

**2008 HSC Notes from  
the Marking Centre  
History Extension**

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# 2008 HSC NOTES FROM THE MARKING CENTRE

## HISTORY EXTENSION

### Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of the Stage 6 course in History Extension. It contains comments on candidate responses to the 2008 Higher School Certificate examination, indicating the quality of the responses and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses.

This document should be read along with the relevant syllabus, the 2008 Higher School Certificate examination, the marking guidelines and other support documents which have been developed by the Board of Studies to assist in the teaching and learning of History Extension.

### General comments

In 2008, 2100 candidates attempted the History Extension examination.

The best responses for both Questions 1 and 2 were sophisticated in their understanding of the historiographical issues and clear in their analysis of the question, and they supported their arguments with relevant evidence. It is important for candidates to be aware of a range of historians so that they can select and use the most appropriate ones for the question. The analysis of the question itself is critical. Some candidates relied on prepared answers and structured their responses around the focus of questions used in previous years. Such responses cannot access the higher mark ranges.

An understanding of the development of history and of the historiographical concepts is essential for a critical evaluation of the Source in Question 1 and also informs the response to the issue of Question 2. In better responses, candidates constructed an informed argument which demonstrated critical judgement of the issues raised in the questions. Sophisticated and critical thinking within the context of historiography was shown in candidates' ability to apply their knowledge both of historians and of their Case Study to the issue of the particular question.

Questions are drawn from a range of areas within the syllabus. The syllabus and not past examination papers should therefore be the basis for the preparation of candidates for this examination. It should not be assumed that the style of question used in 2008 will be repeated in 2009. The best preparation for this examination consists in developing the skills of analysis and argument, of being prepared to make critical judgements and to support these with an informed understanding of the debates in history.

Ensure that equal time is allocated to both questions. Candidates are reminded that, as both questions are of equal value, there is no advantage in allocating more time to one question or the other. Allow time in the examination to analyse each question, to identify the focus issue to be considered, and to plan a structured and logical argument.

## Section I

### Question 1

Better responses made well-supported critical judgements of the issues raised in the Source. They also evaluated the methodology of the sources that they used in their argument, doing more than identifying and describing different historians' approaches to the construction of history.

Not all sources are equally suitable to be used as evidence in the argument being developed. Candidates are reminded that it is important to prepare a range and variety of sources so that they can select the most appropriate for the specific question.

A range and variety of sources should be considered within a conceptual, rather than merely a chronological, framework. This variety will allow candidates the best possible range of sources to draw on in the examination.

Weaker responses described rather than evaluated the viewpoints in the Source and did not deal with the most appropriate of their own sources. Many of these responses were prepared answers with discussion of sources not always being linked to the focus of the question nor integrated with the viewpoints presented in the Source. Many of the weaker responses were structured in terms of questions from past examinations.

Some weaker responses also tended to rely on a single class text that summarised and interpreted the historians for them, substituting the author of the text for the historians and their approaches to history.

## Section II

### Question 2

The responses that engaged with the question and evaluated the Case Study in the light of the quotation were able to deal critically with the issue of interpretation in history. Prepared answers which gave descriptive surveys of historians' perspectives were not able to provide an insightful, critical and sophisticated judgement of the statement as it applied to the selected areas of debate.

In the 2008 examination, responses covered almost all of the Case Studies represented in the syllabus. The two most popular Case Studies in each area were:

- Ancient
  - Tacitus
  - Thucydides
- Medieval and Early Modern
  - Elizabeth
  - Crusades
- Modern
  - JFK
  - Appeasement
- Australian
  - Convict Women
  - Origins of the First Australians

Although generic in nature, the question required a sustained, sophisticated and critical assessment of why and how historians' perspectives of the past are essentially limited. The quotation contained in the question provided a clear discriminator because it required candidates to apply the statement

to at least one area of debate in their chosen Case Study. Candidates must engage with the statement and integrate their analysis into the substance of their response.

Better responses used a range of historians within their argument. These historians were drawn from a significant time period and enabled candidates to make insightful observations about the ongoing nature of the debates. These responses evaluated how and why history is only a partial representation of the past, providing a consideration of the historian's methodology as well as his purpose and context.

