

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

STUDY AND EXAM GUIDE

REVISED

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TOPIC 1: THE VISIONS THAT DROVE NATIONHOOD

KEY KNOWLEDGE

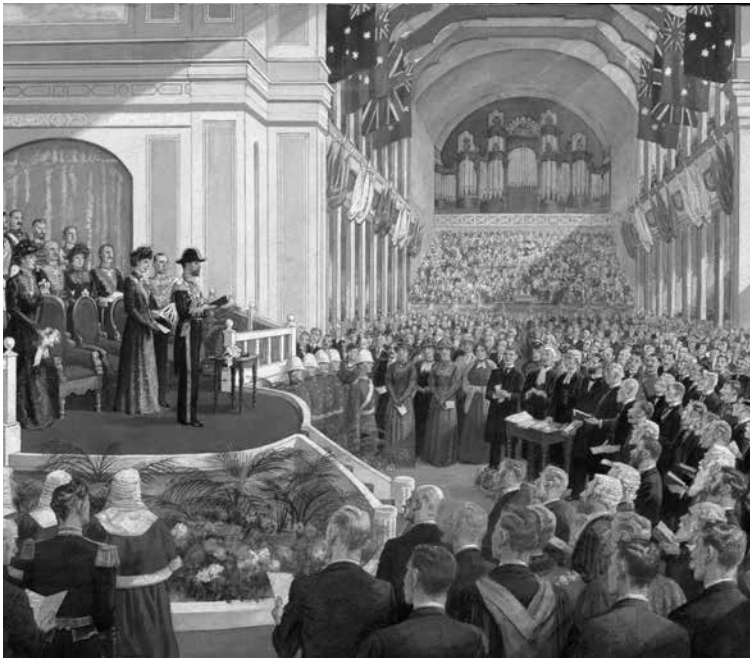
The visions underlying the Imperial Federation League, the Australian Natives Association, *The Bulletin* magazine, the Heidelberg School and Australian literature that drove the formation of the Australian nation up to 1901, including: The desire for economic progress and a uniform tariff policy, ideas about the existence of a distinct national identity as well as a conviction of also being both Australian and British with cultural, economic, political, military, ethnic and kinship ties to Britain.

Advice: You are required to examine the visions (hopes, beliefs, expectations) that colonists in the late nineteenth century held about the future of Australia. It was these visions that underpinned the movement towards the creation of the nation and shaped the institutions and policies that followed. You need to be able to give specific evidence of the visions and who articulated them.

INTRODUCTION

On 1 January 1901, the six colonies (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania) federated to become the nation of Australia. The formation of the nation arose from a combination of influences which interacted to create a vision for a united, democratic and egalitarian society.

The two key conditions that led to Federation were:



9 May 1901, *Opening of the 1st Federal Parliament by the Duke of Cornwall and York*. State Library of Victoria, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/148041>

- Background influences that created a climate supportive of nationhood. These included the growing number of people born in Australia, the emergence of art and literature which reflected a recognition of Australia’s beauty and value, a recognition of the economic rewards that Australia offered, and a growing understanding of the similarities shared among people in all colonies.
- Specific steps taken by political and community leaders to draft a constitution and lobby for the creation of the federated Commonwealth of Australia.

The individuals and groups who led the Federation movement, and those who voted for it, were motivated by a range of reasons.

