inscriptions reference 'she who is known to the king' and 'she whose name is called by the king'. This demonstrates the dominance of the male presence of the pharaoh over and among the nobility. However, there was a great variety to the roles of women in noble households. The king's Great Wife held significant political power, emphasised in relation to the kings through epithets such as 'king's sister', 'king's mother' and 'king's daughter'. Meanwhile, the noble household also included lowly slaves, wet nurses, handmaids and prostitutes, who cannot be said to have had the same sort of influence. The Great Wife of Amun 'held significant, religious economic and political power' (Tyldesley) through her connection to the great wealth and prestige of the cult of Amun-Re and hence occupied a role that was uniquely different and superior to all other women in the state. To group all women into the same political and social role even within the sphere of the noble court is therefore to ignore the significant power of many Great Wives, as well as the untold lives of many women who entered the harem as captives and concubines.*

*There are many royal women throughout New Kingdom Egypt who can be shown as exceptions, even to the broad scope of women's roles in that period. The reign of Hatshepsut (1479–1458 BCE) demonstrates the ability of women to achieve extraordinary political influence in Egypt. This power is emphasised through her divine birth and coronation scenes at her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri, which portrays her as the natural child of Amun, who proclaims 'mark my crown, it is hers, that she may rule the Two Lands'. Tiye (1398–1338) Nefertiti (1370–1330 BCE), the mother and wife respectively of Akhenaten, similarly held unique political power, as many of the Amarna letters appear addressed directly to them. Nefertiti too held political influence, which 'allowed her to abandon the traditional queen's role of passive observer' (Tyldesley). She was portrayed twice as often as her husband in the temple of Gempaaten, and depicted in her own chariot, wearing many crowns, including the khepresh (war crown) as she smites enemies in a scene of the royal barge. Even queens who are more in the shadow of their husbands, such as Nefertari the great wife of Ramesses II held social influence as she is depicted on the same scale as him in colossal statues, and even has her own temple opposite the Ramesseum. There are therefore many Egyptian women who defied the status quo and aggrandised their role.*

*It would be a narrow-minded view to claim all women in New Kingdom Egypt always held the same social and political roles. Whilst women were consistently seen as connected to their husbands and responsible for the household, there are many roles held by women, slaves, prostitutes, and queens who did not fit into this social norm.*

## Greece

This was the least frequently chosen topic (about 13% of responses). Most responses considered Cleisthenes as only one element in the evolution of Athenian democracy and put him in the context of Solon's reforms and Peisistratus' tyranny. The best responses looked at Cleisthenes' reforms in some detail and explained the nature of Athenian democracy. Students who accepted the premise too readily tended to outline the structure of Athenian democracy without really developing a meaningful argument or trying to stretch a discussion of just Cleisthenes out over three paragraphs.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The development of Athenian democracy was a gradual, centuries-long process in which Cleisthenes played a significant, but not the sole, role. Admittedly, his reforms propelled democracy into the familiar model where all citizens had 'maximum equality' (Cartledge), however, his predecessors, Solon and Peisistratus, provided the political basis and economic prosperity which underpinned the mass participation required in Cleisthenes' model. Finally, the system was stressed by the radical Ephialtes and Pericles of the fifth century, launching the Athenian government into a full-blown democracy which proved to be its own demise.*

*Cleisthenes' reforms of 508 were instrumental in the creation of a true democracy, with equality in participation and minimal noble influence. Firstly, there was his revolutionary organisation of Athenian citizens based on 'eminently artificial' (Pomeroy) boundaries. His reforms divided the people into 139 demes. The mountainous, coastal and plain regions were divided into 10 trittyes and grouped into 10 new tribes. Such a reorganisation completely ruptured the traditional criteria for citizen phratries ('brotherhoods') in this manner. The wealthy and nobles who previously dominated within each group through landownership and kinship ties, saw their pre-eminence disrupted. In effect, Cleisthenes' reforms of 508 created one type of citizen. In the creation of the Council of 500 and annual deme officers, including treasurers and demarchs, were responsibilities expected to be maintained by each deme and tribe with the latter providing 50 men each to supervise legislation for each of the 10 year prytanies. Given Athens citizen population of roughly 30,000 men and the maximum service time of two terms within the council it was inevitable that most citizens would have had the opportunity for a voice in legislation. In fact, this is augmented by the introduction of lots and ostracism. The former insured an equal possibility for each man to be elected to the lower offices, while the latter insured the abusive influence of any individual would be limited. In making these changes Cleisthenes effectively introduced the basic model of classical*

