

# VCE Student Profile: Ayrton Eldridge

## Question 1

Please state your name.

Ayrton

## Question 2

Which year did you complete your VCE?

2009

## Question 3

Did you study any Unit 3/4 subjects in Year 11? If yes, please list the subject(s).

Yes, International Studies in Year 11 (2008)

## Question 4

At which school did you complete Year 12?

Scotch College

## Question 5

What scores did you obtain for each of your Unit 3/4 studies? Please indicate both the raw scores and scaled scores.

Subject	Raw Score	Scaled Score
Australian History	50	50
Economics	50	50
International Studies	36	39
Literature	43	44
Maths Methods	38	44
Revolutions	44	45

## Question 6

What was your final ATAR?

99.55

## Question 7

Which tertiary course did you enrol into?

Bachelor of Commerce/Law

## Question 8

Which university/tertiary institution are you enrolled in/planning to attend?

Monash University



*The following questions relate to a typical week where there were no major examinations forthcoming:*

**Question 9**

How many hours did you dedicate to study (outside school) across a typical week?

Over a week (Monday-Friday) I would generally spend around 3-4 hours each night, so approximately 15-20 hours over the weeknights. I found it important to have some time off so I would generally leave Saturday nights free for going out with friends and Sunday nights free to relax. However, during the day on the weekend I would do about 5 hours each day, so approximately 10 hours in total over the weekend. This meant that I would be doing 25-30 hours of study a week outside of school hours.

**Question 10**

What was your typical weekday routine?

Monday to Friday; wake up at 7am, spend 30 mins on public transport to be at school by 8 15. School finished at 3 15 but I had extra curricular activities each afternoon except Friday, so I would not return home till about 5.00pm most evenings. I would generally study from 5 30-7 30pm, break for dinner, then study again from 8pm-10pm. I would attempt to be in bed by 10 30pm.

**Question 11**

Where did you engage in the bulk of your study on a day to day basis?  
(eg. bedroom, school library etc).

Most of my study was in my bedroom, as this was the place where I had my desk, school books and computer. Through a leadership position I was lucky enough to have my own office at school so when necessary I was study in there, rather than the school library.

**Question 12**

How many hours did you dedicate to study across school holidays?

Over the Term 1 and Term 2 holidays I did not spend a large amount of time working as I did not have any mid-year exams. I would perhaps work for about 25 hours each holiday for the Term 1/2 break, giving myself evenings/weekends off and mostly confining work to daytime hours. However, the Term 3 holidays I worked extensively in preparation for the end of year exams. I would give myself weekends off and alternate evenings, but I would estimate that I completed around 90-100 hours of study over this three week break.

**Question 13**

Did you engage in any extra curricular activities across Year 12? If yes, please indicate the activities and how much time was dedicated to each activity.

I had to participate in sport for school. Term 1 I played cricket, which involved 4 hours of training a week and 15 hours over Friday afternoon/Saturday. In Terms 2 and 3 I played soccer which involved 3 hours of training a week but only 2 hours on Saturday. Throughout the year I participated in Scotch's Junior Sport program, which involved 2 hours a week. I was also a school leader and this would often involve speaking at functions/school events on weeknights.

**Question 14**

How did you balance/organise your study with other commitments like work or sport or family?

I found it important to have a checklist of work which I had to get through over a weeknight/weekend. That way I could see how much work I had, and cross out each bit of work once I had completed it. I found that writing it down helped me to focus on what had to be done. Also, by doing this I would know in advance how much time I could set aside for other commitments and this ensured I did not fall too far behind.

*The following questions relate to a typical week where there were major examinations forthcoming:*

**Question 15**

How did you approach the task of preparing for the exam? (For example, would you start the process by writing notes? If so, which resources did you use to compile materials etc).

For both subjects I had taken fairly extensive notes throughout the year, using textbooks and other relevant materials which we received in class. In a week leading up to a SAC/end of year exams, I would read over these notes and summarise the key points/assessment criteria. I would also go over past exams and assessment reports, both found on the VCAA website, which I found to be immensely useful in preparing for the exams.

**Question 16**

How many hours did you dedicate to study (outside of school) in the weeks leading up to the exams?