	MOVEMENTS TOWARDS FEDERATION				
	Formation	Type of Group	Key Visions and Ideas	Key People	Public Support/ Audience
Imperial Federation League (IFL)	1880s	Political movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian federation would be first step in federation of all countries in British Empire• Australia would be 'Britain in the Antipodes'• Politics, judiciary, military, education, architecture, religion, trade unions, social and cultural institutions would remain British in style	Alfred Deakin, Dr J. Moorhouse	Weak
Australian Natives Association (ANA)	1870s	Mutual benefit association (like a private health insurance society) for white people born in Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vision of united, democratic nation that would be British in style with uniquely Australian character• Supported White Australia policy• Campaigned heavily for Federation (1880s and 1890s), hosting influential Federation conference in Corowa, NSW (1893)	Alfred Deakin, James Hume Cook, Edmund Barton, Isaac Isaacs	Moderate
The Bulletin	1880	Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoted Australian bush culture, egalitarianism and a white Australia• Banner read 'Australia for the White Man'	James Edmond, Jules F. Archibald	Moderate (most widely read magazine in 1890s — a favourite of shearers and stockmen — but its brand of republicanism was not the majority view)

	MOVEMENTS TOWARDS FEDERATION				
	Formation	Type of Group	Key Visions and Ideas	Key People	Public Support/ Audience
Heidelberg School	Late 1880s–early 1890s	Art movement (painting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Australian impressionism, celebrating beauty of Australian landscapeExpansive landscapes, painted <i>en plein air</i> (outside), using Australian palette (pale blues, greyish greens, golds, browns)Focus on everyday scenes and characters from Australian bushForged distinctive identity for Australia, helping Federation cause (though traditional British art remained popular)	Tom Roberts: <i>Shearing the Rams</i> ; <i>Bailed-Up</i> ; <i>A Break Away</i> Frederick McCubbin: <i>Lost</i> ; <i>Down on his Luck</i> ; <i>The Pioneer</i> Arthur Streeton: <i>A Surveyor's Camp</i> ; <i>The Purple Noon's Transparent Might</i> Charles Conder: <i>Holiday at Mentone</i> ; <i>Cove on the Hawkesbury</i>	Moderate (mainly Melbourne and Sydney)
Australian Writers	Late 1800s–early 1900s	Literature movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Novels, short stories and poems featured themes thought to be distinctly 'Australian' such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Bush life› Egalitarianism› Hard work and resilience› White Australian culture› A vision for the future of a united nation› (Commonly) males and masculinity› Australia as 'a superior Britain.' <p>(Note: British writers remained very popular, e.g. Kipling, Wilde, Shaw)</p>	Joseph Furphy: <i>Such is Life</i> Henry Lawson: 'Song of the Republic'; 'The Drover's Wife' Banjo Paterson: 'The Man from Snowy River' Barbara Baynton: <i>Bush Studies</i> Ethel Turner: <i>Seven Little Australians</i> Steele Rudd: <i>On our Selection</i>	Moderate – Strong

ECONOMIC PROGRESS

From the 1850s to the end of the 1880s, the Australian colonies enjoyed relatively sustained economic progress. The economic depression of the early 1890s challenged the optimism of many colonists and led to a consideration of ways to ensure that such a disaster could not happen again.

One aspect of the vision, especially from business people, manufacturers and professionals, was the idea of centralising the economy. The hope was that a centralised (i.e. federal) economy would be stronger, more efficient and more resilient than six separate economies. During the 1890s, increasing numbers of legal firms, insurance companies and trading organisations began opening branches in two or more colonial capitals. This was aided by the linking of the eastern capital cities through both rail and telegraph by 1890.



↑ *Shearing the Rams*, by Tom Roberts, 1890. National Gallery of Victoria, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/2920/>

WORKERS' RIGHTS

From the point of view of some workers, there was a belief that national arrangements for wages and working conditions would be beneficial. Though this belief was not shared by all workers and labour unions, there was an increasing understanding that unions would be more powerful if they could operate Australia-wide. This vision was reflected in:

- The establishment of intercolonial trade unions representing shearers and miners
- The holding of regular Intercolonial Trade Union Congresses (from 1879)
- Calls to federate unions, floated at the Seventh Trade Union Congress, Ballarat (1891)
- The restructuring of trade union organisation under the Australasian Federation of Labour
- General support for Federation from the trade union movement, especially in Victoria
- The formation of the Australian Workers' Union (1894)
- The formation of labour parties in the colonies.

