



Advanced Higher  
Coursework  
Assessment Task



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# Advanced Higher History

## Project–dissertation

### Assessment task

This document provides information for teachers and lecturers about the coursework component of this course in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed. It **must** be read in conjunction with the course specification.

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# Introduction

This document contains marking instructions and instructions for candidates for the Advanced Higher History project–dissertation. You must read it in conjunction with the course specification.

This project–dissertation is worth 50 marks. This is 36% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

This is one of two course assessment components. The other component is a question paper.

# Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions for the Advanced Higher History project–dissertation are addressed to the marker. They are also helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Candidates' evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking.

## General marking principles

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- a Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- b If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- c Candidates can structure their project–dissertations in a variety of ways, and may also demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways and at different points in their project–dissertation. Award marks for relevant and appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding, wherever they appear in the project–dissertation.
- d The word count for the project–dissertation is 4,000 words (excluding references, bibliographies and appendices). Candidates must submit the word count with the completed project–dissertation. Do not award marks for the content of references, bibliographies and appendices.
- e If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied. If the coursework is more than 10% over the word limit, mark the candidate's work as normal, then refer it to the principal assessor. You must state clearly that the candidate's work is being referred because it is over the word limit.

## Detailed marking instructions

Candidates need to show depth in their study and refer to both primary and secondary sources.

In order to meet the requirements of the project—dissertation, candidates must:

- ◆ show that they have referred to or quoted from historians, or considered historical schools of thought
- ◆ refer to a primary source
- ◆ reference one source, using a standard referencing system

Where a candidate has not completed the above tasks, they have not met the basic requirements of the project—dissertation.

To gain more than 24 marks, candidates must refer to more than two sources, one of which must be a primary source.

To gain 21 marks candidates must provide clear evidence of research. This can be shown by giving a clear reference for one of the sources, using a standard referencing system. There is also the expectation that candidates use footnotes or endnotes, as well as include a bibliography as evidence of research. They must also include an introduction in the form of an abstract.

The ‘Overview of marking instructions’ grid provides guidance on how to place responses within an overall likely mark range, and indicates how to award individual marks against the following four marking criteria:

- ◆ structure
- ◆ analysis, evaluation and line of argument
- ◆ thoroughness and relevance of information and approach
- ◆ historical sources and interpretations

Of these, use the following key criteria to help determine where to place a dissertation within a mark range:

- ◆ analysis, evaluation and line of argument
- ◆ thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

The grid provides guidance on the features of dissertations falling within mark ranges. Most dissertations show some, but perhaps not all, of the features listed; others are stronger in one area than another. Features described in one column may appear in a response which, overall, falls more within another column(s).

Individual candidate responses do not follow a set pattern and some responses may fall outside these descriptions, or a candidate’s arguments and evidence may differ substantially from the marking scheme. Where this is the case, use your professional expertise to award marks appropriately.

## Overview of marking instructions: mark ranges and individual marking criteria

Structure							
0-9 marks	10-20 marks	21-24 marks	25-29 marks	30-34 marks	35-39 marks	40-44 marks	45-50 marks
No attempt to set out a structure for the dissertation.	Attempt to set out a structure for the dissertation.	Attempt to structure the findings, including at least one of the following:	Structure displays a basic organisation but this may be loose. This includes:	Structure is readily apparent with a competent presentation of the issues. This includes:	Clearly structured, perceptive presentation of issues. This includes:	Well-defined structure that displays a very confident grasp of the demands of the question. This includes:	Structured so that the argument convincingly builds and develops throughout. This includes:
no relevant functional introduction	relevant functional introduction	relevant functional introduction in the form of an abstract with main areas of research outlined	relevant functional introduction in the form of an abstract with main areas of research and sub-issues outlined, and main interpretations	relevant functional introduction in the form of an abstract with main areas of research, sub-issues outlined, main interpretations, and a suggested line of argument	relevant introduction in the form of an abstract with main areas of research, sub-issues outlined, main interpretations prioritised which look at the debate, and a proposed line of argument	relevant introduction in the form of an abstract with main areas of research, sub-issues outlined, main interpretations prioritised which look at the debate, and a clear line of argument	relevant introduction in the form of an abstract with main areas of research, sub-issues outlined, main interpretations prioritised, clear direction of debate, and a clear line of argument
no separate sections which relate to relevant factors	separate sections which relate to relevant factors	separate sections which relate to relevant factors	separate sections which relate to relevant factors	separate sections which relate to relevant factors	separate sections which relate to relevant factors	separate sections which relate to relevant factors	separate sections which relate to relevant factors

