

GCSE

History A (Schools History Project)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J415**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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A953 History around us / Modern world study controlled assessment

General Comments:

The centres have made clear progress since the introduction of changes for the “strengthened GCSE” which created new challenges for them and the candidates starting last year. There was clear evidence from many moderators that the two biggest issues in the first year of word limit and using the old mark scheme were considered. Other issues around general administration such as providing source booklets, MS1 sheets and authentication sheets varied greatly between centres. I would stress going into the last cycle of controlled assessment that making it simple for the moderator to do their work is a very sound starting point for any teacher putting together a package of candidate samples. Many centres seem to understand this well.

In terms of the actual work this year, more centres appeared to be successful at encouraging candidates to focus on the task and use evidence with the teaching programme to develop an answer. Combined with greater realisation that this had to be done quickly due to the word limit saw overall progress.

Finally, moderators still saw plenty of examples of some centres being overly optimistic about the value of the best candidates whilst being somewhat harsher on the less able ones. The highest level sets challenging demands on the candidate and AO3, as an example, requires sophisticated source analysis in relation to the specific question, to achieve this level. This largely explains why some centres slightly over marked their candidates work.

Comments on Individual Questions:

History Around Us

Many centres seemed to really get along with the task investigating the notion of local and/or national importance. The only really notable issue with this question was with centres who had given little thought to how they might provide evidence for candidates around the local aspect of the site. This was especially likely around some castle sites. Centres who used the consultancy service were generally warned about this possibility before the candidates started to work. A few centres seemed to have done little work on the concept of importance of a historical site leaving candidates to decide. In these instances they were often drawn to consider typicality rather than importance.

Overall, the standard of understanding and focus provided in the History Around Us was good, with some evidence of progress on last year.

Modern World Study

There appeared to have been considerable thought about how the study programme and subject matter could be adapted to the specific task for the year. Many candidates then found it possible to use examples of past events to consider how far problems from the past had been resolved. For a few centres the usual issues on the Modern World Study arose; a tendency to think that events from the ancient past are critical in current situations or not bringing the study through to the current situation or at least, recent past.

In the broad scheme of things however, there were fewer examples of both problems.

A954A/11 Study in Development and Study in Depth: with Elizabethan England

General Comments:

Entry numbers for the Elizabethan option were slightly down on last year.

Candidates had considerably more success this year with the source questions, where they were asked to use a source and their own knowledge to test a hypothesis. Candidates were frequently able to correctly explain the relevance of the source to the hypothesis and then either support and/or challenge this view using their own knowledge of the topic and period. However, there was less evidence of candidates considering whether the source (s) provided were representative of the period. Candidates would benefit from considering the provenance of the source in their deliberations to form a conclusion about the nature of the views expressed and possible explanations for why it might confirm or challenge the hypothesis – for example the relevance of the cartoon used for question 9b being published outside Germany or the critical attitude towards bloodletting in the source used for 1b.

The recognition of important dates in cartoons was a positive improvement, particularly on the sources in the Crime and Punishment Option. This assisted candidates in selecting valid supporting material and resulted in successful evaluation of purpose and message.

Structured essays were less well answered this year, with candidates not exploring both sides to the statements and only considering the given side, with a passing reference to an alternative view. Best practice for successful answering of the structured essay questions was seen when candidates used the ‘This was important because.....’ or ‘This resulted in failure because.....’ formula for commenting on the information they had selected. Candidates should be aware that lengthy descriptions of a topic may have little value without this clinching comment. There was clear evidence of the Point, Explain, Example, Link approach among stronger answers. However, although the initial explanation of ideas was generally well done, it would help many candidates to do more work on how to form a valid conclusion. Many candidates simply use this as an opportunity to summarise what has already been said, but there is little value in this. The initial sections of the essay may be treated as separate explanations of different aspects of the question but the conclusion should provide the opportunity for more able candidates to weigh up relative importance. This is not just saying ‘X was more important because...’ but providing a judgement on both sides e.g. ‘X was more important than Y because..... whereas Y was less important because.....’ Often consideration of long term importance provides an opportunity for this type of comparison.

Candidates would do well to remember that explanations of ideas which do not contain specific factual references (names/ discoveries/ developments etc.) are less successful than those which do display such knowledge. Equally answers which are extended to judge a development, by its importance in time or for changes it caused, score more highly than those answers which just describe a development.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A: Development Study

Medicine Through Time

Question No.1.

Most candidates understood the natural/supernatural comparison in 1a, though an explicit reference to the question is more successful than just a juxtaposition of ideas. However top level answers were expected to challenge the sources in terms of how representative they were of the given periods – relatively few did this in any detail. A common misconception in 1b was that the source related to blood transfusions and many candidates were unable to offer relevant knowledge about alternative medical developments in the 18th century e.g. the work of Harvey – though there were some very lengthy answers about what was not shown, which had limited relevance.

Question No. 2.

The first section of this question was well answered with many candidates gaining full marks on Prehistoric medicine. Unfortunately this pattern did not continue into the b and c sections with much description rather than factors for part b and disappointingly limited knowledge being shown on the two plague centuries. Chronology was weak on both sections, with much 19th century knowledge being used in part b and general confusion about the approaches to the plague – many answers simply focused on lack of precise knowledge of the causes of the plague.

