# Stage 2 Ancient Studies

# The Inquiry

This information sheet aims to broaden student and teacher understanding about the inquiry and about strategies and practices that could help students generate the types of evidence needed in the higher grade bands. .

From the 2018 subject outline:

Assessment Type 3: Inquiry (30%)

*Students produce one literary, societal, or historical inquiry, which is presented as an* ***informed and persuasive argument****. The inquiry gives students an opportunity to explore an area of specialization of individual interest, extend their skills (including skills in research and acknowledgment of sources), and enrich their understanding. Students propose and develop* ***a particular point of view about an issue****, as negotiated with their teacher.*

What the inquiry isn’t

* finding out everything a student can that is interesting in a topic and writing it up – that is a project or a recount.

What the inquiry is:

The inquiry is driven by an **argument** not by a topic.

Students wjp create simple, generalised topics such as:

* Greek Mythology

or

* What did the Greeks believe about the gods?

can easily trap themselves in the lower grade bands. There is no real grappling with an idea or an argument that will direct the student to the skills and deep understandings this aspect of the course is assessing.

Examples of inquiry topics which help to shape an argument.

These reflect a range of sophistication in the central ideas.

* How did Greek mythology help the Greeks to make sense of their world?
* To what extent is Roman religion a simple translation of the Greek gods to a Roman setting?
* To what extent did the author of the Percy Jackson series Rick Riordan, accurately base his characters Zeus, Poseidon and Hades upon Greek mythology?
* The Greek gods (or hero) continue to be a source of fascination to the modern world. To what extent does [insert contemporary text name] present a view of the Greek gods (or hero) that a Greek would understand?
* Greek tragedies tell a complex story of a culture caught between traditional faith and increasing secularism. Discuss.

An Inquiry focus, shaped like this helps a student to:

* investigate a topic in depth
* take up a position
* present counter arguments or points of view
* come to a persuasive conclusion

Argumentative papers or presentations necessitate extensive research.

The research phase enables students to:

* develop a deep base knowledge and understanding of the ancient world including:
  + texts, artefacts, ideas, events, people, battles, buildings, institutions, and practices – social, political, religious, economic
  + the diversity of experience
  + the diversity of perspectives
  + relevance to other cultures
  + relevance to other times
* identify the issues involved in a topic:
  + complexities
  + controversies
  + perspectives
  + causes and effects
* pursue those issues through good research practices involving a range of sources:
  + overview sources
  + specialised sources
  + primary sources
  + contemporary sources
* make critical, analytic judgements on the nature of the sources and therefore how to best use them in respect to:
  + authority
  + reliability
  + relevance
  + accuracy
  + bias
  + limitations
  + silences

Having researched material, an argument must then be:

* Developed:
* synthesis of research to:
  + shape a viewpoint on the issue
  + deliver evidence to support the viewpoint
  + understand, acknowledge, and counter alternative viewpoints.
* Structured

Long arguments need: to help the audience to follow the complex thoughts.

* + Context – what does the audience need to understand to orientate themselves – time period, social context, key people, events or ideas?
  + Definitions of key terms
  + The structure of the argument broken into key ideas
  + Key ideas tackled one at a time in a logical sequence
  + Clear ‘topic’ sentences or markers which enable the audience to know what the writer/presenter is focusing on
  + Persuasive evidence that the writer/presenter’s ideas have substance and merit
  + At the end of the argument – a conclusion that not only summarises briefly what ground the argument has covered, but leaves the audience with deep insights as to why it is important.
* Communicated

Persuasive arguments can be presented in a range of ways:

Essays are a written form developed for the purpose of presenting an argument. The conventions of:

* + - * An introduction that:
        + gives context
        + defines key terms
        + outlines the sequence of key points
        + points to a deep insight
      * Paragraphs which:
        + commence with a targeted topic sentence which outlines the central idea
        + contain sentences of deep discussion which expand the key idea and, where needed, offer counter arguments
        + offer persuasive evidence in the form of examples and quotes
        + link forward to the next logical idea
      * A conclusion which:
        + summarises the key arguments briefly
        + provides deep insight into the issue
      * Polished prose style which includes:
        + The technical vocabulary of the subject under discussion
        + Grammatical conventions

Oral presentations. There are conventions to an oral presentation which help the audience to engage and focus on the arguments. Many are like the essay:

* Introduction which gives context, any needed definitions, which outlines key points and their gives a sense of the structure
* Each new idea clearly signposted
* Each idea expanded and supported with evidence
* A conclusion which draws the presentation to a close, reminds the audience of the key ideas and gives them a deep insight

Orals include a set of communication expectations:

* A speed of delivery that the audience can follow, not as many words as the speaker can squash in to make as many points as possible
* A level of care with articulation so that the audience can understand what the speaker is saying
* A level of engagement between the speaker and the audience which might include:
  + - * + Eye contact
        + Humour
        + An expressive voice
* Orals can often benefit from visual aids to help keep the audience focused, orientated and aware of key ideas.

**Orals do not have to be live.** They can be delivered in a variety of forms:

* Filmed
* A voice over to a set of slides
* A pod cast

There will be other less traditional ways to present ‘ideas in an informed and persuasive argument’.

The key questions for the marker will be:

Is the evidence driven by:

* **Ideas** – is the mode able to convey that the student is focused on ideas not only facts and information?
* **Argument** – are the ideas formed into an argument?

Is it:

* **Informed** – is the argument informed by research into primary and secondary sources and deep understanding of the topic?
* **Persuasive** – does the logic of the argument, the examples used and the means of communication persuade the audience of the validity of the argument?

Other examples of inquiry topics

The following list represents a range of sophistication in question construction. Look at these examples in conjunction with “*Developing an Inquiry Question*”.

The final quality of the Inquiry will be due not only to the quality of the question but the quality of the research, synthesis, ideas and argument, communication and understanding of historical and archaeological concepts.

* “Was it the hoplite, or were there other factors that led to the Greek victory at …….[insert a site].”
* “The hoplite warfare was the key to defeating the East both for the Greeks and for Alexander”. Discuss.
* To what extent does the film *300* demonstrate a lack of understanding of critical aspects of the Persian invasion of Greece and the Battle of Thermopylae?
* To what extent did the Imperial Roman army and the Spartan army rely on similar factors to ensure success in war?
* To what extent can the disciplines and approaches of the Roman army be seen in modern SAS training?
* To what extent does the *Asterix* series accurately portray the Roman world?
* To what extent was Queen Dido in Virgil’s Aeneid based on Cleopatra 7 of Egypt?
* To what extent were the women of the citizen class in Sparta and Norse society similar in their treatment?
* To what extent does 5th century Athenian aristocratic society mirror traditional upper-class Arabic tradition?
* As leaders, Hannibal and Hitler shared leadership traits. Discuss this statement.
* How did ancient Greek and Roman medical knowledge and procedures lay the foundation for our modern practices?
* To what extent has Classical Greek architecture design influenced the architecture of colonial Adelaide?
* To what extent are the characters of Clytemnestra, Medea and Antigone recognisable as architypes of contemporary feminist fictional figures?
* To what extent can Australian democracy claim to be based on the Classical Athenian model?