

GCSE (9–1)

Exemplar candidate work

HISTORY B (SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

J411

For first teaching in 2016

**J411/12: The People's Health c.1250 to
Present Day
Summer 2023 series**

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Introduction

These candidate exemplars have been chosen from the Summer 2023 examination series.

OCR is open to a wide variety of approaches and all responses are considered on their merits. These exemplars should not be seen as the only way to answer questions; they have been chosen because they show how the mark scheme has been applied.

Please always refer to the specification for full details of the assessment for this qualification. You may find it useful to read these exemplar responses alongside the appropriate assessment materials (for example question paper, mark scheme and examiners'/moderators' report).

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Question 2

2 Write a clear and organised summary that analyses public health in medieval monasteries.

Support your summary with examples.

[9]

Exemplar 1

8 marks

One feature of medieval monasteries was latrines that were placed ~~at~~ over the river. This prevented any waste building up in the toilets meaning there was a lower chance of disease spreading ^{within the toilets latrines}. Furthermore, the ~~toilet~~ ^{latrines} were placed downstream, and water was collected ^{for the} upstream. This meant that drinking water wasn't contaminated by human waste, preventing water born diseases like diarrhoea, improving public health.

Commentary

Question 2 requires candidates to create their own structured account, selecting, organising and communicating their knowledge and understanding. This should be organised around second order concepts. Candidates typically write at least two paragraphs which are organised around a second order concept such as cause, consequence, change or significance. These paragraphs can have a separate second order concept within each paragraph or can have the same second order concept in each paragraph to frame their response around. Candidates need to fully explain their second order concept, for example 'cause', using specific contextual knowledge.

This is an example of a high-level response, where the candidate provides an analysis of health in medieval monasteries by examining the reasons for their high standard of health and the impact of features on health (causation and consequence).

This first paragraph begins by identifying a specific feature of monasteries (latrines over the river), which is given Level 1. The response then goes on to explain how the placement of the latrines and the method of waste disposal had a positive impact on health. This moves the response to Level 2.

This exemplar continues on the next page.

Another feature of monasteries was piped water from streams. Monasteries were one of the only locations that had this due to their money earned as Medieval ^{England} Britain was heavily religious. ^{as people gave money to monasteries to go to heaven} The piped water meant that all water came from a clean source and didn't have potential to be contaminated during transport to the monastery. This also prevented water born diseases ~~like cholera~~ ^{like cholera} from being caught.

Commentary

In this next paragraph, the candidate examines the root cause of good health in monasteries (their wealth), and explains the impact of this, i.e. they could afford to pipe water in. This is enough to move the response into Level 3, although it could be improved by being a bit more specific about the water supply, e.g. they could afford the cost of laying pipes over long distances (rather than simply saying 'piped water from streams').

Finally, monasteries had hospitals that were in a separate area to the rest of the monastery. These would help to improve public health as the hospital would help to care ^{for ill} people. However, this impact would have been limited due to a lack of scientific knowledge on how to cure people. ~~As~~ Also, the hospitals being in a separate area would have stopped the spread of communicable disease to other areas of the monastery, making public health good.

Commentary

This final paragraph is a threshold example of a Level 3 section. The candidate identifies the feature of infirmaries (although calls them 'hospitals') and their impact, i.e. the layout of the monastery meant that their separation prevented the spread of disease. This is quite brief but just enough for Level 3.

Only two responses are needed for Level 3, so this candidate would have reached 9 marks, had they stuck to their original two paragraphs and added a bit more detail to each one.

Exemplar 2

4 marks

Public health in medieval monasteries was pretty good.

One reason for this was water supply. The monasteries had fresh water coming into the building through pipes. This ensured that all people drinking the water were not vulnerable to disease.

Commentary

This is a threshold Level 2 paragraph. The candidate has organised their answer around causation/consequence. They say that one reason health was good in monasteries was because of the fresh, piped water, which was less likely to cause disease. This just meets the criteria for Level 2 but is very brief.

Another reason for this was food produce. The monasteries would grow their own fresh vegetables and fruits in a garden. The clean water also supported harvest and allowed people to have a healthy diet.

Commentary

This next section was given Level 1 for some description. It is not specific enough to a medieval monastery to be given Level 3 for a further, precise example. The second sentence is also a bit muddled and unclear.

A final reason for this was waste management. Although waste was a huge problem, monasteries had a sewage system where human waste would be taken into a stream or lake. This meant that the sewage did not create unhygienic environments within the monastery. Overall, the public health in medieval monasteries was good.