Question No. 3.

This question was well answered overall. There was a good degree of knowledge displayed on the work of Pare and a clear understanding of Harvey's discoveries, though many candidates were unable to explain more than one enabling factor and some simply identified valid points. Answers to part c, comparing the importance of Vesalius and Pasteur, showed good knowledge of discoveries but candidates would do well to explore significance over time as part of their evaluation, particularly when comparing the significance of individuals for their conclusion.

Question No.4.

Much of the comment for Q3c above, also applies to this question, as both were comparing the importance of two individuals. Sound knowledge was shown of both Koch and Simpson for the earlier parts of the question, though candidates could save valuable time on the (b) sections if they focused on the factors rather than a description of the method of the discoveries.

Crime and Punishment Through Time

Question No.5.

Both 5a and 5b were answered well with a sound knowledge of the respective periods and valid interpretation of the sources. However, the earlier comment about candidates being prepared to challenge the sources using their own knowledge still applies here. There was still some confusion among weaker candidates who classed Trial by Ordeal as a punishment rather than a process.

Question No.6.

Relatively few candidates chose this option. It was pleasing to see a more analytical approach being taken to the Robin Hood story, but there was some confusion of chronology in responses to 6c, with examples being taken from later periods.

Question No.7.

This was the most popular choice for Crime and Punishment candidates. Answers on Highwaymen and Smuggling showed sufficient knowledge and a valid approach, avoiding too much description and selecting relevant factors. Chronology became an issue in many answers to 7c, though most candidates were able to give some valid examples of the 'property' aspect.

Question No.8.

There were many good answers to this question – with part c being particularly successful in explaining both sides of the statement in relation to improvement in Prisons. Answers on Transportation generally focused on fear of the voyage and fear of the unknown.

Elizabethan England

Question No.9.

Q9a was generally well answered. Almost all of the candidates used the source to explain how Drake had become an irritant to Philip of Spain and then went on to explain that this was not the main reason for sending the Armada; they went on to cite Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth's rejection of the marriage proposal and her support for the Dutch as other reasons.

Most candidates were able to find both similarities and differences in the sources used for 9b but relatively few went on to explain the difference in purpose behind the writing of the two messages. Most of those candidates that did get through to purpose used the fact that Lord Howard was writing to a member of Elizabeth's government to develop their argument.

9c was well answered with most candidates referring to details in the source to make valid inferences in context – the size of the crowd indicating how important the event was, the flag referring to the destruction (not just defeat) of the Armada, etc. The best answers moved on to unwitting testimony – designed to show the wealth and power of Elizabeth, the suggestion that God must have been on the side of the Protestants.

Question No.10.

10a usually produced a good set of answers with details of the Babington Plot most in evidence.

10b was also well answered although most candidates tended to focus on one reason for the harsh treatment of the Jesuits – the threat that they might provoke a Catholic uprising. A few went on to explain how this would upset the religious settlement that Elizabeth has worked so hard to achieve. A very small number went on to develop an argument around men like Campion – dedicated and highly respected, refusing to renounce their religion even under torture and rejecting any notion of compromise.

10c produced a range of very thoughtful answers. Most candidates selected Mary Queen of Scots as the greater threat and were able to marshal a number of very sensible arguments to support this claim – the support that she may have from Catholics at home and abroad, the number of plots that swirled around her. The case against Essex rested on either his physical or emotional proximity to Elizabeth – she would not be expecting danger from someone so close to her. A few also argued that Elizabeth's age at the time of the Essex rebellion made her even more vulnerable. This question was notable for the unusually high number of balanced conclusions that were reached by candidates.

Question No.11

11a produced some very detailed answers describing the staging of plays in Elizabethan theatres.

11b showed that candidates had a sound knowledge surrounding the reasons for the popularity of Elizabethan theatres. The economic argument was the most common one with candidates going into detail about how cheap it was for ordinary people to enjoy plays. There was a tendency to list other reasons for popularity, an opportunity for the wealthy to be seen and show off their clothes, refreshments for sale, etc., without developing reasons these further.

11c There was a tendency to agree that theatres were mainly opposed for religious reasons and this was explained in some detail with reference to the Puritans. They associated the theatre with the Romans who had crucified Christ, the encouragement of immoral behaviour and the decline in church attendance were all used as evidence. Better answers considered alternative reasons in the same amount of detail, e.g. concern about sickness and the plague, concerns about law and order. 11c contrasted with 10c in that there were fewer balanced conclusions reached by candidates.

A954B/12 Study in Development and Study in Depth: with Britain, 1815–1851

General Comments:

In terms of differentiation the paper worked well. There does appear to be some issues around the level of source skills displayed by candidates across all the paper, but particularly prevalent on the Depth Study. There appears to be a smaller percentage of candidates who can bring together all the elements of the source based questions together to reach the top levels.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 9a.

The first question on Britain, involving the early period of railways, needed a decent level of evaluation. The source provided plenty of evidence to show which side of the argument the article was on. Despite this, a large minority of candidates actually suggested that the source was against railways. Others struggled to recognise where in the development of railways the article came. The majority wrote answers that were restricted to the content of the source itself.

9b. There were a considerable number of candidates who did not know the context of the source. Others clearly knew about “railway mania” but failed to make a move to the messages or purpose of the cartoon. There were a decent number of candidates who sailed through this task.