The Labour Electoral League of New South Wales won 35 out of 141 seats and held the balance of power after the 1891 election. The 'workingman's paradise' of early federal legislation was significantly influenced by the presence of a strong labour/social democratic party in Australia, ahead of other nations.

A NATIONAL ECONOMY

One obstacle to the vision of a national economy was the existence of two different tariff policies. Some colonies, especially New South Wales, pursued a policy of Free Trade, meaning that no tariffs (taxes) were charged on goods being brought into the colony. Other colonies including Victoria, Queensland and South Australia believed in using tariff barriers to increase the price of imported goods. This would ‘protect’ locally made products, keeping them cheaper and therefore more likely to sell.

The existence of these two tariff policies was a barrier to economic unity. For example, wool growers in the Riverina area (southern NSW) found it easier to export their wool via Melbourne rather than Sydney. However, they had to go through tariff border-crossings at Echuca on the Murray River, which was costly both in terms of time and money.

The desire for a one-tariff policy was both a spur and an obstacle to Federation. Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania believed in the removal of all internal tariff barriers and the placing of an external tariff on all goods entering the country. New South Wales also wanted the removal of internal barriers but opposed the external tariff.

Eventually New South Wales agreed to an external tariff in return for several concessions (the main one being that the federal capital would be in NSW, though the Constitution specified it could not be within 100 miles of Sydney). It could be argued that the vision for economic unity and national economic policies proved more powerful than the wishes of individual colonies.

DEBATES OVER AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY

A REPUBLICAN IDENTITY?

A small percentage of people in Australia, mainly those descended from convict origins, and some Irish, believed that Australia should cut all ties with Britain. They opposed the monarchy and wanted the new federation to be a republic. One journalist even ridiculed the royal family, calling Queen Victoria ‘an obese old woman fond of whiskey.’

The views of this section of the population were expressed in publications such as *Boomerang* and *The Bulletin*. In 1890, *The Bulletin* called for a republican government and the abolition of foreign (British) titles such as ‘Sir.’ These Australians glorified the bush and made heroes of characters such as Ned Kelly and the leaders of the Eureka rebellion.

A DISTINCTIVE AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY?

However, this group of extreme, anti-British nationalists formed a minority. Most of the population had a more moderate desire for a distinctive Australian identity. Manufacturers used Australian symbols such as kangaroos and goannas to sell their products, and growing numbers of people took an interest in Australian art and literature. The American art critic Sidney Dickinson wrote of the new Australian painting style: ‘The golden glory of English Wheat-fields cannot excel the splendour of the wide wastes of grazing land under the dry sky of an Australian summer.’

Distinctive forms of recreation, such as Australian Rules football, were increasingly popular, and farmers adapted soils, crops and machinery to the different Australian conditions. There was a growing belief that working and living conditions for ordinary people were far superior to those of their British ‘cousins.’

These ideas and beliefs contributed to the vision of Australia as a united nation which should be self-governing but which should also retain its links to the monarchy and the British Empire.

A BRITISH IDENTITY?

For most people in the colonies, the desire for national unity and the growing sense of identification with ‘Australia’ did not replace a sense of loyalty to Britain. The two loyalties existed side by side, and, for many people, were interwoven. Some argued that Australians had all the best qualities of the British, with additional Australian qualities that made them superior.

Two slightly different perspectives on this dual loyalty can be seen in the following quotes:

- Hugh Arnold-Forster (British politician and writer, 1897): ‘So it has come about that in the British Empire there exist side by side ... points of identity and points of divergence [that are] the same yet different.’
- Henry Parkes (Australian politician, 1890): ‘The crimson thread of kinship [British blood] runs through us all. Even the native born Australians are Britons [British people], as much as those born in London ...’

The British influence could be seen in a wide range of aspects of day-to-day living.