Commentary

This final paragraph is also slightly unclear and vague. They say that monasteries had 'a sewage system', which is accurate enough for Level 1, but (unlike the previous exemplar), they do not explain what the system was or how it affected health.

The response therefore stays in Level 2 and is given 4 marks.

Question 3

- 3 Why did national and local governments find it difficult to deal with public health issues in the early modern period (1500–1750)?

Explain your answer.

[10]

Exemplar 1

10 marks

One reason the national and local governments found it difficult to deal with public health issues was because of beliefs and attitudes at the time. For example, during the Plague, many people believed that it was caused by miasma - or 'dirty air' - so the government ordered barrels of tar to be burnt in the street, ^{in the Plague Orders.} This was obviously an ineffective response, which shows us that one reason why government response was so difficult was because of a lack of knowledge and understanding, which meant they did not know how to effectively deal with public health issues at the time.

Commentary

The response begins with a general assertion about why governments found it difficult ('because of beliefs and attitudes') which places it in Level 1 at this point. However, the candidate soon makes it clear that they mean beliefs about the causes of disease (Level 2), and they give some specific detail about this (the belief in miasma), moving the response into Level 3. The final part of the paragraph says how all this answers the question – governments couldn't deal effectively with public health issues because of incorrect ideas. This takes the response into Level 4.

Another reason why national and local governments found it hard to deal with public health issues was because they did not take enough action to deal with issues. For example, during the Gin Craze, the government had to implement 4 Gin Acts before they effectively dealt with the problem, because the first 3 acts were weak and no harsh punishments were introduced for the illegal sale of gin until 1751 and they simply encouraged a black market of gin to be set up. This shows us that because the government were too weak and slow in their responses to public health problems, it was extremely difficult to deal with as no effective action was being taken.

Commentary

Taken as a whole, the second paragraph identifies lack of centralised control/enforcement as a reason why governments found it difficult to deal with public health issues such as the Gin Craze. This is supported by detail about the black market/no harsh punishments. This means the response moves into Level 5 and is given the full 10 marks.

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Exemplar 2

5 marks

National and local government found it difficult to deal with public health issues in the early modern period because first of all, the people were very chaotic. There were many rumours of where these illnesses could be coming from but no one really knew. The reason on how these illnesses were spreading was unknown.

Commentary

The response was not given any marks to begin with, as 'because the people were very chaotic' is unclear and not valid. However, by the end of this section, the candidate has identified a valid reason why governments found it difficult to deal with public health issues – people didn't know what caused illness. This places the response into Level 2.

Many people during the time were strongly believing in the miasma theory which was the thought that bad smells caused the disease.

Commentary

The candidate then goes on to give some detail about their reason, i.e. people believed in the miasma theory. This moves the response up into Level 3 and it was given 5 marks.

In order to move this response into Level 4, the candidate would need to use what they have presented to address the question – why did this make it difficult for governments to deal with public health issues? For example, they might say that having incorrect beliefs led to governments taking actions which did not work, so they were unable to prevent the spread of diseases such as plague.

Question 4

- 4* How far were improvements in public health in the 1800s brought about by improved scientific understanding about disease?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

Exemplar 1

14 marks

Improvements in public health in the 1800s were largely not brought about by improved scientific understanding.

Arguably the biggest improvement in public health in the 1800s was the sewers, the first ones opening in London 1865. Designed by Joseph Bazalgette, these were not originally made because people understood what caused disease. They were made to stop miasma - bad air - which they thought ~~was~~ caused disease. ~~waste got so~~ ~~flow~~ The Thames had so much waste that it stunk out Parliament, in the Great Stink 1858. ~~The sewers solved this, not~~ They made the sewers to solve this, not to clean the water itself. Still, ~~they~~ did clean the water, and almost ended cholera ~~and~~ outbreaks, so are a key example of public health improving not due to improved scientific understanding.

Commentary

To reach the top of the mark scheme, candidates need a balanced argument (agree and disagree with the statement), two valid explained points on each side OR three on one side and one on the other, plus a clinching argument.

The first section of this candidate's response begins with some description of public health improvement (Bazalgette's sewers), which is placed in Level 2. However, by the end, they have explained how this challenges the statement, because they argue that actually the sewers were built as a response to The Great Stink, rather than improved scientific understanding about disease. They offer some – brief – detail about what that was, and identify how it led to the building of the sewers. This takes the response into Level 3 for their first explained point.