9c. More candidates appreciated the core point of source C, but there were still some misinterpretations. The problem here was with context and the overall development of the railways that the cartoon should have fitted in with. By 1851 railways presented plenty of evidence for them being accepted, but again, many candidates struggled to get beyond the source.

10a. Many candidates ignored the exact wording of the task. Instead of giving the campaign details of the demand for Parliamentary reform, there were many who simply gave the reasons why the protestors were against the situation.

10b. Most candidates knew the basics of the Swing Riots, with many being able to give one solid explanation. Many fewer managed a multi-causal answer.

10c. This question produced a fairly normal range of responses, but it was perhaps a little surprising to see how few candidates could provide explanations for both sides of the argument for how satisfactory the 1832 Reform Act was.

11a. This task produced some superb answers with really solid understanding of the specific period, whilst others struggled to place this period into any specific context.

11b. Following on from the previous task, many candidates wrote very vague points about the benefits of emigration in the period. Even with a generous approach to context here, many candidates struggled. Relatively few reached the explanation level.

11c. The question differentiated well with some very well argued answers. There is still a tendency for a minority of candidates to muddle up the two systems of Poor Law, with some discussing at some length the problems and problems of moving to the old system. Others seemed to confuse workhouses and factories. At the other end of the scale, many candidates explained in good contextual detail reasons to support the Poor Law and reasons to be against it. The Andover scandal was a good point of reference.

A954C/13 Study in Development and Study in Depth: with the American West, 1840–1895

General Comments:

This proved to be a demanding paper for many candidates. Generally candidates performed better on the essay questions and found the source questions more difficult. When dealing with sources it is important to use the source(s) and knowledge when answering the question. Some successful candidates clearly spent a couple of minutes planning their answers – all candidates should be reminded to do this. Too many candidates use the sources at face value and need to address the purpose of the source and use historical context to test sources, challenge interpretations or explain why a source was produced at a specific time.

Some candidates performed less well on essay questions possible because they chose the wrong question to answer. Candidates need to take their time and choose the appropriate question by looking at all parts a, b and c, rather than letting their choice be swayed by the 5 mark question. Many candidates opted for Question 2 and were successful in part a, however they then struggled to get beyond level 2 for parts b and c. Successful candidates spent time planning their answers to each part and there was some evidence they planned which question to select.

Some candidates performed less well because they did not answer the question set. They described the work of an individual or a situation rather than why the individual was able to make advances or why Public Health was so poor in the Middle Ages. A small minority of candidates misread questions and produced detailed knowledge about the wrong individual. Once more a little planning may have helped candidates avoid these errors.

Successful candidates planned answers, choose questions wisely and showed comprehensive knowledge and understanding of sources in their answers. They had clearly been well prepared for this examination and were able to produce multi-causal responses, debate interpretations and reach valid judgements in their conclusions.

The majority of candidates were taking care with SPAG on 8 mark questions and there was clear evidence of candidates reading through their answers and making corrections.

Chronology still caused problems for some candidates. A small minority confused Prehistoric with the Middle Ages. Knowledge of Plague in both the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries was confused. Public Health in the Middle Ages was confused with Public Health in the nineteenth century. Revision based upon time lines should be encouraged.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Medicine through Time

Q. 1(a) Many candidates achieved L3/5 marks on this question because they successfully showed understanding of both sources and knowledge of Egyptian and Roman medicine to agree with the interpretation. Candidates often focused on the “Nile Theory” of the Egyptians and the supernatural role of Asclepius in Roman times but alternative approaches were allowed. More successful candidates went on to test the interpretation by applying either knowledge of Roman developments in Public Health or explaining how Egyptians also relied on supernatural beliefs. Some candidates confused the Egyptians with the Greeks which did not help the quality of their answers.

Q. 1(b) Many candidates achieved L3/6 marks because they successfully linked Greek ideas relating to the Four Humours with the blood-letting shown in the sources. To move to L4 answers candidates needed to show how Harvey had proved how blood-letting was unlikely to work and/or recognise that the cartoon was critical of blood-letting. Unfortunately many candidates failed to do this. Weaker candidates wrote about blood transfusions rather than blood-letting. Others misinterpreted the source.

Question Two was a very popular choice. Unfortunately too many candidates chose this question because they could deal with 2(a) confidently but struggled to answer 2(b) and 2(c). Candidates must take care when selecting questions.

Q. 2(a) Many candidates produced a wide range of valid points and/or developments with trepanning proving to be a popular choice. There was a small minority of candidates who were unclear on the meaning of Prehistoric and wrote about the wrong period e.g. the Egyptians, the Greeks or the Middle Ages. Once more the use of chronological time-lines for revision is to be encouraged.

Q. 2(b). There were too many disappointing responses to 2(b). Rather than explaining why public health in the Middle Ages was so poor candidates described conditions that applied to towns in the nineteenth century even making references to John Snow and cholera. More successful candidates were able to explain the impact of the fall of the Roman Empire, the power of the Church preventing understanding about the causes of disease, the lack of organisation by government and towns etc.