BRITISH INFLUENCE IN DAY-TO-DAY LIVING	
Place names	Sandringham, Windsor, Brighton, Kew
Celebrations	The Queen's birthday, Guy Fawkes Day ('bonfire night')
Food	Roast beef, pudding
Clothing	Victorian fashion, e.g. corsets, petticoats and long dresses for women, bowler hats for men
Architecture	Rows of terrace houses
Legal and political system	British-style systems, e.g. new federal constitution based on Westminster system
Military	British-style rules, uniforms, decorations and titles; colonial armies enthusiastically supported 'mother country' by sending forces to Boer War (1899)
Education	High schools and universities; University of Melbourne modelled on Oxford and Cambridge but with Australian flavour, e.g. graduates bowed to Chancellor rather than lay at his feet during graduation ceremony

A ‘WHITE AUSTRALIA’?

Many of those who campaigned for Federation or supported nationhood envisioned a ‘white Australia.’

The Bulletin stated that among its key values was opposition to ‘the Chinese.’

An A.B. ‘Banjo’ Paterson poem from 1891 suggested that Chinese people were carriers of disease:

*I looked along the shearing floor afore I turned to go –
There was eight or ten dashed Chinamen a shearing in a row.
It was shift, boys shift for there wasn’t the slightest doubt,
It was time to make a shift with the leprosy about.*

In addition to the belief that the ‘pure white race’ would be contaminated by contact with other ethnicities, there lurked an economic fear, namely that non-Anglo-European workers would undermine living and working conditions by accepting low wages and conditions. Strikes broke out in shearing sheds and on merchant ships because of the claim that Chinese people were undercutting standard wages.

The book *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (1893) by Charles Henry Pearson was enormously influential, in Australia and abroad, raising concerns about the ascendancy of non-white races.

The new federal Parliament of Australia consisted of two houses – the House of Representatives, made up of representatives on a population basis (NSW had the most members; Tasmania the least) and the Senate (based on the US model), which had an equal number of representatives from each state, regardless of population.

A number of powers, or part powers, remained in the hands of Britain (see right).

The Constitution, the laws and the judicial system all played a part in bringing to reality many of the visions that had shaped the nation.

THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution established the Australian nation, thus reflecting the vision of a united Australia. It left a number of powers in the hands of the British government and retained the monarch as Australia’s head of state, thus reflecting the vision of a British-style nation.

The Constitution set up a two-house (bicameral) system, the upper house representing the states equally, the lower house made up on a population basis. This reflected the vision of fairness across the Australian states.

Under Section 51 (xxvi) of the Constitution, the responsibility for Indigenous people remained with the states. Under Section 127 of the Constitution, they were not to be counted in the census. These clauses reflected the vision of a white Australia.

BRITISH POWERS INCLUDED:

The British monarch remained the Australian head of state.

The British government retained the power to make international agreements on Australia’s behalf.

Major responsibility for Australia’s defence rested with Britain.

TOPIC 2: CONSTITUTION, POLITICS AND LAW IN THE NEW NATION

KEY KNOWLEDGE

The constitutional, legislative and judicial decisions that reflected the visions of a ‘White Australia,’ a ‘workingman’s paradise’ and a ‘social laboratory’ including the Immigration Restriction Act, the Franchise Act, the Customs Tariff Act, work and welfare legislation, and the Harvester Judgement.

Advice: You are required to examine the ways in which the visions for the nation (in particular restricted immigration, workers’ rights, the welfare state and the removal of trade barriers) were brought to reality in the early years of the Commonwealth.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Federation was achieved when the Commonwealth of Australia came into existence on 1 January 1901. The six colonies (NSW, Victoria, Queensland, SA, WA and Tasmania) became states, each retaining most of its powers, such as those regarding health, education, transport, and some aspects of taxation.

The federal government was established, with control over a limited number of areas that were best dealt with centrally. These included immigration, foreign affairs, defence, telegraph and postal services and some aspects of taxation.

