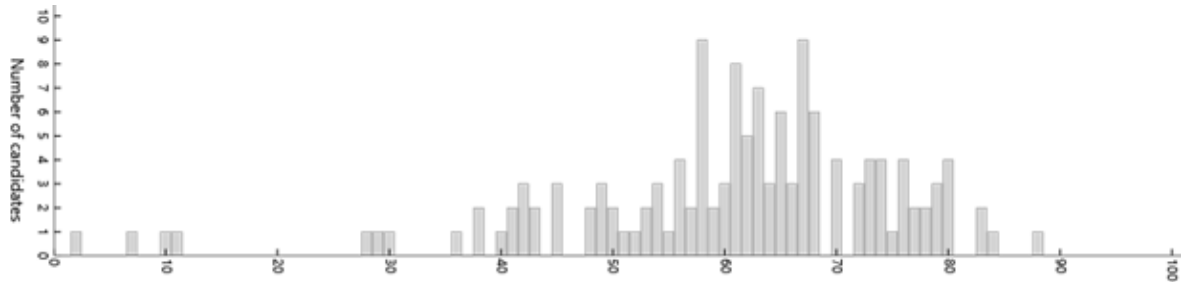




Summary report of the 2019 ATAR course examination: Ancient History

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2019	138	4
2018	133	3
2017	152	7

Examination score distribution–Written



Summary

Egypt: attempted by 35 candidates	Mean 61.41%	Max 83.31%	Min 10.65%
Athens: attempted by 80 candidates	Mean 62.73%	Max 87.62%	Min 2.08%
Rome: attempted by 23 candidates	Mean 50.12%	Max 73.31%	Min 7.40%

The structure of the 2019 examination, which covers three distinct electives (Egypt, Athens and Rome), changed from 2018. There was a change in Section One (Short answer, Unit 3 material), where candidates were required to attempt four out of five options with all questions worth equal marks. In Section Two (Source Analysis), candidates were required to attempt two questions from a choice of three, some of which included scaffolding. The sources and their questions were included in the Question/answer booklet, rather than in a separate source booklet. The layout of the examination paper was also changed, with each elective having its own allocated set of pages, rather than previously where layout was organised according to section and question type.

Section means were:

Section One: Short answer – Unit 3

Egypt	Mean 65.95%		
Attempted by 35 candidates	Mean 16.49(/25)	Max 23.44	Min 6.77
Athens	Mean 61.80%		
Attempted by 80 candidates	Mean 15.45(/25)	Max 23.44	Min 2.08
Rome	Mean 49.28%		
Attempted by 23 candidates	Mean 12.32(/25)	Max 19.27	Min 3.65

Section Two: Source analysis – Unit 4

Egypt	Mean 61.00%		
Attempted by 35 candidates	Mean 15.25(/25)	Max 21.88	Min 1.88
Athens	Mean 63.16%		
Attempted by 79 candidates	Mean 15.79(/25)	Max 23.75	Min 5.62
Rome	Mean 49.13%		
Attempted by 23 candidates	Mean 12.28(/25)	Max 21.25	Min 2.50

Section Three: Essay

Part A: Unit 3

Egypt	Mean 62.00%		
Attempted by 35 candidates	Mean 15.50(/25)	Max 20.00	Min 2.00
Athens	Mean 66.03%		
Attempted by 79 candidates	Mean 16.51(/25)	Max 22.50	Min 6.00
Rome	Mean 60.64%		
Attempted by 22 candidates	Mean 15.16(/25)	Max 20.00	Min 2.50

Part B: Unit 4

Egypt	Mean 58.35%		
Attempted by 34 candidates	Mean 14.59(/25)	Max 20.00	Min 2.00
Athens	Mean 62.33%		
Attempted by 79 candidates	Mean 15.58(/25)	Max 23.00	Min 1.00
Rome	Mean 53.37%		
Attempted by 19 candidates	Mean 13.34(/25)	Max 18.00	Min 5.50

General comments

Generally, candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the syllabus, but did not always provide enough specific detail, particularly in the short answer and essay sections. The increased mark allocation per question in the short answers meant that supplying more specific detail in responses was required than in previous examinations. Candidates should know the key data, terms, people and places that are the examinable content in the syllabus and be able to provide that this content accurately and concisely. In the essay sections, candidates need to ensure that they are responding directly to the question rather than relying on prepared answers. They should also refer to accurate evidence from ancient and modern sources in their essays.

Advice for candidates

- Avoid writing generalised biographical narratives in essay sections. Such generic responses do not attract marks. When offered a choice of individuals or groups to write about, more depth of analysis is likely to be achieved by choosing one rather than several areas of focus if the question allows this.
- Use accurate ancient sources/genuine quotes to support your ideas where possible. Accurate paraphrasing of written source evidence is acceptable.
- Ensure responses include the specific requirements of each question attempted. Identify and address all the key words of each question.
- Use any scaffolding presented with the question in the source analysis section to assist in answering the question itself. Working through the scaffolding alone will not result in an effective response.

Advice for teachers

- Develop strategies to unpack a question quickly and effectively to help your students plan an effective response.
- Remind students that 'individuals' in the syllabus can be addressed by any Unit 3 section of the examination.
- Students should use accurate and legitimate references to the ancient (and modern) sources only. Making up quotes is to be avoided.
- Students should aim to write as formally as possible and engage in academic discourse. As such, they need to avoid using informal abbreviations, such as *Alci* for *Alcibiades*, or *PON* for the Peace of Nicias.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Short answer – Unit 3 (24 Marks)

Most candidates dealt with this section well. Questions were moderately more difficult than previous five-mark-questions, but were more accessible than previous 10-mark-questions and some questions required two or three points of discussion for an effective response. The questions were accessible, clear in focus and linked to the syllabus. There was less effective use of evidence and candidates did not use their wider knowledge of the period of study as effectively to support their answers as in previous years.

Section Two: Source analysis – Unit 4 (20 Marks)

Sources were chosen for their clarity and accessibility. An improvement in responses suggests that the changes to this section are potentially providing the intended positive impact. Candidate response to the new section, however, was inconsistent, evident through responses that included a wide variety of approaches and structures. Some candidates used scaffolding provided in some questions to support their response to the question effectively; others worked through the scaffolding as a checklist, and as a result did not engage with the question as well as those that focused more centrally on the question itself.

Section Three: Essay

Part A: Unit 3 (25 Marks)

Overall, candidates demonstrated a sound grasp of the Unit 3 syllabus. Coherent narratives were provided. Those who used accurate, authentic evidence from ancient sources received more marks. Greater attention could be paid to addressing essay questions more precisely. The essay question in Part A about ‘individuals’ in all three electives elicited very generalised biographical narratives with very few candidates offering convincing analysis in regard to the significance of the individual chosen. This ‘individuals’ question may have attracted less able candidates in all electives who perhaps saw it as a way to write an extended answer based on everything they have learned about a key individual from the course. However, the requirement of the question was for the candidate to synthesise what they knew about the individuals’ lives, carefully select appropriate details and evidence to include and exclude (a vital skill) and finally ensure that what they had chosen addressed the ‘impact’ of the individual on the period of study. This did not require a comprehensive biography, rather, thoughtful consideration of detailed, relevant evidence and careful planning. This is challenging, and as a result, the majority of responses tended to include too much superfluous ‘retell’ rather than appropriate analysis.

Part B: Unit 4 (25 Marks)

Candidate performance in this part of Section Three was largely consistent with the performance seen in Part A.