Q. 2(c) Less successful candidates confused the Plague with the cholera epidemics of the nineteenth century. More successful candidates used valid contextual knowledge to explain a wide range of similarities based on belief in punishment from God, miasma, Plague Doctors etc. Fewer candidates were able to write about differences but those that did often commented on the better organisation of the seventeenth century based upon quarantine, watchers, searchers etc. There were too many nil responses to this question.

Question three was also a very popular question. Generally this was a more successful choice for candidates as they demonstrated sound knowledge of Renaissance medicine although too many candidates struggled to achieve higher than L2 in 3(b).

Q. 3(a) Many candidates produced valid points and developments to describe the work of Paré. Less successful candidates had more limited knowledge. Very few wrote about the wrong individual.

Q. 3(b) Too many candidates described the work of Harvey rather than why he was able to make advances at that time. Some candidates confused Harvey with Galen, Vesalius or Pasteur. More successful candidates explained the impact of Vesalius's work on Harvey, the changes in the power of the Church, the opportunity to dissect dead bodies, Harvey's background, his ability to experiment on cold-blooded mammals etc.

Q. 3(c) Many candidates showed sound knowledge of both Vesalius and Harvey to argue both sides of the interpretation and reach a valid judgement in their conclusion. Less successful candidates only had knowledge of one individual or attributed the work of Galen or Pasteur to the work of Vesalius or Harvey.

Q. 4(a) Many candidates produced valid points and developments to describe the work of Simpson. Less successful candidates had more limited knowledge. Some candidates wrote about the work of the wrong individual e.g. Lister.

Q. 4(b) Successful candidates had clear knowledge of the work of Koch based upon his identification of specific germs, his methods of growing bacteria, the impact of his rivalry with

Pasteur, his contribution to aseptic surgery etc. Less successful candidates had no clear knowledge of the work of Koch but managed to identify some relevant points. Other candidates wrote about the work of Pasteur.

Q. 4(c) Many candidates had sound knowledge of the work of both Jenner and Pasteur and were able to argue both sides of the interpretation and reach a valid conclusion. Less successful candidates only had knowledge of one individual or identified valid points. A few candidates wrote about the work of the wrong individual e.g. by attributing the work of Fleming to Pasteur.

Crime and Punishment

Q. 5(a) Successful candidates used historical context of the time e.g. the witch craze, the role of witch-finders like Matthew Hopkins, the work of James I, reasons why people feared witches in order to explain the purpose of the source e.g. to act as a deterrent. Less successful candidates focused on context and message. Too many candidates relied upon the source to explain message or purpose and remained at level 2.

Q. 5(b) A small number of candidates were able to use sound knowledge and analysis of the source to evaluate the interpretation. Some of these candidates argued that the importance of religion in crime and punishment did not change as God was the judge in the trial by ordeal in and that religion remained important in Mary's reign when she executed many Protestants as heretics. They went on to argue either that actually religion had become even more important by 1556, or religion was playing a different role by 1556, or other crimes had become more important. Lower and middle ability candidates struggled to reach L3. They dealt with Source B very well to achieve L2/4 but often failed to use historical context to analyse and evaluate Source C which prevented them from producing one or both sides of the argument to achieve L3 or L4.

Very few candidates attempted question six.

Q. 6(a) Successful candidates produced a good range of valid points and developments relating to Anglo-Saxon punishments including blood-feud, wergilds, being outlawed, mutilation, execution, banishment, use of stocks and pillories etc. Trial by ordeal was invalid as it is not a punishment.

Q. 6(b) Successful candidates demonstrated comprehensive knowledge to explain one or more than one way in which the story of Robin Hood is useful. Weaker answers identified some parts of the story of Robin Hood.

Q. 6(c) Weaker candidates struggled because the question encompassed several centuries and negative phrases such as "changed little".

Question 7 was a popular question

Q. 7(a) Successful candidates produced a good range of valid points and developments.

Q7. (b) Successful candidates produced multi-causal explanations based upon the vast coastline, smuggling as a social crime, the vicious nature of many gangs of smugglers etc. The weakest responses were based upon generalisations that could apply to today.

Q, 7(c) Candidates produced a wide range of responses with weaker answers being confused over the meaning of "crimes against property". Successful candidates used comprehensive knowledge, e.g. about heresy, treason, poaching and the Bloody Code to argue for and against the statement and reach a valid conclusion.

Question 8 was also a popular question.

Q. 8(a) Successful candidates produced a good range of valid points and developments.

Q. 8(b) Successful candidates produced multi-causal explanations about why transportation was feared, e.g. conditions on the journey, the fear of the unknown, prisoners rarely returning to England etc. Less successful candidates focused on one aspect of transportation whilst weaker candidates usually managed to identify one or two relevant points.

Q. 8(c) Successful candidates used comprehensive knowledge, e.g. of the role of prison reformers and the advantages/disadvantages of the Separate and Silent Systems to argue for and against the statement and reach a valid conclusion. Weaker answers displayed limited knowledge or wrote about invalid topics e.g. the suffragettes.

American West

Q. 9(a) Many candidates lacked knowledge of the role of vigilantes in the American West. Too many candidates of all abilities stuck too closely to the source in this question spending far too long discussing the words of the source rather than demonstrating their knowledge of vigilantes. This often limited candidates to L1/1. Better candidates used limited contextual knowledge to agree and/or disagree with the interpretation resulting in candidates achieving L2 or the lower marks in Levels 3 and 4. There were very few comprehensive answers that used sound knowledge to agree and disagree with the interpretation.