LAW

THE JUDICIARY

The new High Court, and judgements of the Conciliation and Arbitration Court, contributed to achieving hopes and visions for the new nation.

	YEAR	PURPOSE AND FEATURES
High Court	Established 1901	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Interpret and make judgements on law and ConstitutionDecide cases of federal significance, and hear appeals from federal, state, and territory courtsHighest court in Australia – limited number of appeals could be made to British Privy CouncilInitially three members of Bench – heavy workload led to increase to five (1906)
Conciliation and Arbitration Court (especially the 1907 Harvester Judgement)	1907	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Established principle of ‘basic wage’Wage was based on ‘the normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being in a civilised community’Wage set at 7 shillings per day (£2.2.0 per week) for a man with wife and familyNo provision for wages of women, including widows

Australia’s constitution, courts and provisions, combined with the journalism, art and literature of the early Commonwealth, contributed to an image of Australia as a democratic and progressive nation. Phrases such as ‘workingman’s paradise’ and ‘a social laboratory’ were used to describe the lives of ordinary people in the young nation.

LEGISLATION

Laws passed by the Commonwealth parliament helped to bring many of the visions for the nation to reality.

	NEW COMMONWEALTH LAWS	
	Features	Vision reflected
Pacific Island Labourers Act (November 1901)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ordered removal from Australia of South Sea Island labourers recruited to work in Queensland cane fields (from 1860s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">White AustraliaEconomic progressSecurity
Immigration Restriction Act (December 1901)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dictation test made it very difficult for people of non-English speaking backgrounds to enter AustraliaDid not state that ethnicity was a barrier to immigration although this was its purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">White Australia
Franchise Act (1902)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gave vote to men and women over 21Excluded 'aboriginal natives' of Australia, Asia, etc.Granted universal suffrage without property qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">White AustraliaFairness/egalitarianism
Customs Tariff and Excise Acts (1902, 1905, 1906, 1907*) <small>* Note that these are the most significant of a number of Tariff and Excise Acts that were passed</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aimed to achieve the vision of an efficient and prosperous nation through uniform protective tariffs promoting local manufacturing and tradeReflected the vision of a 'workingman's paradise' by insisting that employers pay their workers 'a fair and reasonable wage'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Workers' rightsEconomic progress
Defence Acts (1903, 1909)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduced compulsory military training and a citizens' armyBarred those not 'substantially of European descent' from fighting for Australia ('descent' to be determined by medical officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SecurityWhite Australia
Conciliation and Arbitration Act (1904)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Established court for resolving industrial disputesDesigned to achieve balance between needs of employers and workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Workers' rightsEconomic progressFairness/egalitarianism
Invalid and Old-Age Pensions Act (1908)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provided financial support for people unable to look after themselvesInvalid pension applied to white men unable to work through accident or physical incapacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Workers' rightsWhite AustraliaFairness/egalitarianism
Maternity Allowance Act (1912)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Designed to encourage population growthIntroduced £5 baby-bonus payment for (white) mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">White AustraliaFairness/egalitarianism

TOPIC 3: AUSTRALIAN VISIONS BY 1914

KEY KNOWLEDGE

The extent to which the visions of 'White Australia,' a 'workingman's paradise' and a 'social laboratory' had become reality by 1914, including the position of Aborigines, non-British immigrants, women and workingmen's families.

Advice: You are required to explain the degree to which the Constitution, courts and legislation had 'delivered' the aims of economic progress, a distinctive identity, egalitarianism etc. by the start of World War I.

