

GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

**HISTORY A
(EXPLAINING THE
MODERN WORLD)**

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/11 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

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Paper 11 series overview

Paper 11 is on The Impact of Empire on Britain 1688-c.1730 with Urban Environments: Patters of Migration.

We were extremely impressed with the high standard of responses on this paper. It was that most candidates were well prepared and were able to deploy their knowledge accurately, especially on the explain-type questions. Most candidates attempted all four questions, and very few seemed to have run out of time.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read the question carefully and responded directly to what was being asked • paid attention to the specific focus of the question and answered accordingly • clearly identified a point they wanted to make and then supported it with specific knowledge to explain that point • on source questions, used quotes or clear paraphrasing to prove a point • on source questions, showed how the source's provenance, purpose or context could support or question its validity or usefulness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mis-read the question and wrote about parts of the course which were not being assessed • wrote generic responses which did not address the specific focus of the question • identified the point they wanted to make but didn't back it up with appropriate detail OR gave the detail without making the point they were making clear • on source questions, answered without referring to the source or the particular part of the source they were trying to discuss • on source questions, used generic or 'stock' comments about the provenance or used context without applying it to the validity of the source.

Section A overview

It was clear that candidates had been well prepared for their depth study on The Impact of Empire and we saw an impressive range of contextual knowledge made use of in these questions, some of which was very detailed. The overwhelming majority of candidates attempted to answer both of the questions. Many started with Question 2, making sure that they maximised the time available to complete their most lengthy response. The range and quality of responses varied; as was the case in previous series, developed evaluation of the sources in Question 2 remains the most significant challenge for candidates and a key area for centres to focus on to support their students.

Question 1

The Impact of Empire on Britain 1688–c.1730

- 1 Explain why there was tension between England and Scotland between c.1688 and c.1730. [10]

The open nature of this question gave candidates the opportunity to select from a wide range of knowledge acquired during the course. The majority of successful responses explained the tension caused by issues surrounding the Jacobite Rebellion, the Glencoe Massacre, the Darien Scheme and/or the Act of Union. Most of these responses achieved either Level 3 for a valid identified change or Level 4 for a valid explained change. There were a good number of candidates who explained more than one change and reached Level 5, often using very specific factual detail to support their explanations. Where candidates struggled, they often described issues between England and Scotland without explaining how these led to tension. A minority of candidates wrote about tensions between England and Ireland, which did not address the question. Some candidates conflated their knowledge about Scotland and Ireland, and so focused on religious issues e.g., Penal Laws passed against the Catholics, which again did not address the question asked here.

Advice to centres

This was a well answered question, with most candidates able to apply detailed knowledge successfully. Candidates should be reminded to refer back to the focus of the question, to make sure they are explaining (in this case, causes of tension) rather than providing a narrative.

Question 2

2 Study Sources A–C.

'People in Britain supported the slave trade between 1688 and c.1730.'

How far do **Sources A–C** convince you that this statement is correct?

Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer.

[20]

Candidates were well prepared for this source-based question, with many tackling it first. The vast majority of candidates engaged with all three sources and attempted to relate them to the question being asked, which was very pleasing to see.

Most candidates ended up being placed in Level 2 or Level 3 for using the content of one, two or three of the sources in a valid way to address the question of whether or not people in Britain supported slavery. These comments included: challenging the statement by using Source A to show that the treatment of enslaved people was cruel and therefore unacceptable; using Source A to support the statement by showing that even those demanding an improvement in how enslaved people were treated were not asking for the trade to be abolished, due to the economic benefits for Britain; challenging the statement by using Source B to highlight that there was criticism to the slave trade in Britain; using Source B to support the statement due to the vast economic benefits brought by trade and taxes; and using Source C to challenge the statement by arguing that the treatment of enslaved people was shocking and inhumane. Each source could be used to support or contradict the statement, and all valid explanations were rewarded. The sources proved accessible to the majority of candidates and if they did not reach Level 3, it was most commonly because they picked out detail from the source(s) but did not relate the content to the statement or the question.