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One of the main reasons for improved public health was not science, but the end of the laissez-faire (leave it alone) attitude of the government. ~~The~~ In 1867, ~~at~~ most working class men were given the vote. This meant they had some say in who ~~the~~ ran the government, so the government had to please them in order to be voted in again. This ~~meant~~ means that laws passed to improve public health were probably motivated by this, not ~~the~~ improved knowledge of diseases, especially as it was quite obvious that the conditions were horrible to live in, even if they didn't know they directly caused disease.

Commentary

In their next section, the candidate identifies another reason for public health improvement – the end of laissez-faire attitudes as a result of working-class men gaining the vote – which further challenges the statement. This is given Level 2. However, unlike in their previous paragraph, the candidate does not go on to identify a tangible public health improvement which occurred as a result, so this cannot be given Level 4 for a second explained point.

However, there was an improvement in public health before 1867 which was caused by improved knowledge of disease. Despite no miasma^{**}, there was a cholera outbreak in East London in 1866. William Farr found a dead eel in the water pipes in this area. This, along with the work of John Snow and Louis Pasteur's germ theory in 1861, proved that miasma didn't cause disease, bacteria in water did. This led to the 1866 Sanitary Act, which made towns responsible for sewage, water supply and street cleaning. There were no more cholera outbreaks after this major cholera epidemic after this, so this is a key example of public health improving due to science.

Commentary

This is a threshold example of an explained point. The candidate identifies a reason to support the statement – the work of Louis Pasteur – as well as a public health improvement (the 1866 Sanitary Act) which occurred as a result. To make this section stronger, more detail could be given about the work/experiments of Pasteur, as only the briefest amount is offered. Additionally, although the Sanitary Act allowed the formation of drainage districts and enabled the provision of better house drainage, it didn't say anything about water supply or street cleaning, so knowledge could be tighter here. Nevertheless, this moves the response into Level 4.

However there was another key step in public health which, whilst influenced by ~~strict~~ science, was largely caused by the end of the government's laissez faire attitude. This was the 1875 Public Health Act, which consolidated all previous health acts, ~~and~~ setting more ~~strict~~ strict standards for public health. It also made towns appoint a medical officer to ensure this was enforced. That this was done after working class men got the vote shows it was motivated by this, not science.

Overall, whilst knowledge about diseases helped improve public health, ~~improvements were made before~~ key improvements ~~improvements~~ improvements were still made without it, and later improvements only happened because of the end of the laissez-faire attitude.

* * the sewers

** because of the sewers

Commentary

This final section takes the response into Level 5. The candidate identifies the end of laissez-faire and links this factor to the 1875 Public Health Act. The use of words such as 'strict', 'made' and 'enforced' is enough to link the Act to the end of a laissez-faire attitude for Level 5 (this is also a continuation of their earlier point which did not quite make it beyond Level 2 because they had no specific example).

The response was therefore placed in Level 5 and given 14 marks. For Level 6, a fourth, fully-explained point is required (which could have been achieved by linking the working-class vote to a tangible outcome/improvement).

Exemplar 2

8 marks

In the 1800s, the government started to lose their laissez-faire attitudes towards the public and its well-being. This is seen during the Great Stink when the River Thames smelt really bad due to the amount of waste being dumped into it. Due to the Great Stink, the government got Joseph Bazalgette to build England's first sewage system to reduce the smell produced by the Thames. Bazalgette built 1300 ^{metres} miles of sewage systems, improving the air quality, as it reduced the amount of waste thrown in the Thames, improving people's health.

Commentary

The candidate begins with an accurate identification of a reason for public health improvement in the period – the loss of laissez-faire attitudes. This is given Level 2 only, as it is not developed beyond that. However, they then gain Level 2 again for the identification of another reason – The Great Stink. This time, they do develop this point by briefly describing what that was and going on to explain how it led to a tangible improvement – the building of Bazalgette's sewers. This places the response in Level 3, despite the inaccuracies here.

Before 1861 no one knew what actually caused diseases and illnesses. However, in 1861 Louis Pasteur discovered that diseases were caused by the spread of bacteria and germs; he called it 'germ theory' with the understanding that disease/illness was caused by bacteria. This allowed people to find easier ways to stop the spread of these diseases, improving public health.

