



GENERAL COMMENTS

This was the sixth year of the revised *VCE Australian History Study Design*. The 2010 examination provided students with the opportunity to display their considerable skills and extensive knowledge acquired through diligence, good teaching and hard work. The more successful students responded to the terms of the questions ('to what extent', 'discuss', 'provide examples'), clearly understood key concepts such as 'identity' and analysed the documents provided in the exam paper. They also used evidence to support their answers and had a strong grasp of historians' views.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section A

Document chosen	none	A	B
%	0	78	22

i.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	0	3	97	2

ii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	3	16	25	54	3.3

iii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	4	15	23	25	17	13	3.6

iv.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	7	2	5	10	14	17	20	15	10	4.9

Document A

i.

Examples of 'meanness and dishonesty' included:

- taking possession of the land
- 'swept them off the face of the earth'
- 'shot them down like dogs'
- put corrosive sublimate in their damper
- 'made them drunkards'
- 'infected them with disease'
- 'made them outcasts in their own land'.

Students received two marks for identifying two examples from the document of 'meanness and dishonesty' in the treatment of Aboriginals.

ii.

Students needed to identify and explain two examples given in the document that a colonist might have used to justify the treatment of Aboriginals, including:

- Aboriginals were less civilised
- 'we put it [the land] to better uses than they would do'
- Aboriginals looked hopelessly on



Two marks were available for each example – one mark for identifying the justification and one mark for the explanation.

iii.

In this question students needed to discuss the extent to which the views expressed by the editor about the European treatment of Aboriginals reflected the general views of European settlers in the Port Phillip District (PPD)/Colony of Victoria. Students needed to consider whether the views were typical of the settlers at this time. The more successful students were able to realise that the *Argus* editor was being highly critical of PPD/Victorian residents and that they had to show evidence of a similar and/or different view. In general, the settlers had no misgivings about the treatment of the Aboriginals, but the more successful answers were able to write about a varied response from Europeans and were able to give examples such as Richard Howitt, Katherine Kirkland, James Dredge and the Henty family.

iv.

This question asked students to explain the concept of terra nullius and to discuss its impact on the Aboriginal people in the Port Phillip District/Colony of Victoria. The more successful students were able to answer both aspects of the question. The concept of terra nullius (meaning 'land belonging to no one') focuses on the Aboriginal people having no right to possessing the land as they have not developed it in the European way. This impacted drastically on the Aboriginal communities. Key issues were: loss of land, marginalisation, destruction of traditional lifestyle, loss of food sources, dispossession, population decline, disease, violence and the settlers disregarding traditional Aboriginal beliefs. The more successful students addressed both parts of the question; their responses were highly relevant and showed a high level of knowledge and evidence.

Document B

i.

Students received two marks for identifying from the document two immediate consequences that the rush for gold had on the towns of Melbourne and Geelong, including:

- depopulation
- decrease in business activity
- ships are deserted.

ii.

Students needed to identify and explain two issues that the Colony of Victoria faced because of the discovery of gold, including:

- not just the idlers but those in responsible employment have gone to the diggings
- economic activity is at a standstill
- concern at the effect of this lack of economic activity
- schools are closed
- gender imbalance, as the males have gone to the goldfields.

One mark each was awarded for identifying and explaining the issue.

iii.

Students needed to contrast the time of the document (1852) to the late 1850s. The document was largely negative and, while there were plenty of negatives in the late 1850s, the benefits of the gold rushes were evident in Melbourne and Geelong. There was an economic benefit as there were many businesses to support the gold rush. There was an economic boom, building boom, increase in population, improvement in infrastructure and improvement in education and cultural institutions. The more successful students also mentioned the changed political situation because of the Eureka rebellion.



iv.

In this question the key point was the comparison between the two dates. The hope of finding gold was a key motivating factor after 1851, but in both cases the hope of improvement in circumstances was great. Prior to the gold rushes, the availability of cheap land and the use of this land to improve one's place in society was a strong motivation. It could be argued that the motivations and hopes essentially did not change during this period; the key focus was on achieving something better. It could also be argued that the gold discovery brought about significant change – greater numbers and diversity of backgrounds. An examination of push and pull factors enhanced students' arguments. The most successful students discussed to what extent the motivations and hopes differed before and after gold.

Section B

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	15	11	20	17	37	2.5

Examples of the emergence of an Australian national identity include:

- pride in being Australian-born
- sense of being an Australian – nationalism
- Australian art style – McCubbin, Streeton, Roberts
- Australian literature – Lawson, Paterson, *The Bulletin*
- creation of a fairer society – egalitarianism
- bushman pride
- Australiana in furniture, applied arts
- sport – cricket and Australian rules football.

One mark was awarded for each example and a second mark was awarded for an explanation. Some students struggled with the concept of national identity.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	8	18	20	20	17	14	3.5

This question required students to examine to what extent Indigenous Australians were excluded from the new nation. Indigenous Australians were excluded from the census, from the franchise and from the benefits of the new nation. These benefits were derived from legislation passed in the new parliament such as the *Maternity Allowance Act 1912*, the *Invalid and Old Age Pension Act 1908* and also from the *Defence Act 1903*. They were not part of the new nation at Federation and they were to remain the responsibility of the State Governments. The more successful students went on to explain that it was not the intention of Federation to exclude the Aborigines because it was thought that they would die out and therefore it was felt unnecessary to include them. However, this exclusion is what happened. Students' responses needed to include considerable detail about significant exclusion.

Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	7	4	6	7	9	11	13	15	11	8	9	5.6

Students were required to make links between the progress made by 1914 and whether this progress could be explained by fear rather than by hope. The more successful students argued that both were motivating factors. Evidence to support fear as a motivation included fear of invasion from Japan and China shown in the *Defence Act 1909*, fear of foreigners as shown in the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* and *Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901*, and fear of the erosion of workers' benefits. Evidence to support hope included hope of a new beginning as a united country through federation; the *Franchise Act 1902* was underpinned by ideas of hope for a new democratic country; and hope for a fair society as shown in provisions in the *Old Age Pension Act 1908*, the *Workmen's Compensation Act 1897*, which was replaced by the *Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904*. The Harvester Judgement also indicated hope for a fair standard of living for workers. Increased emphasis on education was argued by some students as it would hope to lead to a better future and for better citizens.

Section C

Question chosen	none	a.	b.	c.
%	2	40	26	32



Many students could have improved their essays by using evidence from a variety of sources and directing their essays to the question. The most successful students did this extremely well. The discriminating factors for the essays were the relevance of arguments used, depth of knowledge and the extent of evidence supplied from a variety of sources.

Question 3

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	1	1	2	3	3	3	4	3	6	6	6	8	10	9	8	7	7	4	4	12.4

Question 3a.

World War I

Students were required to argue to what extent they agreed with the statement ‘Australians responded to World War I with a mixture of pride and uncertainty’. Students considered how the response changed over time. There was considerable pride and arguably some uncertainty in the beginning, and there was hope of proving ourselves as a new nation. But not all shared this view, particularly socialists and people of Irish background. Over time, there was uncertainty/hostility regarding the casualty rate, fear if you were classified as an enemy alien, uncertainty and division about the conscription attempt. The more successful students argued that the ultimate response was of the glory of the Australian involvement – The Anzac Legend – which afforded the new nation considerable pride.

Question 3b.

The Depression

Students needed to argue to what extent they agreed with the statement ‘The crisis of the Depression negatively affected all Australians’. The more successful students argued that there was a diversity of experience of this crisis; they were able to get past generalities such as ‘the working class were badly affected and the rich were not adversely affected at all’. Some students considered the psychological impact of unemployment and the political stresses that surely impacted on all. Others argued that there were some positives in this negative situation, such as families and communities working together.

Question 3c.

World War II

This essay asked students to argue to what extent they agreed with the statement ‘World War II opened up deep divisions in Australian society’. Most students were able to identify divisions in society such as the enemy interment, black-market activity, union actions, conscription, the presence of US servicemen and the changing role of women. The more successful students argued that, while there were divisions, there was also a strong cohesion after 1942 – when Australia seemed to be directly threatened, there was also a sense of working together for the common goal.

Section D

Question chosen	none	1	2	3	4
%	3	9	73	2	13

Identification

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	4	14	24	52	3.2

Evaluation

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	7	6	10	11	14	12	15	11	12	4.4

Analysis

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	13	5	7	8	11	13	16	13	15	4.5

Marks for this section were awarded as follows.

- identification of the attitudes reflected in the representation – two points and an explanation (4 marks)
- evaluation of the degree to which the representation reflects the attitudes about the issues studied at that particular point in time (8 marks)



- analysis of changing attitudes in relation to the issue (4 marks); use of evidence from the other point in time that you have studied to support comments (4 marks) (total of 8 marks).

A. Attitudes to Indigenous rights

This visual representation showed the official reaction to the Aboriginal Tent Embassy of 1972; it was being demolished and was not accepted by those in authority. The representation was a fair reflection of attitudes of the time. There was some support for the message of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, for example by Gough Whitlam who was the opposition leader at the time, but the prevailing view was a negative one. However, Aboriginal issues were now party political.

The other point in time was reaction to the 1967 referendum. The general reaction was to support the vote. The referendum was successful as approximately 90 per cent of Australians formally voted 'yes' for it. A deeper understanding of this vote may conclude that it was a vote for superficial change, but was it a vote for real change? The Tent Embassy protest may have demonstrated this latter point.

B. Attitudes to the Vietnam War

The editorial from *The Age* in April 1965 was generally supportive of the decision to involve Australia in the Vietnam War. It based this view on Australia's treaty commitments and on the belief in the domino theory. The more successful students agreed that this was the prevailing view but used examples of dissent at this time. The other point of reference was 1970 where there was widespread opposition to the involvement in the War. To receive full marks, students needed to explain how this change of attitude occurred.

C. Attitudes to the environment

This cartoon from January 1983 presented a view of the Franklin Dam controversy where a Tasmanian man was showing a different attitude to those representing groups in Sydney and Melbourne.

It was reasonably accurate at the time where in Tasmania the controversy was seen in economic terms, particularly in regard to employment, whereas on the mainland, the issue was debated in environmental terms. This was considered by many students, along with the demonstrations at the river and the looming federal election where Bob Hawke promised to use federal power to stop the Dam, and was supported at the election by mainland states but not by Tasmania.

The other point in time was 1972 with the flooding of Lake Pedder where the attitude in Tasmania was the same, but the environmental protest was small, as was the Federal Government intervention. The key aspect of the change between the two dates was the bringing of environmental issues into the mainstream.

D. Attitudes to immigration

The photograph was from 1965 and showed a protest by University students at Sydney's Mascot airport over the decision by the Australian Government to deport a young woman of Indian background. The time frame was during the phasing out of the White Australia Policy; the photo was clearly against this policy, but the White Australia Policy was still being enforced.

There was growing pressure to end the White Australia Policy at this time, not just from students, but the policy was officially being seen as harmful to Australia's international image.

The other point in time was the 1970s and the arrival of refugees from Vietnam known as 'boat people'. There was a mixed reaction to this issue with the prevailing, but sometimes reluctant, view being that Australia has a duty to take these people in. However, by the 1970s, the White Australia Policy was abandoned. Other points raised by students included that the White Australia Policy was scrapped in 1973 and the mood had moved from assimilation to multiculturalism, but better responses questioned whether this was actually the case.