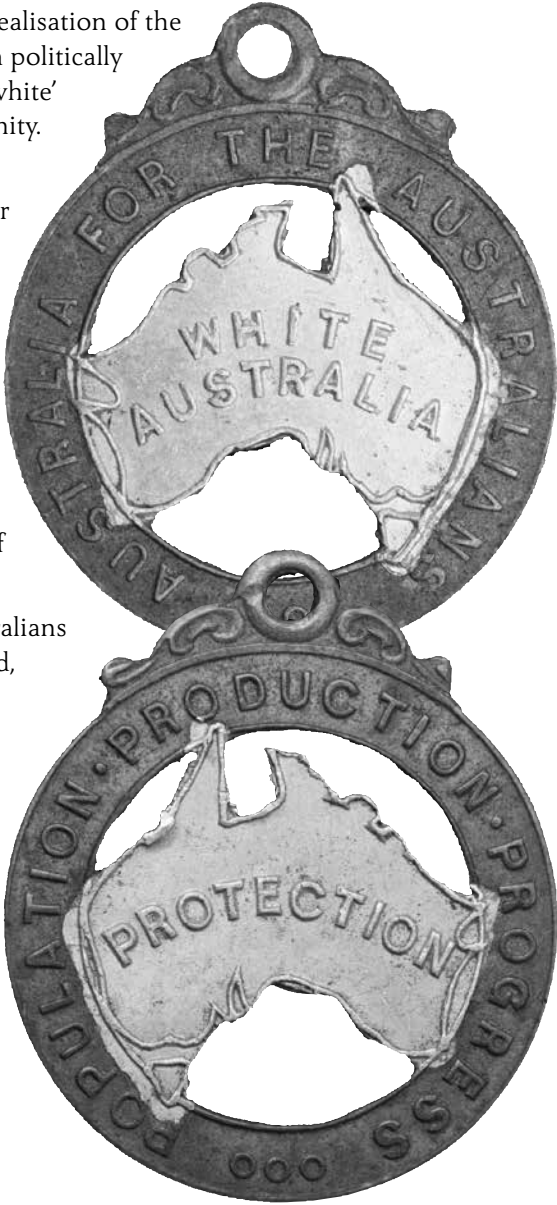
By 1914, a great deal of progress had been made towards the realisation of the Australian peoples' visions for their new nation. Australia was a politically stable, economically progressive, British-style, predominantly 'white' nation. There was a growing sense of Australian identity and unity.

However, women and Australians from a non-Anglo-European background missed out on some of the benefits offered to other Australian citizens.

A 'WHITE AUSTRALIA'

By 1914, Indigenous people experienced the lowest living standards in Australia, including poor health and poor access to justice. The Aboriginal Protection Act (1909) in NSW gave the government wide-reaching and paternalistic powers over Aboriginal people in that state. Many children were taken away from their families and people could be forcibly moved off their land if non-Indigenous people wished to use it.

Despite the prevailing discrimination of the period, some Australians expressed tolerant attitudes, such as journalist Bernard O'Dowd, who wrote in 1901, 'I know that the coloured races are classed as inferior races but I must admit that I cannot see evidence of their inferiority.'



Brass 'White Australia' protection badge, 1906. Photo by George Serras. National Museum of Australia, <http://collectionsearch.nma.gov.au/object/74305>

ASSESSMENT

- › **GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY**
- › **SAMPLE EXAM AND RESPONSE GUIDE**

RESPONDING TO SOURCE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

SOURCE ANALYSIS PART A

The wording and mark value of these questions will vary. They are likely to be worth approximately **4 marks**, and to **focus on drawing information from 1–3 sources**.

Refer to at least one specific component of the source(s) provided. This might be a direct quote from a written source, or a specific reference to an element in a visual source. Ensure that you integrate these quotes/descriptions into your response, and signpost them with phrases like **‘as shown in Source 1’**.

EXEMPLAR RESPONSE

What do Sources 1 and 2 reveal about the ways in which Victoria was transformed as a result of the gold discoveries in the 1850s? (4 marks)

The student clearly **signposts** their use of the sources by saying, ‘both Sources 1 and 2 suggest...’

The point extracted from the written source is illustrated with a **short, direct quote**.