Structure							
0-9 marks	10-20 marks	21-24 marks	25-29 marks	30-34 marks	35-39 marks	40-44 marks	45-50 marks
no conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue	conclusion which attempts an overall judgement on the issue	conclusion which suggests an overall judgement on the issue	conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue	conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue, bringing together the key issues	conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue, evaluating the key issues	conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue, based on synthesis and evaluation of key issues or points	conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue, based on direct synthesis and evaluation of key issues or points

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach							
0-9 marks	10-20 marks	21-24 marks	25-29 marks	30-34 marks	35-39 marks	40-44 marks	45-50 marks
Treatment of the issue shows little relevant knowledge.	Treatment of the issue shows little relevant knowledge.	Treatment of the issue shows relevant knowledge, from more than one source.	Treatment of the issue shows sufficient knowledge which reflects a basic understanding of the issue, from more than two sources.	Treatment of the issue shows an awareness of the width and depth of the knowledge required for a study of the issue.	Treatment of the issue is based on a fair quantity of research, demonstrating width and depth of knowledge.	Treatment of the issue is based on wide research and demonstrates a considerable width and depth of knowledge.	Treatment of the issue is clearly based on a wide range of serious reading and demonstrates a considerable width and depth of knowledge.
Very superficial coverage of limited areas of the topic.	Very superficial coverage of limited areas of the topic.	May be superficial and/or limited in coverage.					
	Some elements of the factual content and approach relate only very loosely to the issue.	Some elements of the factual content and approach relate only very loosely to the issue.	The factual content links to the issue and the approach relates to analysis.	The factual content links to the issue and the approach relates to analysis and evaluation.	Evidence is linked to points of analysis or evaluation.	Evidence is clearly linked to points of analysis or evaluation.	Evidence clearly supports and is linked to points of analysis or evaluation.



Analysis, evaluation and line of argument							
0-9 marks	10-20 marks	21-24 marks	25-29 marks	30-34 marks	35-39 marks	40-44 marks	45-50 marks
<p>No evidence of analysis.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Analysis is not relevant to the question.</p>	<p>Much narrative and description rather than analysis or evaluation.</p> <p>Weak sense of argument.</p>	<p>Much narrative and description rather than analysis or evaluation.</p> <p>Weak sense of argument.</p>	<p>Attempt to answer the evaluative aims of the question and analyse the issues involved. This is possibly not deep or sustained.</p> <p>Argument is generally clear and accurate but there may be confusions.</p>	<p>Sound awareness of the evaluative aims of the question and a fairly sustained analysis.</p> <p>Argument is clear and accurate, and comes to a suitable – largely summative – conclusion.</p>	<p>Firm grasp of the evaluative aims of the question and an assured and consistent control of the arguments and issues.</p> <p>Argument is clear and directed throughout.</p> <p>Conclusions arise logically from the evidence and arguments in the main body, and attempt synthesis.</p>	<p>Firm grasp of the evaluative aims of the question and a very assured and consistent control of all the arguments and issues.</p> <p>Fluent and insightful presentation of the issues and arguments. Clarity in direction of argument linking to evaluation.</p> <p>Conclusions give a robust overview and/or synthesis and a qualitative judgement of factors.</p>	<p>Fluent and insightful presentation of the issues. Detailed and effective analysis and evaluation which advances the argument and considers various possible implications of the question, going beyond the most obvious ones.</p> <p>Conclusions give a robust overview and/or synthesis and a qualitative judgement of factors.</p>

Historical sources and interpretations							
0-9 marks	10-20 marks	21-24 marks	25-29 marks	30-34 marks	35-39 marks	40-44 marks	45-50 marks
No discernible reference to historical works.	No discernible reference to historical works.	No discernible reference to historical works.	Some awareness of historians' interpretations in relation to the issue. Historians may be used as illustrative points of knowledge.	An awareness of historians' interpretations and arguments. Historians may be used as illustrative points of main lines of interpretation.	Sound knowledge and understanding of historians' interpretations and arguments.  Some awareness of possible variations of these interpretations or connections between them.	Sound knowledge and understanding of historians' interpretations and arguments, which is consistent.  Some awareness of possible variations of these interpretations or connections between them. There may be an appreciation of the context which gives rise to these interpretations.	Sound knowledge and understanding of historians' interpretations and arguments, and an engagement with current historiography.  Consistent awareness of possible variations of these interpretations and connections between them, including an appreciation of the context which gives rise to these interpretations.
No references to primary sources.	No references to primary sources.	Clear reference to at least one primary source.	Clear reference to at least one primary source linked to the issue.	Clear reference to primary sources linked to the issue.	Clear use of primary sources including a critical use of at least one primary source linked to the issue.	Clear use of primary sources. Critical use of at least one primary source to contribute to the direction of the argument.	Critical use of primary sources to contribute to the direction of the argument.

