

Examiners' Report

January 2011

GCE

GCE History 6HI01 C

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General Comments

As in previous examination sessions the candidates for Option C were, in general, very well prepared for each Topic studied. Candidates are increasingly aware of the need to answer the question asked rather than write about the question themes in general but there is still some need to focus more on the key words. Supporting evidence is generally secure but candidates often do not select the most relevant or appropriate material, and there is still a disappointing lack of chronological awareness and an apparent lack of confidence in using dates. At the lower Levels, however, there was a tendency towards the description and explanation more appropriate to GCSE.

The scripts reflected the full range of levels. Most students wrote between three and five pages for each answer, though a small number were unable to write more than a few Level 1 sentences or paragraphs. The overwhelming majority of students followed instructions, writing their answers on the appropriate pages and indicating the question number in the appropriate box. Legibility was generally not an issue, and, where it was, this seems to have been about the colour and type of pen used. Most candidates were able to identify and evaluate at least some key points.

However, some scripts, especially for questions 6, 9 and 14 were conspicuous by an absence of appropriately selected factual evidence. In such scripts, worthy points were often supported by very thin detail and candidates often resorted to repetition. As suggested above, however, there were more Level 3 scripts this session with a tendency towards adequate narrative supported by brief commentary.

Some responses, although showing obvious evidence of knowledge, could only access Level 3 and in many cases Level 2 because of a misreading of the time period referred to in the question. For Question 3 some candidates covered the period before 1775 as well and some responses to Question 4 began only after the resolution of the conflict. Question 11 was often focused on the period after 1885 with many responses covering the whole period of the Topic without discrimination. Other candidates failed to recognise that Question 12 referred specifically to the geographical area of southern Africa leading to irrelevant discussion of north-east Africa in particular. A good introduction will put the question into context and reference to the beginning and end dates of the question set should help the candidate to focus more effectively on the time-period involved.

Future candidates might consider whether a generalised 'prepared' opening is an effective way to focus on the question set with only 35 minutes available to plan and write a response. A large number of answers began by repeating the question set, prefacing this with 'To a certain extent I agree that...'. Others declared that 'many historians' agreed with the point made in the question, but were never able to substantiate their claim. Better answers avoided these approaches, producing their own opening statement which usually suggested individual confidence and a personal viewpoint.

Overall, once again, however, centres should be commended for the preparation and obvious enthusiasm with which they approach the Topics; the knowledge of candidates is more tailored to the themes each year. The best responses are analytical, detailed and reach interesting, well-supported judgements.

It is highly recommended that centres read the reports, in particular, those with exemplification documents produced for the other Options available in 6HI01.

C1 The Origins of the British Empire, c1680-1730

This is a popular Topic and invariably candidates are very well prepared both in approaching the questions and in their ability to use detailed supporting evidence. However, although many well focused responses with good detail are achieving high Level 4 there are fewer scripts reaching Level 5 than might be expected. Candidates are being encouraged to write integrated judgements and conclusions to show how

the major influences on imperial expansion are inter-connected but many candidates are not relating this directly to the factor under discussion. In this Topic, rather than prepared generalised introductions, there seem to be prepared integrated, but generalised, conclusions which state or assert that all the factors are inter-dependent. In both the main paragraphs of the response and the conclusion it is important to focus on the role/significance of the given factor relative to the other factors by using explanation and supporting evidence to reach a reasoned, evaluative judgement. There has been an improvement in the use of specific examples of territorial expansion but when discussing trading companies their geographical areas of influence are at times ignored.

Question 1

Both questions were attempted by a roughly equal number of candidates. Most candidates were able to identify mercantile influences in the growth of empire compared to other factors. Differentiation was clear, however, between those candidates who focused specifically on the requirements of British merchants i.e. the nature of mercantile operations and those who wrote about trade in general. A significant number of candidates described and commented on the role of the major trading companies rather than analysed how merchant activity might enable the empire to grow. At the lower Levels merchant influence was often dismissed briefly with other factors, such as war, developed more fully.

Question 2

There were some impressive answers here. Candidates were able to distinguish and differentiate rivalry with France across the period and refer to territorial expansion in specific geographical areas. There was an awareness of early rivalries leading up to the Treaty of Utrecht with the resurgence of rivalry at the time of the Seven Years' War. Other factors were well developed and some of the best answers suggested that rivalry with France was part of a wider pattern of European rivalry and war intended to increase influence, territory and wealth. As suggested above, however, the mere statement that factors were inter-connected is not enough to gain access to the higher Levels.