Q. 9b) Lower ability candidates made surface use of these sources and accepted them at face value to decide which was most useful. Middle ability candidates tended to identify contextual knowledge to test one or both sources. It was very rare for candidates to achieve L4/6 where the demands of the question proved to be too high (candidates were expected to test the strengths and weaknesses of both sources). Too many candidates referred to the cowboy in Source C looking after, or hunting, buffalo.

Q. 9(c)) Source D proved extremely difficult for many candidates to handle. Far too many candidates misinterpreted the source and only achieved L1 out of seven marks. Many candidates failed to link the source to the Johnson County War – which prevented them from reaching L4. Valid knowledge relating to range wars and conflicts over cattle rustling could achieve L2 or L3 depending upon whether message or purpose were added to the explanation. Successful candidates did make the link between context of the Johnson County War and the message or purpose of the artist. Message could include cattle rustling caused conflict, the cattlemen were wrong, it was pointless conflict etc. Purpose could include: to prevent people from carrying guns, to improve law and order, to support the homesteaders or the cattle barons etc.

Questions 10 and 11 were equally popular.

Q. 10(a) Many candidates displayed comprehensive knowledge relating to the uses of the buffalo.

Q. 10(b) Successful candidates produced a multi-causal or single response based upon the events leading to the battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876 e.g. the discovery of Gold in the Black Hills, Sitting Bull's vision, the reasons why the Sioux and Cheyenne were off the Reservation, Custer's actions leading to the battle etc. Level two responses focused on more general causes of conflict with the Indians e.g. the destruction of the buffalo, Manifest destiny etc.

Q. 10(c) Many candidates were well prepared for this question and were able to produce sound knowledge to explain one side of the argument to agree that Custer was to blame. More successful candidates were able to argue both sides and reach a valid conclusion.

Q. 11(a) Many candidates displayed comprehensive knowledge relating to the journey West. Some candidates produced valid points on the journey of the Mormons to the West – these were rewarded.

Q. 11(b) Successful candidates produced multi-causal explanations of the problems faced by homesteaders. Weaker responses became a list of problems but some were linked together to provide single or multiple explanations. Candidates should be advised to focus on the question as too many candidates went into detailed explanations of how the problems were solved. This wasted time and some candidates failed to use the same points in part (c).

Q. 11(c) Successful candidates demonstrated comprehensive knowledge to argue for and against the statement and reach a valid conclusion. Some candidates became too involved with discussing the pros and cons of barbed wire rather than considering other developments. Other candidates produced more general responses relating to the pros and cons of barbed wire even claiming that it offered protection from the weather. Knowledge of the solutions to the homesteaders' problems was generally good and many candidates achieved L3/4 or better.

A954D/14 Study in Development and Study in Depth: with Germany, c.1919–1945

General Comments:

Entry numbers for the Germany option were slightly down on last year.

Candidates had considerably more success this year with the source questions, where they were asked to use a source and their own knowledge to test a hypothesis. Candidates were frequently able to correctly explain the relevance of the source to the hypothesis and then either support and/or challenge this view using their own knowledge of the topic and period. However, there was less evidence of candidates considering whether the source (s) provided were representative of the period. Candidates would benefit from considering the provenance of the source in their deliberations to form a conclusion about the nature of the views expressed and possible explanations for why it might confirm or challenge the hypothesis – for example the relevance of the cartoon used for question 9b being published outside Germany or the critical attitude towards bloodletting in the source used for 1b.

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Medicine Through Time

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Germany 1919 – 1945

Question No.9.

Q9a was probably the best answered question on the paper. Almost all candidates were able to explain the context of the source (though answers tended to be over long and repetitive) and most could correctly identify a valid message. Fewer were able to explain the purpose - candidates should be encouraged to think 'The source was published to tell people.... **so that** they would...' in order to move their answer to the top level.

Whilst candidates correctly interpreted the source for 9b, answers generally focused on the positive and negative sides to Nazi policy towards women, with relatively few being able to compare both aspects with conditions under Weimar, which was a key point to the question. However, when Weimar was included, answers produced some high level comparison of ideas. There was some misinterpretation of the source for 9c, with some candidates focusing on education for girls. However, overall there was a tendency for candidates to use the source as a means of describing Nazi attitudes towards education with specifically commenting on utility. A simple solution is for candidates to utilize the question as part of their answer e.g. 'This source is useful because it shows.....' Top level answers also made specific comments on the limitations of the source by detailed reference to contextual knowledge of the Nazi curriculum and education policies.

Question No. 10.

10a either elicited good solid answers or confused the Spartacists with the Kapp Putsch.

10b showed that candidates had a sound knowledge of the terms of the Treaty (though they should be reminded to be specific rather than refer in general language i.e. 'they lost land') however there was much less success in explaining more than one reason why the Treaty was unpopular. Answers tended to list the terms and provide an overall assessment, rather than taking each term separately, which gave a much more focused answer.