In the week of swot vac leading up to the exams I would work 7 hour days over the week and weekend. In the early weeks of Term 4 when we were still at school I would work for 4 hours during the week and around 6 hours each day on the weekend.

**Question 17**

What was your typical day to day routine when studying for the exams?

I would try to have the evenings off and have an early night, but during the school-free days I would try to work similar to my school timetable, with a few hours later in the afternoon. This meant that I would work in hourly blocks with 10 minute breaks in between. This same process was repeated on weekends. I would try to finish working at around 5 30pm each night and relax after that.

**Question 18**

Did you continue your extracurricular activities in the weeks leading up to the exams?

My school sport and service activities had finished by the start of Term 4 so I did not have these extra-curricular activities in the lead-up to exams. I did however have an increased workload due to my leadership position at Scotch, however this was not excessive and I was able to manage this easily.

**Question 19**

Which technique(s) did you use to learn materials "off by heart"? (eg. writing notes, re-writing, reading texts etc).

Economics - this subject was largely based on theory, definitions and the ability to apply this theoretical knowledge. Therefore a lot of my revision was based around learning my notes off by heart. I found writing the notes out and summarising/re-summarising these notes, whilst time consuming, was the best way for me to learn the material off by heart. I do not consider simply reading notes to be effective.

Aus. History - once again I found writing out notes to be the best way to learn the material, especially in terms of learning quotes and specific information. Succinct, summarised notes are especially important in subjects such as history where there is a large volume of material to learn. Timelines was also an effective way for learning dates and sequences of events.

**Question 20**

If applicable, when did you start preparing for your Unit 3 exams?

When did you start preparing for your Unit 4 exams?

Economics - I started exam revision during the Term 3 break. I had taken notes during the year but over the holidays I began summarising them which further consolidated my knowledge of them. I also began doing practice exams during this period which helped me become conditioned to exam questions.

Aus History - I started exam revision during the Term 3 break. I had taken notes during the year but over the holidays I began summarising them which further consolidated my knowledge of them. I also began doing practice exams during this period which helped me become conditioned to exam questions.

**Question 21**

Did you suffer from anxiety attacks or mind blocks in any of your exams? What did you do to alleviate or get through these situations?

I did not suffer from any stress attacks or "mind blocks" as I found that, as I had worked consistently during the year, I felt prepared and confident going into the exams. I think preparing thoroughly for exams by doing extensive study and preparation is the most effective way of alleviating stress.

**Question 22**

Did you throw yourself back into study after the mid-year exams, or did you take a significant study break?

I had no mid-semester exams so this was not a major major issue for me. However, i did the take the chance to relax in the week of school whilst the mid-semester exams were being conducted, in order to have a break before completing work over the Term 2 holidays.

**Question 23**

Did you study across the Term 2 school holidays? If yes, what did you spend the bulk of your time doing?

I did engage in some study over the Term 2 holidays, although this was mainly confined to revision of the Semester's work. I did not feel it was necessary to work extensively over the break as i felt it was important to take a break after a long and busy semester. However, i felt that revising the semester's work was useful as it helped me consolidate this knowledge, which then meant at the end of year it came back to me much more easily.

**Question 24**

If you did not study across the Term 2 school holidays, do you believe that your workload and stress levels would have been reduced if you did engage in some study?

N/A

### **Questions Relating to the Subject You Have Been Asked to Write About**

**Question 1**

Which subject does this report relate to?

Australian History 3/4 and Economics 3/4

**Question 2**

What sort of marks did you get in this subject across the year?

Economics - Over the year we had four SACs. I received scores of 58/60, 54/60, 45/50 and 40/40 for each of these SACs. In the end of year exam I got a score of 87.5/90 and subsequently a study score of 50.

Aus History - Over the year we had four SACs. I received scores of 39/40, 47/50, 50/50 and 25/25 for these SACs. In the end of year exam I got a score of 78.5/80 and subsequently a study score of 50.

**Question 3**

Based on your results and performance throughout the year, were you confident that you would obtain a perfect Study Score? If not, what Scaled Score were you anticipating/hoping to receive?

Economics - I had completed numerous practice exams for this subject and was confident of doing well, yet I did not expect to receive a perfect score. I was hoping to achieve a minimum study score of 45, with anything over that a bonus.