Commentary

This part of the answer was given Level 2 for a description of Pasteur's work. However, it did not move into Level 4 because the candidate does not identify a specific improvement which happened as a result of this factor.

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However, when cholera hit England public health wasn't improved. John Snow, he discovered found out how cholera was being spread. He knew that cholera was in the water and came through the pumps, but he didn't entirely know what was in the water, at the time that was causing people to become so ill. Even though he found out what was causing cholera, no one believed his idea because the beliefs around Miasma was more dominant in the beliefs of causing disease, not improving public health.

Commentary

This section was also given Level 2 for a description of the work of John Snow. As the candidate themselves actually acknowledges, Snow's investigations into the causes of cholera cannot be argued to have had an impact of the government's decisions to bring about public health reform. Therefore, this could not be given beyond Level 2.

Moreover, the use of heavy machinery being a health hazard and the amount of smoke from these machines produced. During the industrial 1800's the increase in machinery being used and more factories being made causes lots of air pollution. People weren't used to the amount of smoke from these factories caused people to struggle with breathing, not improving public health.

Commentary

This final paragraph does not address the question of why there were improvements in public health in the 1800s. Instead, it veers off to answer a different question about whether or not there were improvements. No further marks can be given.

The response was therefore placed in Level 3 for the first paragraph and given 8 marks. To move into Level 4, a second, valid and fully-explained point is needed.

Question 5

5* 'Responses to epidemics between 1900 and 2000 were **not** effective.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

Exemplar 1

12 marks

In the period between 1900 and 2000, there have been many responses to epidemics & some of these responses were effective, and some were not effective.

One example of ^{an effective response} ~~this~~ is the Spanish flu outbreak of the late 19th century and the response from Manchester. This is because Dr James Niven wanted tirelessly to try and limit the spread of the disease. One example of his work is that he closed schools and theatres. This ~~reduced the number of~~ response was effective as it reduced the number of people likely to catch the disease and because of this, the death rate in Manchester was lower than in other cities. Overall, I would disagree with the statement as this response to the Spanish flu epidemic was effective.

Commentary

In this initial section of the response, the candidate identifies the epidemic of the Spanish Flu, which is given Level 1. The next part briefly describes one local response – Dr. Niven's advice in Manchester leading to the council closing schools (he didn't shut theatres). They then answer the question by offering some further evidence, i.e. this was an effective response because the death rate in Manchester was lower than in other cities. This takes the response into Level 3.

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However, other responses to the Spanish flu epidemic were ineffective, for example the government issued a public information film starring Dr Sam Wise which told people to stay away from public spaces if they had symptoms. However, this response was ineffective as copies were not issued until late in the second wave, meaning that the information was delivered late and had a limited effect on cases of the virus where decreasing anyway. This meant that the film only really helped spread fear towards the public, meaning that it did not have a very effective response to the epidemic.

Commentary

The next section stays with the Spanish Flu but examines the opposite side of the argument. The candidate identifies a government response – the production of the ‘Dr. Wise’ public information film – and gives some detail about it. This is given Level 2. They then explain why this was not an effective response (it was only produced late in the second wave so had a limited effect), which moves the response up into Level 4.

Furthermore another response that was not very effective was ~~the~~ the initial response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. This was because initially people thought the virus was only caught by gay men and drug users, and because these groups of people were not well liked, there was not much of a response, and the disease was allowed to spread, leading me to further agree with the statement as these past two responses were not very effective.

This exemplar continues on the next page.

Commentary

Next, the candidate moves on to examining responses to HIV/AIDS. The candidate identifies the prejudice against certain groups during the start of the epidemic but this is given Level 2 only, as the candidate only asserts 'there was not much of a response', instead of identifying a response and explaining why it was/was not effective.

However, later on in the epidemic, more effective responses started to emerge. For example charities like the "Terrence Higgins Trust" started to teach people about the dangers of HIV, because of this action, the media started to act, and eventually, the government started to screen blood transfusions. Overall, I would have to disagree with this statement as these responses were effective, and did eventually end the epidemics.

In conclusion, whilst some responses were effective and others were not effective. However, I would have to disagree slightly with the statement as the ~~initial~~ responses did become slightly effective, but I would ~~majority~~ ^{majority} have to agree with the statement as most of the responses were not effective.

Commentary

This final section also stays in Level 2 because the candidate lists responses but does not explain why these were effective.

So, the response ends up in Level 4 and is given 12 marks for two, well-explained and supported points. A third would be needed for Level 5.

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