Both Sources 1 and 2 suggest that Victoria was transformed through an influx of people coming in on ships. Source 1 shows the masts of many ships in the bay and the bustle of people and transportation of goods on the wharf. The wharf looks to be a substantial building and the people appear well-dressed, reflecting a wave of prosperity which changed Victoria.

Source 2 reflects the environmental transformation caused by gold mining, with references to ‘mud and clay.’ The observer comments on the way that water accumulated and was used to wash gold, adding to the disruption of the natural environment. The writer also comments on the change in the landscape, e.g. ‘thrown into heaps of clay.’ (118 words)

SOURCE ANALYSIS PART B

The style and mark value of these questions may vary. They are likely to be worth approximately **6 marks**. They are likely to ask you to comment on what the source(s) suggest about a particular topic and to provide **other knowledge/evidence** in support of your comments. As well as referring to the source(s), draw on factual information such as dates, statistics, quotes etc.

Form connections between the ideas in the source(s) and your own knowledge. You will find this easier if you use **connective phrases**, like those listed below

The source	... captures the idea that...	Your factual knowledge
	... exemplifies the belief that...	
	... reflects the fact that...	
	...however, in reality ...	
	...but this is misleading , because...	
Your factual knowledge	... reflected in the source by...	The source
	... described in the source as...	
	... depicted in the image as...	
	... highlighted by the source through...	

EXEMPLAR RESPONSE

What attitude towards Indigenous people is reflected in Source 3? How typical was this attitude? (6 marks)

The miner quoted in Source 3 reflects a positive attitude to Indigenous people. He shows no fear of the ‘abode of blacks’ and willingly approaches their camp. He shows confidence that the Aboriginal people are giving him the correct directions. This shows a respect for Aboriginal knowledge and understanding of the land.

This positive attitude was shared by some European colonists. For example, explorer Major Mitchell suggested that he could not have completed his exploration of the Western District of Victoria without the assistance of his Indigenous guides (1836).

However, not all colonists were so positive. Lack of understanding of the Indigenous culture or relationship to the land was responsible for the ‘herding’ of people into missions and protectorates such as Langhorne’s Aboriginal mission (1837–39). Some colonists also exploited the Indigenous people. John Batman’s agreement with the Wurundjeri (1835) attempted to ‘buy’ thousands of acres with relatively worthless items, and many squatters exploited Aboriginal labour for little or no pay. Other colonists reacted to the Indigenous people with violence: numbers of deaths from massacres are disputed but 200–4000 died in massacres such as that at Butcher’s Creek (1841). (191 words)

Direct response to the question.

Quote from a written source is used to support argument, and this is marked with a **signpost phrase** (‘quoted in Source 3’).

The student provides support for the view presented in the source with **evidence**.

Three brief points offer **different perspectives** than that given in the source.

Specific evidence provided, e.g. dates, Langhorne’s Aboriginal Mission (1837–39) example, comment on Batman’s Treaty, figures on massacres.

SOURCE ANALYSIS PART C

These questions require you to **analyse an aspect of the topic, using evidence from the source(s) provided and other knowledge** such as dates, statistics, laws, and quotes from primary and secondary sources. They are likely to be worth approximately **10 marks** each.

Form connections between the different elements of your response by using connective phrases like the ones shown under part-b questions on page 132.

Note that these questions are effectively mini-essays and require a similar structure, e.g. a contention, introduction, 3–4 paragraphs supported with evidence, and a conclusion.

EXEMPLAR RESPONSE

Evaluate the extent to which Port Phillip District/Victoria was transformed as a result of the gold rushes. Use evidence to support your response (10 marks)

The gold rushes in Victoria (1851–1860s) were responsible for some very significant transformations in the colony. There were changes in population, wealth, development of Melbourne and of the inland, and the dispossession of Aboriginal people accelerated. However, not all aspects of Victoria were transformed. There were aspects of the colony had been established before gold and continued into the 1850s.

Clear **opening sentence**.