Aus History - I did many practice exams for this subject and was achieving full marks or close to it for each one of them. Thus I was more confident of receiving a perfect score for the subject, although knowing how hard it is to do so I was not expecting it. I was hoping for a study score of around 47 for the subject, with anything over that a bonus.

**Question 4**

Which section/topic from Unit 3 and 4 did you find most challenging?

Economics - I found the topic of External Stability, which was in the Unit 3 section of Australia's economic objectives, the most challenging of the year's work. This was because it focused on a wide range of issues to do with Australia's economic situation as well as global factors.

Aus History - I found the second area of study in Unit 4, based on Australian contemporary issues, to be the most challenging. This was because we had to learn a large volume of knowledge on the chosen issue, and apply it to an unseen piece of written/visual evidence from the period.

**Question 5**

How much time did you spend preparing/working on SACS?

Economics - each SAC was largely based around the application of theoretical knowledge, In preparation for these SACs I would spend approximately an hour a night for 3-4 days studying/summarising my notes, then another 3-4 hours doing practice SACS and questions.

Aus History - each SAC was largely based around applying the knowledge of dates, events and historians' views to different documents and questions. In preparation for these SACs I would spend approximately an hour a night for 3-4 days studying/summarising my notes, then another 5-6 hours doing practice SACS and questions. I would spend more time doing practice questions for Australian History as much of this revision was based on extended response/essay questions.

**Question 6**

What was the best source of help/information for the SACS?

Economics - I found that out the textbook was the best place to start for SAC revision. It provided good definitions and explained economic relationships clearly and thoroughly. It also had numerous practice questions which were designed along the same lines as the VCAA study guide. I also found it important to get these practice questions corrected by a teacher. This enabled me to seek explanations in areas I needed to improve and work out what markers were looking for in an exam.

Aus History - our school did not have a set textbook for Australian history, but instead we were given various handouts and photocopies from other textbooks and historians' books. These were a good source of revision as the views they presented were diverse but comprehensive. In particular I found it important to get practice questions/essays marked by my teacher, as with humanities and essay-writing subjects it is especially important to get the technique that examiners want to see down to a fine art.

**Question 7**

Did you regularly use a private tutor in this subject? If so, did you find this assistance beneficial?

Economics - I did not use a private tutor at all during the year, however I worked very closely with my teacher. I found a tutor unnecessary when my teacher was able to mark a lot of my work/revision and give me extensive help. This extra help was vital, in particular to help me refine my answers to incorporate as much detail in as little writing.

Aus History - I did not use a private tutor at all during the year, however I worked very closely with my teacher. I found a tutor unnecessary when my teacher was able to mark a lot of my work/revision and give me extensive help. This extra help was vital, in particular to help me develop the style of essay/extended response that examiners want to see.

**Question 8**

Did you attend a tuition college/tutorial classes/lectures to assist in this subject? Did you find this assistance beneficial?

Economics - I did not attend any additional tutorials/lectures for this subject out of class hours. I found the in-class help and resources made available by the school to be sufficient.

Aus History - I did not attend any additional tutorials/lectures for this subject out of class hours. I found the in-class help and resources made available by the school to be sufficient.

### **Question 9**

If applicable, do you feel that you would have obtained the same score if you did not use tutors/coaches/lectures/tuition programs?

Economics - although I did not use extra tuition/coaching from an outside source, I believe that had I not sought extra help from my teacher I would not have achieved a perfect score in the subject. The extra help and feedback I was able to receive from my teacher was vital in helping me develop my exam skills and perfect my understanding of the subject.

Aus History - although I did not use extra tuition/coaching from an outside source, I believe that had I not sought extra help from my teacher I would not have achieved a perfect score in the subject. The extra help and feedback I was able to receive from my teacher was vital in helping me develop my exam skills and perfect my understanding of the subject.

### **Question 10**

What was your best source of help across the year (teacher, tutor, lecture program etc)?

Economics - my teacher was the best source of help to me during the year. This was the case not just in teaching the material, but more importantly in providing extensive feedback to me when correcting practice questions/exams. This helped me to adapt my writing skills to exam questions and hone my technique into the style that examiners want to see.