*Athenian democracy, and from the quorum of 6000 required for certain elections, it evidently functioned well, making Cleisthenes a significant contributor to a democracy which later reformers would capitalise upon.*

*The forms of Cleisthenes would have been impossible without the foundations laid by Solon and Peisistratus. The former's political and economic reforms were the first challenge to Eupatrid supremacy, and the latter combined this with his own fiscal policies to create a wealthy and proud population. Upon his selection as archon in 594 BCE, Solon introduced a new system of democratic government, whereby the pentakosiomedimnoi became the top class eligible for archonship with the two lower classes given the opportunity to serve in the council of 400. In doing so Solon promoted 'active citizenship' (Lane Fox) which allowed the poor to have a voice in the assembly while giving wealthier non-Eupatrids direct authority. More importantly, the overweening powers of the Areopagus were severely reduced, and its probouleutic function was replaced by the council. Additionally, Solon's seisachtheia created a free peasantry, which Peisistratus empowered in his reign from the 540s. Using his personal wealth, Peisistratus' 'principal service' (Ehrenberg) was the creation of prosperous farmers proud of their identity. This was achieved through various subsidies from his personal reserves and the promotion of economic activity such as the minting of Attic coins, building programs (temples of Athena and Zeus) and the discovery of Attic pottery dating to the sixth century in regions as far as Spain and Syria. Thus, Solon's reforms, later capitalised on by Peisistratus, allowed the flourishing of the citizens which then enabled the successful functioning of Cleisthenes' new system.*

*At the height of Athens' repute, Ephialtes and Pericles emerged as two prominent reformers who developed the democracy to unprecedented levels of freedom while also sowing the seeds of its own destruction. After the ostracism of Kimon (461), Ephialtes (with Pericles as his junior adjutant), embarked on a string of legislations. First of all, most of the Areopagus' remaining power was stripped and they were relegated to dealing with capital punishment and religious duties. Meanwhile the power of impeachment was distributed to the already blossoming assembly. In effect, it became the ultimate decision-making power. Augmenting these changes were Pericles reforms relegating the selection of archonship to lot and the introduction of pay to the lower class thetes for jury duty and military service. This final move empowered the thetes, creating a 'demotic democracy' (Cartledge), which, although making Athenian democracy virtually universal, caused its own collapse. What followed was an emerging class of demagogues who sought approval from the 'feckless masses' (Cartledge) to embark on overly aggressive campaigns like the Sicilian Expedition (415-413 BCE). Furthermore, the constant grandstanding and hypercriticism of these demagogues contributed to the democracy's loss of authority and ability, as evidenced by the defection of Alcibiades and execution of generals from the battle of Arginusae (406) despite their victory. Ultimately, the legacy of Ephialtes and Pericles was marred by the destruction of Athenian democracy through their own 'internal stresses' (Thucydides).*

*Cleisthenes, through his various reforms, had an indispensable role in the growth of Athenian democracy, building on the work of his predecessors, and establishing changes that were developed by subsequent democrats. Cleisthenes was an important link, but not the sole contributor, between the foundation-laying Solon and Peisistratus and the grandeur but ultimate destruction of the zealous Ephialtes and Pericles.*

## Rome

This topic was by far the most commonly chosen (about 62% of responses). Many students accepted the premise of this topic too readily. This tended to generate an essay that gave a survey of a select group of powerful men – usually a paragraph on Romulus, then one on the Gracchi (possibly with Marius and Sulla) and then some combination of the First and Second Triumvirates. The question invited students to discuss the (often tense) relationship between individual leaders and other political systems. Most students presented a collection of biographies with little more than an implied argument – something to the effect that the existence of strong leaders was in itself proof that there were only strong leaders in Rome. Better essays contrasted this with at least the Senate and possibly other aspects of oligarchic power (e.g. consuls and

dictators). Very few essays considered the power of the people as exercised through assemblies. Some students tried to present essays in which each paragraph considered a different way in which strong individuals ruled (i.e. one paragraph about wealth, one about status, one about violence); this could be an effective strategy if it considered more than just individuals.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*From the mythical moment Romulus crowned himself king, to Brutus' exile of Tarquinius Superbus, to the moment Octavian named himself Augustus, ancient Rome has always been associated with examples of strong men. The Republic, however, could not be described as always being ruled by one individual, and even in the era of the seven kings, Rome was not beholden to one man only. Entities like the Senate and the various assemblies held much power, even as individuals rose above them.*