C2 Relations with the American Colonies and the War of Independence, c1740-89

This is a popular topic and candidates are becoming more confident with the often complex nature of the events covered. Centres do need to consider that can cover more than one specification bullet point not only at the beginning of the time period under study but also at the end. Also the fourth bullet of the specification refers explicitly to the legacy of the conflict in Britain, its remaining North American colonies and America itself as well as the relationship between them.

Question 3

This was overwhelmingly the most popular question. Most candidates were able to understand that this was focused on the reasons why the conflict took so long to come to an end but some candidates focused on the causes of the war itself or, more often, why foreign intervention was necessary. There was some excellent discussion of the strength and weaknesses of the American and British position at the beginning of the war with many good responses arguing that it was not the colonists lack of strength and the subsequent need for foreign assistance which lengthened the war but the unwillingness of the British to negotiate. Other responses agreed with the statement or suggested that the British failure to win early in the conflict allowed the colonists to regroup. However, many responses that referred to British failures were only able to reach low Level 4 because of an imbalanced structure which failed to give enough focus to the given factor. Although candidates were

aware of the basic chronology of events there was a disappointing lack of reference to dates and the time scales in which events were happening; in particular, it was often very unclear when foreign intervention did actually begin.

Question 4

There were very few answers to this question at all and those that did were often confused as to the time period to be discussed or treated it as a question focused on the causes of the American Revolution. Good responses were able to link the events of American Revolution to developments in British politics during and after the conflict with reference to representation, taxation and freedom of speech.

C3 The Slave Trade, Slavery and the Anti-Slavery Campaigns, c1760-1833

This is a popular topic and candidates are increasingly well prepared in terms of content knowledge. However, background and contextual knowledge often dominates answers leading to imbalanced answers and candidates need to select the relevant and appropriate supporting material with more discrimination. Candidates knowledge is often generalised and lacks some security. There is a tendency for candidates to write about everything they know about abolition. Many candidates produced responses which are adequately or well focused rather than directly focused on the question asked and so often find it difficult to access the very highest Levels.

Question 5

This was the most popular question. Most candidates were able to identify and comment on the role of religious groups in the campaigns against slavery but there was a disappointing lack of discrimination between Quakers, Evangelicals and other groups and connections to the Clapham Sect and abolition societies. There was often confusion as to which religious groups different individuals belonged to and often an assumption that all of the different contributors were separate from each other as influences. Some of the best answers were able to chart the inter-relations between religious groups, individuals and societies and to show how their influence changed over time. A significant number of candidates interpreted the question as being about the success of the campaigns or the achievement of abolition itself. The question required a discussion of religious groups as the motivational force driving the campaigns rather than achieving opposition. Some of the best answers were able to show how the initial Quaker impetus was held up by political discrimination leading to a greater Evangelical role in public. Well focused answers also suggested that although throughout there was an underlying religious motivation at various times other influences came to the forefront, for example, the role of women in the 1820s. There were relevant references to the religious motivation of slave revolts but their connection to the campaigns was often vague and not stated or responses became imbalanced with detailed descriptions of the revolts themselves. Once again many candidates who do refer to slave revolts assume that they all took place on British territory and/or refer to them as if they all took place at the same time.

Question 6

This question was attempted by a good proportion of candidates and led to responses across the whole Level range. Despite some tendency to describe the role of family in the lives of slaves most candidates were able to try to determine the importance of family to slaves. Most candidates attempted to determine importance by explaining the role of family as a release for the horrors or working life or suggested that family was not as important as different forms of religion, for example. The best scripts were able to determine importance in this way but also to acknowledge the changing importance over time with discussion of the effects of the Abolition Act of 1807 in particular. A few scripts were little more than vague and generalised simple

statements about family life and were unable to achieve more than Level 2. Candidates responding to questions based on the operational and social aspects of slavery outlined in bullet point two of the specification can tend towards narrative and so it was very pleasing to see that the majority of candidates did attempt to analyse the statement, establish importance and try to reach a judgement even if the supporting evidence was a times a little insecure.

C4 Commerce and Conquest: India, c1760-c1835

There were very few responses to this Topic at all and so it would be difficult to comment widely. The scripts that were seen attempted analysis and provided some supporting evidence but were lacking in detail and secure information.

C5 Commerce and Imperial Expansion, c1815-70

There were very few responses to this Topic at all and so it would be difficult to comment widely. However, the scripts that were seen suggested an improvement in the use of supporting evidence to exemplify imperial expansion leading to some interesting and thoughtful answers.