Aus History - my teacher was the best source of help to me during the year. This was the case not just in teaching the material, but more importantly in providing extensive feedback to me when correcting practice questions/exams. This helped me to adapt my writing skills to exam questions and hone my technique into the style that examiners want to see.

### **Question 11**

Did you do anything differently study wise in comparison to your peers at school?

Economics - I found that I took far more extensive notes in this subject than a lot of my peers. This gave me a better base understanding of the subject. I also did wider reading on the subject, such as budget reports and articles in the Financial Review, which gave me a greater in-depth understanding of the subject and different views. In the lead up to exams, I did far more practice exams and was thus able to get more feedback from my teacher. I felt that this prepared me better for the exams than others doing the same subject.

Aus History - I found that I took more notes for this subject than others, and was thus able to have a better understanding of key dates and events than others. I also did wider reading for this subject, which I found to be particularly important. This gave me a more detailed knowledge of historians' views and primary sources, which if integrated into an answer gives it more depth and can earn extra marks. In the lead up to exams I also completed more practice essays and exams, which prepared me better for the exam than other students.

### **Question 12**

Do you feel that you had an advantage over other students in this subject? If so, what was this advantage?

Economics - I found that any advantage I had was due to the extra work I did in the subject. This extra work meant that I was able to stay on top of the subject, gave me a greater and more in-depth understanding of the content and, in the lead-up to exams, the practice papers I completed gave me greater confidence leading into the exam than many of my peers.

Aus History - I found that any advantage I had was due to the extra work I did in the subject. This extra work meant that I was able to stay on top of the subject, gave me a greater and more in-depth understanding of the content and, in the lead-up to exams, the practice papers I completed gave me greater confidence leading into the exam than many of my peers.

**Question 13**

Compare the subjects for which you obtained your lowest and highest Subject Study Scores.

Detail what you did differently between the two subjects and if applicable, provide your opinion on why you obtained such different scores.

My lowest study score was in International Studies in Year 11, and my highest was in both Australian History and Economics in Year 12. I think there were a few reasons why there was such a difference in my study scores for these subjects. For instance, in International Studies I did not do any wider reading for the subject, relying solely on the textbook. In Australian history and Economics I completed a lot of wider reading outside my textbook, which gave me a much more detailed and in-depth knowledge of the subject. I also completed more practice exams and read more of the VCAA examiners' reports in Australian History and Economics than in International Studies. I felt that I was therefore better prepared for the exam in these subjects than in International Studies, and hence I felt these were the reasons behind my higher scores.

**Question 14**

As part of your exam preparation for this subject, did you spend time writing up a comprehensive set of notes from which to learn? If yes, how many hours do you believe you invested into this task?

Economics - I had written a comprehensive of notes as the year progressed, but over the Term 3 holidays I summarised these. I found that this condensed my knowledge of the subject and gave me a more relevant set of notes to study in the lead up to the exams. I estimate that this task took approximately 15 hours and, whilst time consuming, I found this was very useful for me to help me learn and retain the course content.

Aus history - I had written a comprehensive of notes as the year progressed, but over the Term 3 holidays I summarised these. I found that this condensed my knowledge of the subject and gave me a more relevant set of notes to study in the lead up to the exams. I estimate that this task took approximately 10 hours and, whilst time consuming, I found this was very useful for me to help me learn and retain the course content. There was not as much content in Australian History as many other subjects, yet it involved note-taking from more sources such as historians' books and other primary sources.

**Question 15**

Did you purchase/acquire quality notes to assist in your examination preparation? If yes, did you find this acquisition beneficial? Why/why/not?

I did not purchase any additional notes for either Australian History or Economics. I found that the material in the textbook and extra reading given to me by teachers was sufficient. I also utilised my school library in obtaining extra reading. However, if a student cannot obtain a wide range of sources I would encourage buying a set of comprehensive notes as they are vital in exam preparation.

**Question 16**

How many examination papers did you work through as part of your exam preparation?

Economics - I would estimate that I completed approximately 14 practice exams for Economics in the lead-up to the exam.

Aus History - I completed about 8 practice exams for Australian History, I completed fewer ones than Economics as there were not as many available.