*In the regal period of Rome, the king was not crowned king due to his birthright, but instead elected from the noble class by the other nobility with the election confirmed by the Curiate Assembly consisting of the commoners. The Curiate Assembly held no powers in choosing who was nominated, but it reminded the kings of who they were beholden to. The kings were held responsible by the common people and the noble class, the system that would lead to follow into the Republic with the development of the Centuriate Assembly. Even if this assembly was 'rigged' in favour of the wealthiest Romans, there was still the notion that the people had to give their approval for political decisions. The word 'republic' itself comes from 'res publica' referring to the sentiment that the Roman state was the business of the people while the main governing body of the Senate had the important responsibility of the 'treasury' and of maintaining 'foreign relations' (Polybius). The hatred of kings is reflected in the structure of the magistracies, where pairs of consuls were elected with veto power over each other. This was one way that individual rule was prevented. Even when there was a need for individual rule in times of crisis, the legends surrounding them encouraged individual power as something to be used briefly and in the service of the Republic. The story of Cincinnatus, for example, emphasises the virtue of peacefully surrendering power back to the senate after his term as dictator was over. Rome was not by nature a state under individual rule throughout its history, due to the distribution of power to magistrates such as consuls and tribunes and the authority of the Senate.*

*The Roman Republic's decline began when individual glory began to become more important to politicians than preventing the rise of kings, as Gaius Marius and his former second-in-command, Lucius Sulla, rose to power by flouting laws and tradition. Despite laws that prevented successive consulships, Marius held a total of seven from 103 to 101 BCE and then 98 to 95 BCE. By doing this, he weakened the Roman political system and enabled later politicians to continue to manipulate or ignore the cursus honorum for their own benefit. Sulla also abused the cursus honorum and set a precedent for using violence for political power, such as in his two marches on Rome in 88 BCE and 83 BCE to intimidate the Senate into giving him the position of dictator. Marius and Sulla mark the beginning of individual rule in defiance of the traditional authority of the Senate. Their use of private armies further weakened the traditional system. Marius instituted laws which required a general to pay his army in the form of land to address the 'enlistment crisis' (Holland) in Rome. In implementing this policy, the loyalty of 'professional armies' (Boatwright) started to shift from the Republic to individual generals who would provide them with land. Sulla used his loyal soldiers to march on Rome and launch violent proscriptions to eliminate enemies and consolidate his sole rule over Rome.*

*Sulla's 'greatest mistake' according to Julius Caesar was that he gave up his position rather than hold onto it to his death. Caesar, even before, crossing the Rubicon opposed Pompey 'who had claim to be the first Roman emperor' (Beard). The two powerful individuals' ambitions led to conflict in the Civil War whose effects were felt long after the death of Pompey in 48 BCE and of Caesar in 44 BCE. The Second Triumvirate also included powerful individuals that ruled Rome, ironically in the name of restoring the Republic, and of these Octavian (later Augustus) emerged triumphant. Heralded as an heir to Romulus and destined to bring about another 'golden age' (Virgil), Octavian rise to power showed that the measures taken by the senate to prevent one man rule had been eroded over the years. Before Augustus,*

*Caesar had demanded supreme power from the Senate, becoming dictator for life and acting like a king. This, however, led to his assassination and Augustus was always careful to balance his one-man rule with a respect for the appearance of republic values, echoing the regal tradition in which the kings had to at least pretend they acted with the blessing of the people.*

*Though the Roman Republic's later politics were dominated by individual rule and sole leaders, it was not that way for the majority of its history, shown by the power of the Senate and magistracies, the role of the assemblies and the hatred of kings even as the traditions of the Republic were failing. Rome's political power resided in a range of different institutions for much of its history, not in individual rule.*