10c – the focus of this question was on the collapse of Weimar rather than whether it was disliked. Many candidates failed to recognize this distinction and selected examples from much earlier in the period, prior to the Golden Age, failing to recognize that Weimar had survived these challenges. As a result many candidates did not provide valid evidence for both sides of the statement. The effects of the Great Depression were well understood, though there is still evidence of confusion between this period and the post Versailles hyperinflation etc. Better answers considered the alternative factors of Hitler's role or the events of 1933/34.

Question No. 11.

Answers to 11a were well produced, though some confusion between SA and SS was evident.

Although 11b took a newer approach to the topic of opposition, asking for types rather than groups, this was generally well answered, with sound understanding shown of the roles of Youth groups, the church and the army. Candidates would benefit from looking at the detail in the question as many did not respond to 'Nazi Regime' but simply wrote in response to 'the Nazis' – the difference being that Communists were not accepted as a valid group for the question, but many candidates wrote at length on this aspect.

Again, the wording of the question for 11c brought some issues. The question referred to 'keeping the Nazis in power' not 'bringing them to power', resulting in some invalid use of exemplars. However, there were many good answers with candidates being able to discuss both sides and, generally, linking their knowledge to the question. A few candidates successfully argued a balanced conclusion.

A955A/21 Historical Source Investigation: A Study in British History: Public Health in Britain 1800–1914

Question 1

This question was answered quite well. Of those candidates who reached the top level of the mark scheme, few successfully supported the answer with knowledge and source use on both sides for full marks. There were few that ignored the source completely and wrote about the topic more generally. However, the majority of the responses usually failed to consider what we might not learn from the source or its limitations as a piece of evidence for Public Health conditions in the first half of the nineteenth century. Many candidates demonstrated sound contextual knowledge, although source use was not always direct, nor carefully selected. Most rightly identified the statement ‘cholera is not contagious’ as an illustration of the state of medical knowledge. There were a pleasing number of candidates who placed the above statement in the context of a lack of understanding of Germ Theory, which was also accurately attributed to the 1860s. There were explanations of laissez faire attitudes, but unfortunately many candidates believed John Johnstone must have been speaking for the government as a whole rather than just a section of vested interests, despite the clear reference to quarantine laws within the source.

Question 2

It was clear from the format of the responses that many centres are trying to prepare candidates well for ‘similarity and difference’ questions and, in comparison to Q1, a substantially greater number of answers successfully covered both sides of the question. There were some very thorough responses that made detailed use of the information in the sources. Candidates often focused on Chadwick’s belief in miasma as the cause of disease in contrast to Snow’s belief that cholera was water-borne. Some went on to provide the contextual background in considerable detail. The most obvious similarity was the concentration in both sources on water, drainage and sewage. This was the usual route by which candidates were able to access the top level. Some candidates find the task of comparing sources very difficult. Even some of the better candidates sometimes got lost in the detail of their knowledge of Chadwick and Snow and went off at a tangent in their answers. Candidates need to be trained to make point for point comparisons so that they avoid analysing each source in turn in great depth before directly addressing the question.

Question 3

Candidates often had impressive knowledge of the context of later nineteenth century Public Health and were able to use this to talk about the value of Source D in demonstrating the apparent failure of legislation like the Artisans’ Dwellings Act of 1875. A few candidates wrongly challenged the reliability of the source based on that knowledge in the belief that the passage of laws to enable slum clearance must have meant that Shaftesbury was not telling the truth. They then got into something of a tangle trying to explain what his motives for such untruths may have been. Only a few candidates understood fully the causes of the overcrowding described by Shaftesbury. Some wrote at length about the effects of urbanisation during the Industrial Revolution, which was not strictly relevant. It was very gratifying when the most able candidates demonstrated their knowledge of the effects of the 1875 legislation on overcrowding; the very problem that the law had sought to tackle was sometimes exacerbated by the slum clearance programmes, which led to the construction of housing which was beyond the incomes of the poorest sections of society and led directly to the kinds of housing conditions witnessed by Shaftesbury.

Question 4

This was perhaps the most disappointingly answered question on the paper. Whilst many candidates tried to analyse the message of the cartoon, a lack of detailed contextual knowledge prevented them from reaching the higher levels. There was some evidence that candidates in a number of Centres had not learned about the Liberal reforms of 1906-1912. Such candidates often failed to recognise Lloyd-George, thinking instead that the man in the cartoon represented the aged poor for whom life had become so desperate that they had had to resort to begging and were on the verge of suicide. Even amongst the better candidates where contextual knowledge was more abundant, there was a marked failure to address the purpose of the cartoon. The key consideration for candidates needs to be, 'What did the cartoonist hope to achieve? What was the intended impact of publication?' The most likely reason was to garner opposition to the reforms; to put increasing pressure on Lloyd-George and the Liberals, since this was a highly unpopular piece of legislation amongst the wealthier classes. Some talked vaguely about 'winning votes', but since there was no General Election until 1910, such comments were incorrect and could not be credited. Whilst some candidates were able to place the poster into the political context of 1908, they often failed to explain the purpose of the cartoon.