Historical sources and interpretations							
0-9 marks	10-20 marks	21-24 marks	25-29 marks	30-34 marks	35-39 marks	40-44 marks	45-50 marks
Minimal sense of referencing.	Attempt to accurately reference one source using one standard referencing system.	One source accurately referenced using one standard referencing system.	Some sources accurately referenced using one standard referencing system.	Many sources accurately referenced using one standard referencing system.	Most sources accurately referenced using one standard referencing system.	Most sources accurately referenced using one standard referencing system.	Most sources accurately referenced using one standard referencing system.

# Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the project–dissertation for Advanced Higher History.

This project–dissertation is worth 50 marks. This is 36% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ identifying an appropriate complex historical issue for research
- ◆ drawing on in-depth knowledge and understanding
- ◆ using information from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ analysing perspectives from historiography
- ◆ synthesising evidence and historiography in a sustained and coherent line of argument
- ◆ drawing a well-reasoned conclusion based on evidence
- ◆ organising, presenting and referencing findings using a standard referencing system
- ◆ creating an abstract that summarises the different interpretations and debate(s)

Your project–dissertation should demonstrate that you have met these criteria. You do not have to demonstrate them in the same order as they are listed above. For example, your conclusion could, but does not need to, come at the end of your writing.

The project–dissertation gives you an opportunity to develop your knowledge of history at Advanced Higher level, and to apply this knowledge to a question or issue of interest to you.

The project–dissertation encourages you to develop as an independent learner and to develop skills which will be useful to you in future study or work. Among these skills are planning, research, evaluation and presentation.

You can research any historical issue of your choice. A successful project–dissertation is likely to be about a topic in which you have a genuine interest.

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know if there are any specific conditions for doing this assessment.

## Working with others

You must choose your own question or issue to research. However, others in your class may have chosen a similar one. It might be helpful to work part of the time with others when you are researching your question or issue.

If this is the case, it is important that the evidence you produce is your own work.

## Word count

The word count for the project–dissertation is 4,000 words (excluding references, bibliographies and appendices). You must submit the word count with your completed

project–dissertation. You should not try to bypass word count restrictions by moving information from the body of your project–dissertation into these sections, as you do not gain marks for the content of references, bibliographies or appendices.

You can use standard abbreviations in your project–dissertation, but formal English is expected. For example, you can use acronyms and initialisms, such as NKVD, NATO and EU. However, you should not use contractions throughout the project–dissertation in order to reduce your word count. This means you should use ‘do not’ rather than ‘don’t’ and ‘were not’ rather than ‘weren’t’, and applies to all abbreviations of this type. The only exception to this is within a lifted quote.

If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied.

The following information helps you understand the requirements of the Advanced Higher History project–dissertation.

In this assessment you have to:	How you can do this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ identify an appropriate complex historical issue for research</li> </ul>	<p>The issue you choose must be one which allows you to meet the requirements of the project–dissertation. A complex issue requires analysis and evaluation, and allows you to synthesise points into a line(s) of argument, leading to a conclusion.</p> <p>SQA has published a list of suggested titles which you can use if you wish. The document is available on the Advanced Higher History subject page. Alternatively, you may develop your own title. If you are doing this you should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the purpose of researching the issue</li> <li>◆ the relevance of the issue in the context of the subject (why it is worth learning about the issue)</li> <li>◆ what historical factors or areas for analysis and/or evaluation the research may involve</li> <li>◆ what primary and secondary sources are likely to be available</li> <li>◆ whether there are relevant historiographical perspectives you can explore</li> </ul> <p>Your teacher or lecturer may support you by commenting on the suitability of the issue you have chosen and advising on the likely availability of sources.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ draw on in-depth knowledge and understanding</li> </ul>	<p>You should show that you have researched the issue. You should show both an understanding of the details of the issue you are studying (depth), and understanding of the wider historical context (breadth).</p> <p>In considering the depth of the issue, you should think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ relevant historical factors</li> </ul>