C6 Britain and the Scramble for Africa

This is a popular topic with centres and is combined with a variety of other Topic not just the chronological period before and afterwards. Candidates are knowledgeable about the different factors involved in influencing expansion in Africa and are becoming increasingly confident with reference to events in different geographical areas. Centres should be aware that question may be set across the bullet points and clarification in the specification. Once again it is also necessary to point out that centres that at AS level candidates do not need to discuss theories of imperial expansion and if candidates are using this as an analytical tool they must use specific examples to provide supporting evidence.

Question 11

This was the most popular question and most candidates were aware of the nature and significance of the Berlin West Africa Conference. However, the extent to which responses were able to relate this to the expansion of formal empire in Africa after 1885 varied considerably. Many answers were imbalanced with a brief reference to the Conference followed by a standard response to imperial expansion and little focus on the concept of the establishing of formal colonies often resulting in Level 3 and low Level 4 answers. There were a significant number of high Level 4 answers which were able to discuss the role of the Conference more confidently to establish some balance. However, often having stated how the Conference influenced the need to establish spheres of influence and prove occupation, many response failed to connect the legacy of the Conference to actual events. With greater discussion of the inter-related nature of the factors influencing expansion in Africa, many well focused Level 4 response could have become Level 5 integrated responses. Some candidates who had obviously been well versed in metropolitan and peripheral theories wrote responses which failed to mention any specific examples at all and in one case failed to identify either Britain or Africa adequately. However, when theory and evidence are integrated well this approach can lead to some interesting, vibrant and thought-provoking answers. The very best answers were able to establish the Conference in

the context of expansion after 1885 in different geographical areas and to discuss the nature of formal control.

Question 12

This question was answered by relatively few candidates but those who did attempt it often produced interesting and lively answers with much thought using the approach anticipated by the mark scheme. The question covered elements of British expansion into southern Africa covered by bullet points two and three. The question did not require a detailed knowledge of individual defeats experienced in southern Africa by the British, although some candidates were able to show impressive factual detail, but rather a discussion of the underlying factors/influences which caused a series of military setbacks during this time period. Most candidates referred to incidents in the Zulu Wars and the 1st and 2nd Boer Wars but some also included events in Rhodesia and even the Jameson Raid. The extension of British power with reference to the Zulus in southern Africa is specified as an element of the content clarification and so candidates should have been aware of the significance of the opening date. There was some imbalance with an over reliance on supporting evidence from the 2nd Boer War and some candidates clearly confused events of the two Boer Wars. However, the majority of candidates were able to refer to examples of the British underestimating their opponents and to other inter-related factors such as the arrogance of British attitudes, the territorial advantage of their opponents, a lack of preparation and poor leadership in coming to a judgement.

C7 Retreat from Empire: Decolonisation in Africa, c1957-81

This topic is popular and most candidates are clearly aware of the issues surrounding Britain's decision to decolonise after the Second World War. Most candidates are able to refer with increasing confidence to case studies from east, west and southern Africa but some still confuse the geographical areas. There is, however, still some insecurity with regard to the parallel chronologies within the various regions of Africa and the use and knowledge of dates is often poor with candidates. This is particularly so in the case of the dates at which independence was granted, the years covered by Mau Mau and the main events in Southern Rhodesia after UDI (1965). There is also often confusion between South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

Question 13

Both of the questions were tackled in roughly equal proportions. Most candidates were clearly aware of the influence of white settler communities on the independence process and there were some interesting and effective answers with reference to the absence of white settlers in west Africa compared to the situation in east, central and southern Africa. The best responses were able to focus on the key theme of the extent to which the presence of white settler speeded up the decision process during these years in comparison to other factors such as the growth of African nationalism, external and economic pressures. Some candidates used a case study approach effectively but by concentrating only on three countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Southern Rhodesia some of the nuances of the situation are often missed; some very good answers compared the different situation surrounding the three constituent countries of the attempt to consolidate colonial rule in the Central African Federation.

Question 14

There were many good answers to this question with a clear understanding of how African nationalism from the late 1950s was encouraged by the changing attitudes of the British government, with particular reference to Ghana and the 'winds of change'. The best answers were able to compare the given factor with other factors

such as the long-term nationalist legacy, the effect of World War II, decolonisation in other parts of Africa and the world, the effect of the Suez Crisis and the context of Cold War challenges. However, there were a significant number of scripts which misinterpreted or misunderstood the question. Some candidates inverted the question discussing the extent to which African nationalism changed the attitude of the British government whilst others considered the extent to which changing attitudes encouraged decolonisation. There were a small but worrying number of scripts where candidates clearly thought that African nationalism and African independence were the same thing. The attitude of Africans towards British rule and the growth of independence movements in the 1950s and 1960s is the basis of the second bullet point and is clearly specified in the content clarification.

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