**The 30 & 36 mark Essay Questions – A Guide**

**General**

* You will answer one 30 mark essay question from a choice of two in Section A and one 36 mark essay from a choice of two in Section B
* The essay technique for the 30 and the 36 mark questions is the same. A 36 mark essay will simply include more depth of knowledge, a wider range of sources and more developed evaluation of their views

The marks for the question come from three assessment objectives: **AO1, AO2** and **AO3**

**AO3** **[15/30] [18/36]** – ***Use, analyse and evaluate ancient sources within their historical context to make judgements and reach conclusions about how the portrayal of events by ancient writers/sources relates to the historical context in which they were written/produced***

This means:

* Showing an understanding of the contents and views of the source(s) given in relation to the issue in the question
* Using the sources given and others you have studied as evidence and examples
* Using your knowledge of the period, other sources and the provenance of the sources given to assess why they have the views they do and how reliable these are

**AO2** **[10/30] [12/36]** – ***Analyse and evaluate historical events and historical periods to arrive at substantiated judgements***

This means:

* Looking at events in a balanced way – producing arguments and counter-arguments around them; strengths and weaknesses
* Weighing different arguments to find out which is stronger
* Assessing the significance of events
* Reaching developed judgements which link directly to the issue in the question are well supported

**AO1** **[5/30] [6/36]** – ***Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the features and characteristics of the period***

This means:

* providing specific and detailed own knowledge to explain what the interpretation is arguing
* giving specific and detailed examples from your own knowledge to support judgements made about the interpretation
* using your knowledge of the ancient sources to support judgements about the interpretation

**Planning**

You should aim to spend a minimum of 5 minutes planning each of your essay answers. This should start with you carefully reading the question and highlighting any key terms. You should identify what the specific issue in the question is and any date range you are given to answer within. Then:

* Bullet-point the 3-5 main points you want to make in your essay (5 for a 36 mark essay) making sure that this would give you a balanced answer with arguments supporting and challenging the issue in the question
* List any important examples or pieces of evidence that will be crucial in answering the question (do this before writing as you are less likely to then forget to include them)
* List the range of sources you will use in the essay – essential to do this to make sure your answer includes a range and variety of sources. Plan this into your essay and don’t expect it to happen by chance

**Structure**

**Conclusion:**

* Briefly re-read the question before writing then answer the question directly, providing a full explanation of your judgement
* Make sure there is balance in your conclusion – consider both sides of the argument and explain why one is stronger than the other

**Main Paragraphs:**

* Start each paragraph with a signpost sentence which introduces the point you are going to make and how it links to the question
* Develop the point with a range of evidence from the sources and evaluate the reliability of their views (see below)
* Develop the point and the sources with own knowledge – the two should be mixed together and not in separate sections
* Provide developed analysis of the point – how is it a strong argument and does it have any limitations?
* Sum up your overall judgement on the issue in the paragraph and link it directly to the question

**Introduction:**

* Reword the question to show an understanding of it and of the issue it is asking about
* Outline the points/arguments your essay will consider
* Provide a brief overall judgement that your answer will be able to sustain

**Introduction**

**Point/Argument 1**

**Conclusion**

**Point/Argument 2**

**Point/Argument 3**

**Point/Argument 4-5 etc.**

**How to evaluate the views of the sources in your essays (AO3)**

When including ancient sources make sure you reference who the author is or what the source is if it is archaeological. You are not expected to include lengthy quotes or the specific source number. When using sources you will also need to evaluate why an author or source has a particular view, or how reliable the view is. There are three main ways of doing this:

1. Use your knowledge of the ***period*** to support or challenge the views or claims in the source – *does your own knowledge of the period the source describes back up what it is saying or challenge it?*
2. Use your knowledge of other ***sources*** to support or challenge the views or claims in the source – *always try to use the sources in combination and to mix up different types of sources e.g. does a written source say something that is supported or challenged by an archaeological source?*
3. Use your knowledge of the ***provenance*** of the source to support or challenge its views – *think* ***P****urpose* ***A****uthor* ***N****ature* ***D****ate* ***A****udience* ***T****one. Does this help to explain why a source has a particular view and does it make it more or less reliable?*

**Mistakes to avoid**

* Don’t try to write this like a traditional own-knowledge essay – most of the marks are for the use and evaluation for the sources so there should be lots of this in your answer
* In 30 mark Period Study essays make sure you cover the date range being asked. This could be 492-404 BC or 31 BC – AD 68.
* Avoid overly-generalised evaluation of the sources (“Tacitus doesn’t like emperors…”). OCR refer to this as ‘pre-fabricated’ evaluation. Focus on evaluating the provenance of the author when it’s relevant to the point you are making and otherwise on the view from the source rather than the author.