The question also required candidates to consider how 'convincing' they found the sources in relation to the statement and this continues to be the most challenging area for candidates. Although most candidates did attempt evaluation, the bulk of attempts that were made fell back on simplistic comments about provenance, such as (with Source B), 'it was written by a plantation owner, so he will obviously be biased in favour of the slave trade' or (with Source C), 'it was written by a former member of the RAC, so is reliable as he would have had first-hand experiences of the slave trade.' Some candidates used the sources as a 'stimulus' for their knowledge and filled their responses with what they had learned about transatlantic slavery. While the range and depth of this knowledge was often impressive, rarely was it used to evaluate the source(s) as required by the question.

The most successful candidates examined the precise purpose, motivation or context of one or more of the sources in order to address the question of how convincing they were as evidence about the statement. Typically, these candidates argued that Source B was less convincing given that the pamphlet was designed to respond to criticism being levelled at plantation owners. These responses were awarded at Level 4. Fewer candidates successfully evaluated Source C; the idea that John Atkins was writing after the RAC had lost their monopoly and might have had an ulterior motive in criticising the slave trade, and therefore his business rivals, was only picked up by a handful of candidates. Source A proved particularly difficult to evaluate effectively. Candidates typically tried to argue that it was unreliable as it was a pamphlet that was being sold, rather than explaining that it was convincing evidence as, if people were prepared to buy it, it suggested that this subject was controversial and being debated at the time.

Advice to centres

Centres need to make sure that their candidates have lots of practice in handling sources critically, rather than just accepting their content at face value, or falling back on 'stock' evaluations linked to reliability or 'bias'. Candidates should be encouraged to question the purpose and motives behind the sources, and how this may make them more or less convincing. They should also consider the context in which the sources were produced and how this may make them more or less convincing based on how typical or surprising they are.

Candidates also need to recognise that this question is assessing their skills in handling contemporary sources, so where contextual knowledge is employed, it needs to be used selectively, to argue whether sources are convincing or not about this particular question, not just to showcase what they know about the topic

Exemplar 1

with plantation owners in 1789. This source was written by a plantation owner in the West Indies, who definitely had reason to fear slave revolts. This source on a whole convinces me that British people did not support the slave trade, because the Bishop of London felt he had to publicize the letter to get the British people's support. Source B convinces me that plantation owners felt they were doing the British Empire a favour, saw no wrong in what they were doing and tried to convince the British people it was for their benefit they were working.

Exemplar 1 is a section of a response which successfully evaluates Source B and uses this to address the statement. The candidate has used the purpose of B – that the letter is being used to try to get support – to argue that the source shows that the British people did not support the slave trade. As this candidate has also used the content of all three sources, this evaluation has pushed their mark up into Level 4.

Section B overview

Again, it was clear that candidates were well prepared for the questions on Spitalfields and knew the history of the site well. Almost all candidates attempted both questions. However, Question 4 remained the question where most marks were lost. This is clearly where centres could concentrate on helping their students with a focus on how to approach the question of utility.

Question 3

Urban Environments: Patterns of Migration

3 Explain why the Jewish community in Spitalfields faced difficulties between 1880 and 1939. **[10]**

Most candidates made a reasonable attempt at this question. There was some impressive knowledge on display about the history of the site and migration from this period. Candidates achieving Level 3 and above most commonly gave specific examples linked to the exploitation of Jewish workers in sweatshops and/or anti-immigrant feeling typified by the actions of groups such as the British Brothers League or the British Union of Fascists. Many candidates achieved Level 4 or Level 5 by fully explaining one or more impacts.

Where candidates did less well, they tended to identify very general points, such as the Jews facing difficulties because of anti-Semitism, or problems linked to poverty which could be true for any immigrants at any time, rather than the Jews in Spitalfields between 1880 and 1939. These responses were usually placed in Level 1. Some candidates focused on developments linked to the question, for example the 1905 Aliens Act, without making these relevant to the question of difficulties for the Jews in Spitalfields.