In this assessment you have to:	How you can do this:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ relevant historiographical perspectives</li> <li>◆ anything else that might be relevant</li> </ul> <p>In considering the wider historical context, you should think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ how the issue affected or influenced other historical developments</li> <li>◆ whether the issue was affected or influenced by other developments</li> <li>◆ anything else that might be relevant</li> </ul> <p>To gain marks for knowledge, your points must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ relevant to the question or issue you have chosen</li> <li>◆ developed (by providing additional detail, exemplification, reasons or evidence)</li> <li>◆ used to respond to the demands of the question or issue</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ use information from a range of primary and secondary sources</li> </ul>	<p>You should collect information relevant to your issue, from a range of sources. This means you should use more than two sources of information. You can gain marks for using these sources to support your line of argument, and for referencing them using a standard referencing system.</p> <p>You should use both primary and secondary sources. If you do not use at least one primary source, you are unable to gain more than 20 marks for your project–dissertation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ analyse perspectives from historiography</li> </ul>	<p>You should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ include an analysis of different perspectives on the issue you are researching. These are likely to be from recognised, published historians</li> <li>◆ show that you understand historians' interpretations and arguments. These are not necessarily opposing views on an issue. Instead, different historians may emphasise different historical factors, or interpret the significance of events differently</li> <li>◆ show that you understand the prevailing present thinking on the issue. This does not necessarily mean the most recent historical writings. In some areas, the prevailing thinking may not have changed for a significant period of time – so historical writings that are decades old may still be 'current'. These sources should be referenced using a standard referencing system</li> </ul>

In this assessment you have to:	How you can do this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ synthesise evidence and historiography in a sustained and coherent line of argument</li> <li>and</li> <li>◆ draw a well-reasoned conclusion based on evidence</li> </ul>	<p>You should draw together different pieces of information to support your response to the question or issue. These can come from the sources you have researched, and/or your own knowledge.</p> <p>Your conclusion should include an overall judgement about the question or issue. This should be based on the developed points within your argument.</p> <p>You should organise your overall response into a coherent line of argument in response to the question or issue.</p> <p>Your conclusions can, but do not have to, be made at the end. Your conclusions could be positioned throughout the dissertation as a logical part of your line of argument.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ organise, present and reference findings using a standard referencing system</li> </ul>	<p>When writing your project–dissertation you should make clear, accurate and direct reference to the sources of information you have used, using a standard referencing system so that the marker can identify it. To help you do this, you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ use ‘quotation marks’ around any text that has come from other sources</li> <li>◆ use footnotes or end notes to highlight the origin of these sources</li> <li>◆ acknowledge the sources of diagrams, illustrations or images</li> <li>◆ write a bibliography (a list of all sources)</li> </ul> <p>To gain full marks, you must clearly reference most of your sources using a standard referencing system, for example MLA, Chicago, Oxford or Harvard.</p> <p>Remember that plagiarism (passing off other people’s work and ideas as your own) is cheating. This includes copying passages from the internet and not acknowledging the source. It is also plagiarism if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ all or some of your project–dissertation has been produced by someone else</li> <li>◆ you have copied from a book, an internet site or an essay bank without referencing</li> </ul> <p>Markers can easily spot plagiarism. If plagiarism is detected, you will lose marks. It may result in your qualifications being cancelled.</p>

In this assessment you have to:	How you can do this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ create an abstract that summarises the different interpretations and debates(s)</li> </ul>	<p>An abstract is the first piece of work that readers come across in your dissertation. It is a summary of your work and normally appears after your title page and table of contents.</p> <p>There is a technique to writing an abstract. A strong abstract might consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a statement of the problem or issue that you are probing, including an indication of the requirement for your research</li> <li>◆ your research method</li> <li>◆ your results or findings</li> <li>◆ your main conclusion(s)</li> </ul>



# Administrative information

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.1	Mark criteria for the Structure 10–20 marks range amended from ‘No attempt to set out a structure for the dissertation’ to ‘Attempt to set out a structure for the dissertation’.  Marking grids flipped so that mark ranges are ascending so as to align with the essay marking grids in the question paper.	August 2021

Note: you are advised to check SQA’s website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

## Security and confidentiality

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