Question 5

It is clear that Centres have grasped the differences between this question and the final question on the A952/21 paper. There is clear recognition that this is a more demanding question, in the sense that candidates have to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the period and weave the sources into the thread of their argument in relation to the question. As such, there were some very pleasing answers and the overall standard has improved since 2015. There were several examples of well-planned and well-structured answers which considered the various factors limiting public health developments during this period. Some had sensible introductions, and it was clear from the outset exactly which direction in which the answer was heading. Most essays had a conclusion. Some one-sided answers were awarded top level marks where the approach was what can best be described as 'forensic'. Such answers usually disagreed with the statement, but chose to unpick the proposition from a number of angles, whether it be in challenging the idea that few improvements had been made before the twentieth century; whether the cause of disease was misunderstood before the twentieth century, or if, indeed, there were other factors that held back developments in Public Health. Such answers suggested a maturity of approach beyond the level expected at GCSE.

A955B/22 Historical Source Investigation: A Study in British History: Protest & Reaction in Britain 1800–1914

General Comments:

The performance in 2016 was similar to that in 2015. As a general rule, the strengthened specification places more value on knowledge of this period of Protest and Reaction in Britain 1800 – 1914 and therefore those candidates who were able to place the sources accurately did well. This was particularly apparent in questions 4 and 5 where there was a need to go ‘beyond the source’ and to show deeper knowledge of the content.

It is worth highlighting that OCR have produced a set of verbatim candidate responses to all questions on this strengthened specification from the June 2015 paper which is available via Interchange. It is well worth showing future candidates the difference between a low-level and a high-level response as the criteria will not change in 2017 and beyond. Where candidates use accurate knowledge supported by direct reference to the source they will invariably do well because they are demonstrating their abilities as historians.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question No. 1

This was by far the best answered question on the paper. Candidates not only had a good knowledge of the Luddites generally but were able to focus in on the ‘Intended Impact’ of the letter from General Ludd to a Huddersfield Mill owner. The clear message of the source was that the workers wanted the machines destroyed so that the workers got their jobs back. Nearly all candidates could establish the tone of the source (‘a threat’ or ‘to intimidate’) and only a handful wrote about the Luddites generally with no reference to the source at all. .

This meant that the majority of candidates were awarded Level 4 with many answers rewarded at Level 5. There was some excellent contextual knowledge deployed, particularly about the effect of the Napoleonic Wars, the poor harvests of 1811 as well as the attack of Rawfields Mill and the passing of the Frame Breaking Act in 1812. The most successful answers were able to combine their knowledge with support from the source as this excerpt from a level 5 / 9 mark response shows:

Source A is a letter to the owners of a Huddersfield woollen mill in 1812. It details instructions that state frames must be ‘taken down’ in order to avoid conflict. This source is signed by Ned Ludd who was the fictional leader of the Luddites and was used to add a sense of organisation to the group – the ‘Army of Redressers’. This letter was written by the Luddites who would smash the machines that were taking their jobs and forcing them into poverty. In 1812 the Frame Breaking Act was established making damaging the frames punishable by death so this letter was sent as a threat so no violence needed to occur. The Luddites wanted the owners of the frames to peacefully take them down so they could have their old jobs back.

The above excerpt shows relevant contextual knowledge supported by clear reference to the source through quotations to build an answer that shows message (‘threat’) and purpose (‘to get their old jobs back’).

Question No. 2

This question was asking candidates to compare two opposing views on the Tolpuddle Martyrs and most candidates were able to infer that one source was against the Martyrs (Source B) and was for the Martyrs (Source C). Many candidates were able to support their assertions with use of (appropriate) quotations from the sources.

For Level 4 and above, examiners were looking for candidates to establish the Intended Impact of both sources. The question did require a focus on 'Why are the sources different' and level 4 and 5 answers needed to go beyond the context of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and look at the purpose: what were the intentions of each author?

Excerpts from a level 3 answer would be as follows:

Source B and source C are different because they are from people with different beliefs about the Tolpuddle Martyrs. The Tolpuddle Martyrs were six men convicted of swearing a secret oath under a law normally used to prevent mutinies in the navy.

Judge Baron Williams sees the men as evil and dangerous as he was a rich landowner and therefore he would be on the side of the government. The radical newspaper however disagrees and has sympathy for the men as they think the men are 'honest' and have been treated unfairly. So the sources disagree because they have opposite opinions about the guilt of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

However, Level 4 and 5 were reserved for those candidates who established the Intended Impact for one (Level 4) or both (Level 5) of the sources as the following excerpt shows:

"Source B was said by a Judge to a Jury. The trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs was rigged from the start as the Government was worried about the ideas of the French Revolution spreading to England and this would undermine their authority.

*Source C was published in a radical newspaper and it talks about the 'horrid sentence' that was given to 'innocent men'. It is talking about the public support for the Tolpuddle Martyrs and trying to get support for bringing them back from Australia **(Level 4)***

*Judge Baron Williams wants the Tolpuddle martyrs to be convicted **(Level 5)**. It is clear he wants this as he calls them 'evil' and 'dangerous'. However, source C, published in the same year, the radical newspaper is trying to persuade people to support the campaign to overturn the transportation sentence and bring the men home"*

There is an important difference between stating that the newspaper is 'sympathetic' and that the newspaper 'wants to create sympathy' for the men. 'Sympathetic' or 'feels sorry' is message and 'to create sympathy' is purpose and the latter will always be rewarded at a higher level.