**Question 17**

Which exam papers did you work through?

Economics - I worked through the last five VCAA exams, which I found to be very useful as they followed a similar format to the end of year exam. I also completed practice exams created by independent organisations such as NEAP, CPAP, Insight and CSE.

Aus History - I worked through the last three years of VCAA exams, but I couldn't do more as the exam format was different in the years before this. I also did practice exams from independent organisations such as CSE and Insight, but I found that not as many of these entities created Australian History practice exams.

**Question 18**

Did you work through any exam papers under exam conditions? If yes, how many?

Economics - I did the first two or three exams in my own time, answering them the way I thought was best and ensuring I knew all the course content. Once these exams were marked and I was satisfied that I met these requirements, I began completing them under timed conditions. I believe doing this is very important as it prepares you for the actual exam and helps eliminate panic or mind blanks which you may experience if you haven't done much exam practice.

Aus History - I did the first two or three exams in my own time, answering them the way I thought was best and ensuring I knew all the course content. Once these exams were marked and I was satisfied that I met these requirements, I began completing them under timed conditions. I believe doing this is very important as it prepares you for the actual exam and helps eliminate panic or mind blanks which you may experience if you haven't done much exam practice. I found this to be especially important with Australian History, which I think is one of the hardest exams to complete within the time limit. This is because you have to effectively plan and write two essays as well as two extended response questions in a very short space of time.

**Question 19**

If applicable, how much time was invested into preparing for the Unit 3 examination?

How much time was invested into preparing for the Unit 4 examination?

Which examination did you find more difficult and why?

Economics - I only had one exam for this subject. I spent approximately 15 hours writing up exam notes over the term 3 holidays, and then completed around 14 practice exams in preparation for this exam. I also studied my notes for around 3 hours a week in the five weeks between the start of term 4 and the exam.

Aus History - I only had one exam for this subject. I spent approximately 10 hours writing up exam notes over the term 3 holidays, and then completed around 8 practice exams in preparation for this exam. I also studied my notes for around 3 hours a week in the five weeks between the start of term 4 and the exam.

**Question 20**

Had you previously covered all the questions/concepts that appeared in the exams or did the exam paper contain materials that you had never seen before? If so, did this make you panic in the exams?

Economics - I had covered all the material in the exams, mostly due to my private study and note-taking. Practice exams in particular were especially important in conditioning me to the types of wording that exam questions came in and the different ways to answer them. I see no reason why, if you have done extensive study and exam preparation, there will be a question in the exam which covers material you have not studied.

Aus History - Again, all the questions in the exam were on material which I had studied, and were similar to ones I had done in practice exams. Therefore, there was nothing new which threw me as I had covered all the necessary material. One difference in this exam is that the student must respond to an unseen quotation in an essay, and a visual/written document for an extended response. Whilst these two prompts were different to ones in practice exams and could not be studied for, I found that they were similar to ones in past exams. Therefore, even though they were unseen I found that they did not throw me or cause me to panic as I had done adequate preparation.

**Question 21**

If applicable, did you complete every question in the Unit 3 exam? If no, please estimate how much of the paper you did address.

N/A for both subjects

**Question 22**

If applicable, did you complete every question in the Unit 4 exam? If no, please estimate how much of the paper you did address.

Economics - I completed every question in the exam.

Aus History - I completed every question in the exam.



**Question 23**

Did you use any special exam techniques when working through the actual exams?

I found that monitoring time was the most important exam technique to master. This could be perfected by doing practice exams in the same format. I think it is important to allocate a specific time for each question/section, as it is easy to get carried away on one question and then realise you have not left yourself enough time for subsequent questions. This may involve giving yourself a set limit of 45 minutes for an essay and 15 minutes for a 10 mark extended response question; I felt this strategy ensured I did not run out of time on the exam due to spending too long on certain questions.

**Question 24**

If applicable, what mistakes did you make when preparing for the Unit 3 exams?  
Did you do anything differently when preparing for the Unit 4 examinations?

N/A

**Question 25**

Which resources did you find most helpful when preparing for the exams?

