Stage 1 and Stage 2 Ancient Studies

Understanding the Assessment Design Criteria

Knowledge and Understanding

Where do they come from?

On Page 4 of the subject outline are the learning requirements for Ancient Studies:

Learning requirements

The learning requirements summarise the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students are expected to develop and demonstrate through their learning in Stage 2 Ancient Studies.

In this subject, students are expected to:

1. **understand and analyse historical concepts**

2. **demonstrate knowledge and understanding of texts, artefacts, ideas, events, people, and institutions of the ancient world**

3. **demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the political, social, cultural, and/or economic diversity in the ancient world**

4. apply inquiry skills to analyse and evaluate sources and perspectives, and synthesise evidence

5. research and understand the ideas and innovations that emerged from the ancient world, and consider their influence

6. communicate ideas and arguments, using a range of evidence and subject-specific language.

KU1 Knowledge and understanding of texts, artefacts, ideas, events, and/or people.

This specific feature is widely applied. It is where students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of their study or more specifically ‘the facts’ of their research. It is very useful for allowing students to demonstrate what they have learned and would be applicable to every task.

* In the lower grade bands students would give only a very basic account of a text, event, idea or person from the ancient world. A lack of research would prevent them from detailing any depth or complexity of understanding. It is important that students pay attention to RA1 and find their information through at least competent research practices that move beyond “Google search” and to a discerning process of research which asks critical questions.
* Students need access to a range of sources and learning activities offering different perspectives, so they are able to present their information referring to different interpretations. For example, *Although Themistocles was….Herodotus implies that….* Or for example in the study of Homer’s Odyssey*: It was considered the role of women to…however Penelope clearly breaks this stereotype when she*… etc.
* Students who are successful in this criterion draw from a range of sources to deepen and demonstrate their understanding. They delve into not just recount of any facts but use **specific and relevant facts** and information to demonstrate a **detailed and critical understanding**.
* To be **critical**, students must **analyse** the information they have and then use this analysis to form their understanding.
* When students are able to structure their information and ideas showing differing perspectives they are more likely to demonstrate in-depth knowledge and insightful understanding.

KU2 Recognition of, and reflection on, political, social, cultural, and/or economic diversity within the ancient world.

This KU feature is not as broad as KU1. It is much harder to demonstrate evidence in this criterion by default.

* The key word in this criterion is ‘**diversity’**. The student must move beyond generic or broad sweeping statements about the ancient world. For example, to be successful in this feature, when discussing slavery or women in the ancient world (popular topics) students would provide more than simplistic, generalised statements about the lives and experience of these groups of people. For example, they would **differentiate** between the experiences of upper class Athenian women and the lower class, or Roman Matrons as compared to Spartiate women. When investigating slavery, students who demonstrate a discerning and well informed understanding of slavery would clearly articulate the **difference in experience** of slavery **within** and, where appropriate, **between** cultures. The experience of slaves in the Egyptian Imperial Household was very different to the experience of slavery in the construction of public building projects. Likewise, there are stories of individual slaves of Roman politicians who led very privileged lives.
* Students should use **both primary and secondary source material to highlight individual experiences that may differ from the common experience and be able to provide some analysis as to why this might be the experience of some but not all**.
* Students when analysing the economy of an ancient civilisation, are able to look, in-depth, at a range of factors and systems which evolved from or impacted on the economy. Or in the study of Roman politics, be able to identify the perspective, role or motivations of different factions within the Senate, rather than a make general comments about the Senate as a unified group. This is what differentiates between well-informed rather than generally informed knowledge and understanding.
* **To be insightful means to make connections beyond the obvious and accepted**. Students are encouraged to look to the silences and the gaps within the information provided about the ancient world and make some educated links. For example, would a 5th century Athenian Audience see Euripides’ Medea as a hero or a villain? Why did Hannibal never march his army on Rome in the 2nd Punic War? For what purpose does Homer construct a duality in the character of Polyphemus in his Odyssey – isn’t he just a monster?

KU3 Knowledge and understanding of literary, historical and/or archaeological concepts

This feature applies to not only standard notions of historical and archaeological concepts such as

* *evaluate differing perspectives on the past to understand the contestable nature of historical and/or archaeological knowledge and to draw reasoned conclusions*
* *evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, interpretations, and contestability*

But also toliterary historicalconcepts.

* Literary genres such poetry, tragedy, and comedy are governed by historical concepts.  For example, the concept of Greek Tragedy or Comedy in 5th century sits in a historical context. The concept of Greek communal life is essential to understanding why Drama was such an important part of life. The Greeks held cultural concepts of such as hubris, hamartia, peripeteia, anagnoris and catharsis that informed their thinking and interpretations of characters and actions within a tragedy. The structure of tragedy was defined by concepts of cause and effect, continuity of action, unity of time and place.
* In studying the concept of tragedy in a literary context you could apply KU3 as your students identify the unique features of tragedy and/or its impact on the audience in the past but also as a reflection of dramatic forms today. Evidence of the feature can be found in how well the student has explored the concept and demonstrated insightful knowledge and understanding i.e. made links/explored from different perspectives/gone beyond the accepted knowledge and understanding.
* Evidence of this feature can also be found in the student’s ability to identify what ‘ bigger picture concept’ might be at play in the study of the ancient world. For example students can study the concepts of:
  + **Contestability** in Herodotus’ account of the Persian wars.
  + **archaeological evidence** in a study of Pyramid at Giza as a reflection of Egyptian religious belief.
  + **cause and effect** of Peloponnesian war on Athenian society
  + **interpretations** through the story of Aeneas and Dido as Augustan propaganda

In conclusion

Knowledge and understanding in the A and B band is more than students regurgitating facts or ‘tell me everything you know’ into their work. There are some clear demonstrations of thinking and analysis of information required.

Specifically targeted task design enables this creative and critical thinking from our students.