Advice to centres

It is important that candidates are specific with the knowledge they are deploying, with a clear focus on the group, location and time frame specified in the question. While it is true to say that the Jewish community in Spitalfields faced anti-Semitism and issues with poor living conditions, these points are too general to achieve a mark higher than Level 1 in answer to this question

Exemplar 2

3	<p>The Jewish community when coming to England got involved in the rag trade in which they would sell the clothes off their backs and eventually sweatshops began to form where weavers used to weave. The conditions in these sweatshops were awful and they weren't given breaks, paid fair wages or treated with respect. Consequently the Jewish population was poor and treated badly by sweatshop owners. This the anger reached its climax when the great Yiddish parade occurred. The Jewish population that worked in sweatshops marched to the rabbi and demanded better working conditions. It was declined and the Jewish population rioted until working conditions were eventually improved. Thus a struggle was working conditions in sweatshops.</p>
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Exemplar 2 is a section of a response that identifies and explains in full a specific example of the difficulties faced by the Jews in Spitalfields between 1880 and 1939. This is clearly about the particular difficulties faced by the Jewish community in this place and time, rather than a more generalised example which could apply to virtually any immigrant group. As such, this response moves into Level 4.

Question 4

4 Study Sources D and E.

Which of these sources is more useful to a historian studying the history of the Huguenots in Spitalfields?

[10]

Some candidates performed well on this question, which was about source utility, although fewer made supported inferences from one or both sources than we have seen in previous series. It was expected that candidates would make valid inferences from the sources about the history of the Huguenots in Spitalfields.

Most valid inferences (awarded at Level 3 and above) referred to Source D revealing the resentment and anger faced by the Huguenots (supported by the vicar's accusation that the Huguenots were like 'vultures' who 'rob us of our religion too'); and Source E showing us at the same time that some Huguenots, such as Lewis Chauvet, had been successful and achieved wealth and status (supported by the fact that he was a 'master weaver' who could afford to hire his own soldiers).

Where candidates who had a valid inference from Source D did not reach Level 5, it was usually because they misinterpreted Source E; many thought that the 'mob' described in the source were also Huguenots, so argued that the source was useful for revealing their violent tendencies.

Weaker responses typically ignored the content of the sources and used the provenance to argue that either D was more useful as it was taken from a book and was written by an educated vicar, or that E was less useful as it was taken from a gossip magazine and was likely to be exaggerated. Some candidates wrote in detail about the Cutters Riots, but often linked this knowledge to a misunderstanding of the 'mob' in Source E. It was also common for candidates to assert value to the content of the sources, without going on to make valid inferences from this.

Advice to centres

All candidates should be encouraged to understand how historians use sources, and consider them as a historian might, i.e., what can we work out from these sources? How do they help us? Candidates would benefit from activities which allow them to practice making inferences from different contemporary sources.

High ability candidates should be encouraged to consider how the content of contemporary sources can help historians to find evidence about: attitudes towards migration; the impacts of migration; the experiences of migrants; or the reasons for migration taking place.

Lower ability candidates should be encouraged to focus on the content of the sources, rather than making generic comments based on reliability linked to source type.

The guidance in the specification provides a helpful set of prompts to help candidates consider the ways in which sources might be useful as evidence.

Exemplar 3

Source E was written in a magazine which updates you on events happening ~~there~~ therefore is unlikely to be false information. This source would be useful when researching the huguenots as it shows the difficulty and hatred they were given. However it also shows how they were successful while being in Spitalfield as Lewis Chauvet was able to privately hire soldiers to protect him and his home as a mob of weavers attacked his home by destroying his stock and furniture and breaking all of his windows.

Exemplar 3 is an extract which gives a supported inference from Source E about the success of the Huguenots in Spitalfields. The inference about the Huguenots being successful is supported with the example from the source about Chauvet privately hiring soldiers. This is a good example of a Level 4 response.

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