Question No. 3

This question was clearly focused on utility and required candidates to consider the usefulness of the source with reference to their contextual knowledge. The majority of candidates were stronger explaining usefulness, and used the words in the source on the gate – Tithes, Poor Laws as support. Top-level answers were characterised by accurate use of knowledge and direct reference to the source to demonstrate the usefulness and limitations of the source but crucially using different contextual knowledge for each side so showing deeper knowledge and understanding of the Rioters. Many candidates limited their not useful argument to 'It is a cartoon so it is likely to be exaggerated / drawn to poke fun'. This is quite low level: candidates need to fully explain the limitations of this cartoon in terms of its provenance in an English magazine to access the higher levels.

It should also be said that there has clearly been some very good and in-depth teaching on the Rebecca Riots as there were a number of references to the need to transport lime and also how Robert Peel quelled the rebellion as well as specific examples of attacks on named toll gates. Accurate knowledge about the Rioter's attacks on the side bars of the toll gates particularly impressed the examining team.

Question No. 4

This was by far the least well-answered question on the paper. The question focussed on a poster produced in 1912 that supported women's right to vote. Nearly every candidate was able to write about what the poster showed but few went on to use their knowledge to explain the campaign beyond saying 'It was produced by the Suffragists / Suffragettes' despite the question asking candidates to use both the source and their knowledge. The number of marks available – (9) – should have suggested to candidates that a brief paragraph on this question was unlikely to be rewarded with a high level. Where candidates did score in the top levels it was because they had set the source in 1912 and considered the peaceful activities of the Suffragists against the actions of the Suffragettes – in particular the failure of the Conciliation Act in 1911. Some candidates remarked on the colour of clothing matching the Suffragette colours which was also rewarded. As with last year, we did not reward answers that referred to the death of Emily Davidson (1913) nor responses that wrote about how women's work in World War One earned them the vote. It is important that candidates place the source accurately to the time period as opposed to writing everything they know about the campaign for women to get the vote.

Question No. 5

There was some disappointment that the standard of responses to this question did not noticeably improve from last year. It is therefore worth explaining what we are looking for from Level 2 upwards. This question asks candidates to use both their knowledge and the sources to agree / disagree with the given interpretation. Therefore it is a requirement that both appropriate knowledge and the sources are used in answers: failure to use either knowledge or sources means that any candidate cannot score above level 2 / 5 marks. It is not enough to simply 'refer to the sources by letter' - this is not using them critically and, where candidates write 'as in source C' this would only be a level 2 response (at most). Candidates should avoid giving answers along these lines: '*Source A is about the Luddites. The Luddites support this statement because*' (and then go on to use knowledge about the Luddites). This is clearly not 'using the source; a quote / description to support a point being made is what we expect and must see to credit use of a source.

For the Levels above level 2, we expect to see use of both their wider knowledge and the sources on the paper. By knowledge, we are expecting to see candidates write about Protest & Reaction in Britain and deploy information that goes 'beyond the source': in other words, it is not on the paper. By way of examples, if candidates were talking about The Rebecca Riots that information such as 'Tithes' will only be credited when the resentment about the Tithes is explained as the word 'Tithes' is in the cartoon.

For Level 3 and above, where the knowledge deployed and the source use is valid, then candidates will have demonstrated the ability to use historical sources critically in their context as well as deploying appropriate information and reaching a reasoned conclusion. Level 3 is awarded where candidates write a one-sided answer agreeing or disagreeing with the statement. To reach a level 4 candidates will have done this much better for one side of the argument than the other (or used either their knowledge or the sources much better): to reach level 5 or 6 candidates will have done both sides well with both accurate deployment of knowledge and valid use of the sources to support their argument. It is clearly stated in the mark scheme that we expect to see a minimum of 3 sources used critically for Levels 5 and 6. One final difference between Levels 5 and 6 is that for Level 6 we also want candidates to evaluate the reliability of at least one source.

This year, at Levels 5 and 6, there were some very interesting answers to the question ‘In the period 1800-1914 protest was about no more than improving living and working conditions’. The majority of candidates agreed, on balance, with the statement and there were some responses that were a pleasure to read as they showed a depth of understanding and historical investigation that is at the heart of this paper. In particular, there was some excellent use of the sources, particularly source C which was used to show how the motives of the Tolpuddle Martyrs agreed with the statement but that the protest about their conviction did not as this excerpt shows:

‘The public meeting attended by 10,000 persons’ was not arguing for better living or working conditions but to campaign to right an injustice by ‘horrid sentence’ of the men being sent to Australia after being found guilty under an Act only meant to be used in the Navy”.

Likewise, Source A was interpreted by many candidates as not agreeing with part of the statement which was equally rewardable as with this excerpt:

“Source A shows that Luddites wanted the detestable Shearing Frames pulled down. The Luddites were men who had lost their jobs because the machines were faster and cheaper. This source does not support the statement because it refers to the Luddites wanting their jobs back, not an improvement in their working conditions”.

Finally, it is worth remembering that this question (including SPaG) is worth 19 out of the 53 available marks on the paper. This indicates that candidates should leave about 30 minutes for planning and writing the response to this question. Most candidates ensured that, in length at least, this was their longest answer: however, some potentially good answers were left incomplete as candidates had clearly run out of time. That said, it was pleasing that all but a handful of candidates left this question until last which allowed them to consider all the sources in the previous four questions before making a decision on how to use them as evidence in their answer to question 5.

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