Economics - Other than my own notes and the textbook, I found the VCAA Exam reports very valuable when preparing for the exams. These give examples of high level answers for individual questions, detail what sort of answer the examiner is looking for, and provide examples of common mistakes or things which may cause you to lose marks. I think these reports are invaluable tools in helping students understand the marking criteria for an exam, and I found it helped me to tailor my answers in the style that examiners were looking for.

Aus History - Other than my own notes and the textbook, I found the VCAA Exam reports very valuable when preparing for the exams. These give examples of high level answers for individual questions, detail what sort of answer the examiner is looking for, and provide examples of common mistakes or things which may cause you to lose marks. I think these reports are invaluable tools in helping students understand the marking criteria for an exam, and I found it helped me to tailor my answers in the style that examiners were looking for.

**Question 26**

What advice would you provide to those students aiming for a 50 in this subject?

Economics - I would advise that the most important thing to master for this subject is the theory and its application to economic situations. If a student can understand this, then answering exam questions will simply be a matter of reeling off definitions and being able to apply your knowledge to the question. This can be practised and perfected over practice exams, which I think are vital in giving you an understanding of the exam and the correct way to answer exam questions. I would also advise the student to read widely and beyond the textbook. Reading on the budgets, different government policies and world economic events can be done on the internet or in newspapers, and I found doing this helped strengthen and widen my understanding of these issues, as well as give you a number of different perspectives.

Aus History - this subject is not based on theory but rather on events, dates, views and outcomes. It is essential that the student have a clear understanding of key events - how and why they occurred, what their consequences were and how people reacted to it - as well as the dates on which the event occurred. Wider reading in this subject is essential, as a key exam criterion is on the student's ability to integrate the differing views of historians on these issues. This wider reading is best if the student seeks out and reads books written by historians, as not only can they strengthen a student's knowledge but they will also provide them with a wealth of the author's opinions. It is also crucial that the student practices writing essays under time, as I found this exam to be the most difficult in terms of completing in the set time limit. The ability to write quality, detailed essays in a short space of time can set an excellent student apart from the rest; thus this skill is extremely important in attaining high marks for Australian History.

## General Advice

### Question 1

What was the most difficult aspect of completing your VCE studies and how did you overcome this?

The hardest part of doing VCE is the need for a student to sustain a high workload and level of concentration over nearly the whole year. This can be at times physically, mentally and emotionally draining. I felt that in order to keep up motivation and mental discipline, it was important to have a diverse range of interests. These may include sport, exercise and reading away from study books. This can help you relax and de-stress, and I certainly found it kept me sane over the year. Another key issue is not to study for extended periods of time without taking a break, as your productivity will decrease and your mind will not retain any of the information. I found that taking a ten minute break every 50 mins of study helped keep me fresh and allowed me to concentrate at a high level for most of the day.

### Question 2

If you had your time over again, would you do anything differently across Year 11 and/or 12?  
Why/Why Not?

I was happy with the way I approached VCE and thus I would not do anything differently. This was because I was able to identify the ways I worked best early in the year, and was able to keep disciplined and work at a high level for the whole year.

### Question 3

Is there anything that you wish you had known about before entering the VCE?

No, I was happy with the level of information I had received from my school prior entering into VCE. I had been advised of study strategies, options for outside tutoring and the best way to prepare for exams before the year, so I entered Year 12 confident that I was well-equipped to deal with the year.

### Question 4

Are there any resources/services/products that would have assisted you in your studies had they been available?

I found that the resources I had available to me during the year, such as the textbook, additional materials and the teacher, to be all that I needed for my subjects. They gave me the base I needed for my knowledge of the course content, and my teachers were invaluable in helping me apply this knowledge to questions and exams. Therefore, I did not feel that I needed any additional resources that were not available to me.

### Question 5

If you had one piece of advice to give future students, what would it be?

It is a common mistake for students to stress excessively during Year 12 and let themselves too far behind in their work. I found that, as long as you stay on top of your work and study consistently during the year, it does not get too stressful and you will find that you do not have as much work to do in preparation for exams. It is only when work and SAC preparation is left till the last minute that students get stressed and find they are unable to cope with all their studies. This is why I find it so important for students to work throughout the year, as it leaves them less work to do before exams and they can focus on simply revising, rather than learning, the course content.