

General Certificate of Education  
January 2004  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



**HISTORY**  
**Unit 3**

**HS03/PM**

To be conducted between 1 November and 15 December 2003

Instructions and Guidance for Students on  
Externally Assessed Course Essays.

**Instructions**

- You must read these instructions carefully both before starting your preparation for the two Course Essays and again before sitting the controlled test(s).

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**AS HISTORY: MODULE/UNIT 3 – COURSE ESSAYS****INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS ON EXTERNALLY ASSESSED COURSE ESSAYS – 1 NOVEMBER/15 DECEMBER 2003**

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**● What are the externally set and assessed Course Essays?**

Externally set and assessed AS History Course Essays are your individual responses to essay questions set by the AQA and marked by an examiner appointed by AQA. (They are not marked by your teacher.)

A Course Essay question will be set for **each** of the **two** topics you are studying.

Once the Course Essay question is released to you by your supervising teacher *in each case* you will be given two weeks in which to work *individually* to prepare for your formal essay-writing session. If you are asked to prepare *both* Course Essays at the same time, you will be given four weeks to prepare for the formal essay writing session(s). This session will be conducted under examination conditions and you will have 1 hour 30 minutes in total in which to write each of your Course Essays.

Each formal essay-writing session may be subdivided into two shorter sessions if needed.

You are allowed to take an essay plan of no more than two sides of A4 into the formal essay-writing session and this must be handed in to the supervising teacher and sent off to the examiner with your Course Essay in each case. If your formal essay-writing session is subdivided, you must hand in your essay plan to your supervising teacher at the end of each session. No new material may be introduced into the concluding session.

Each response should be set out as a conventional essay, in continuous prose, in paragraphs, with a brief introduction and concluding comments/remarks.

**● Do I need to spend time studying Unit 3 before doing each Course Essay?**

Yes. You will need to know and understand the topic/themes as set out in the specification (your teacher will tell you what they are) before you attempt each of the two Course Essays. It is expected that you will have spent about 10 hours per Course Essay topic on preparation with your supervising teacher before he or she releases the Course Essay question to you. You should also be familiar with essay writing skills before you start your individual preparation.

Once you have the questions, you have a further two weeks to prepare on an individual basis (or four weeks if you are preparing both Course Essays at the same time). In this period of individual preparation your supervising teacher cannot help you and you must not work with other students or individuals.

**● Can I work with others?**

When *preparing* for each Course Essay, **before** the question has been released by your supervising teacher, you may work with others in the normal way. Once you have the question, you *must work entirely on your own*. You will be graded on your own independent work which you submit for assessment. This must not be the same as other students' work for obvious reasons.

- **Can I get help from my teacher or use books, the Internet etc?**

Again, when *preparing* for each Course Essay, i.e. before the release of the actual question to you, you may seek advice and guidance from your supervising teacher. The expectation is that you will also use books and other sources of information to prepare for each Course Essay both before and after the release of the question. However, once the question has been released to you, and when writing your Course Essays under controlled conditions, you must **not** discuss your work or get help from your teacher, or other students, or other individuals.

- **What format is required for my essay plan for the formal Course Essay writing session?**

Your essay plan should be:

- handwritten on no more than 2 sides of A4 lined paper;
- in note-form, not continuous writing;
- your own work based on your reading and research about your Course Essay;
- legible;
- labelled with your name and examination details.

Each of the Course Essays should be written on examination stationery. You must not use correcting fluid.

If your essay-writing session is split over two sessions, the essay plan and your work in progress will be retained by the supervising teacher at the end of the first period of controlled conditions and re-issued at the beginning of the next. You must not attempt to introduce any new material into the second session.

At the end of the essay writing session(s) attach your essay plan to your Course Essay with a treasury tag and hand both items in to your supervising teacher who will send them to the Board's examiner.

- **How long will I have to complete the writing up of the Course Essays?**

You will have up to a maximum of 1½ hours for *each* Course Essay, under controlled conditions. This time may be split over two sessions if necessary.

- **What are the word limits and are they important?**

You should aim to complete each Course Essay in 1000 words. Part of the skills AQA is testing relates to your ability to present an historical explanation *briefly and precisely*. You must use relevant information and judgements **selectively** to the best of your ability and keep within the guidelines. Essays which slightly exceed the word limits will be marked in the usual way **but any over 1500 words** will be marked at a maximum of Level 3 in the Levels of Response mark scheme (which has 5 Levels) because you will not be demonstrating the selection of relevant material. AQA recommends that you discuss the marking criteria for the Course Essays with your supervising teacher as part of your preparation before the release of each question. Details are in the specification and in the specimen materials published in support of it.

Turn over ►

- **What are controlled conditions?**

Controlled conditions are very similar to examination conditions – you must work on your own under supervision.

- **What happens if I fail to observe AQA's requirements?**

Your work will not be accepted, and, if there is evidence of malpractice, AQA may impose strict penalties. Your supervising teacher will make you aware of the possible penalties for malpractice as they are set out in AQA's Regulations.

The purpose of each Course Essay is to enable you to research an interesting history topic and prepare an essay *on an individual basis* and without the usual pressures of the examination situation. You will be very familiar with the topic by the time you write each Course Essay and the examiners look forward to reading your individual efforts.

**END OF INSTRUCTIONS**