Candidates are reminded that a limited range of historians limits the possibility of developing an argument that would allow them to make critical judgements about historical interpretation. Responses which developed around the context, methodologies and perspectives of a range of historians were able to deal effectively with the focus of this question. Weaker responses tended to describe the different viewpoints of the historians rather than critically evaluate how and why those perspectives were limited. Using a single source or a textbook style summary of the debate limits the response to a survey-style narrative.

Debates within Case Studies should not be constructed from sensationalist media-type issues which can be found in the Case Study. Weaker responses, especially in the JFK Case Study, focused on sensational personal issues which limited the scope of the debate and the evaluation of the historiography of the Study.

Candidates are reminded that spending too long on their Question 1 response is to the detriment of their Question 2 response. Both questions are of equal value and the best overall result can be obtained by allowing sufficient time to plan, structure and write the response to both questions.

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# History Extension

## 2008 HSC Examination Mapping Grid

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
<b>Section I</b>			
1	25	What is history?	E1.1, E2.2, E2.3
<b>Section II</b>			
2	25	Case study	E1.1, E2.2, E2.3



## **2008 HSC History Extension Marking Guidelines**

The following marking guidelines were developed by the examination committee for the 2008 HSC examination in History Extension, and were used at the marking centre in marking student responses. For each question the marking guidelines are contained in a table showing the criteria associated with each mark or mark range.

The information in the marking guidelines is further supplemented as required by the Supervisor of Marking and the senior markers at the marking centre.

A range of different organisations produce booklets of sample answers for HSC examinations, and other notes for students and teachers. The Board of Studies does not attest to the correctness or suitability of the answers, sample responses or explanations provided. Nevertheless, many students and teachers have found such publications to be useful in their preparation for the HSC examinations.

A copy of the Mapping Grid, which maps each question in the examination to course outcomes and content as detailed in the syllabus, is also included.

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## Section I

### Question 1

*Outcomes assessed: E1.1, E2.2, E2.3*

#### MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engages with pertinent issues of historiography raised by Gammage about how historians work</li><li>Presents a sophisticated, complex and critical judgement about how historians work supported by close reference to the Source and at least TWO other sources</li><li>Provides a perceptive, sustained and complex argument in a well-structured, integrated and sophisticated response</li></ul>	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demonstrates some engagement with relevant issues of historiography raised by Gammage about how historians work</li><li>Presents a clear and reasoned judgement about how historians work supported by substantial reference to the Source and at least TWO other sources</li><li>Provides a coherent, substantial and well-developed argument in a well-structured and integrated response</li></ul>	16–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identifies some issues of historiography raised by Gammage about how historians work</li><li>Presents a discussion about how historians work supported by some reference to the Source and at least TWO other sources</li><li>Provides a relevant discussion in a structured response</li></ul>	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identifies at least ONE issue of historiography raised by Gammage about how historians work</li><li>Makes comments about how historians work with limited reference to the Source and refers to at least ONE other source</li><li>Presents a description in a structured response</li></ul>	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>May identify an issue of historiography raised by Gammage about how historians work</li><li>Displays little or no understanding of how historians work</li><li>Offers isolated observations</li></ul>	1–5

## Section II

### Question 2

*Outcomes assessed: E1.1, E2.2, E2.3*

#### MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides an insightful, critical and sophisticated judgement of the relevance of the statement as it applies to the selected area of debate</li><li>• Demonstrates extensive knowledge and sophisticated understanding of at least ONE area of debate from the chosen case study</li><li>• Presents a sustained, complex and sophisticated argument in a well-structured and integrated response</li></ul>	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a clear and reasoned judgement of the relevance of the statement as it applies to the selected area of debate</li><li>• Demonstrates substantial knowledge and well-developed understanding of at least ONE area of debate from the chosen case study</li><li>• Presents a sustained and coherent argument in a well-structured and integrated response</li></ul>	16–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a sound discussion of the relevance of the statement as it applies to the selected area of debate</li><li>• Demonstrates a sound knowledge and some understanding of at least ONE area of debate from the chosen case study</li><li>• Presents a relevant discussion in a structured response</li></ul>	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a limited discussion of the statement as it applies to the selected area of debate</li><li>• Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of at least ONE area of debate from the chosen case study</li><li>• Presents a limited discussion or description</li></ul>	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides little or no understanding of the statement as it applies to the selected area of debate</li><li>• Demonstrates little knowledge of the chosen case study</li><li>• Makes isolated observations on the case study</li></ul>	1–5