

Examiners' Report  
June 2013

GCE History 6HI03 B

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June 2013

Publications Code UA036157

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## Introduction

It was pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates in the fourth session of the 6HI03 B examination. Many candidates wrote insightful comments which placed them in the higher grade categories. The paper was divided into two sections: Section (A) was an In-Depth Study question, and Section (B) an Associated Historical Controversy question.

Examiners want to see candidates who can use the sources and their own material effectively to answer the questions set. Some candidates wrote too much generalised comment. As a consequence, their responses lacked precise analytical focus and detailed supporting evidence.

Although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer both questions. The ability range of those entering was diverse but the design of the paper allowed all abilities to be catered for. There were also very few rubric errors. As expected, there were far more entrants for

*B1 – France, 1786-1830: Revolution, Empire and Restoration*

than for

*B2 – Challenging Authority: Protest, Reform and Response in Britain, c1760-1830*

One pleasing trend is that very few candidates produced essays which were devoid of analysis. The main weakness in responses which scored less well tended to be a lack of sufficient knowledge, rather than lengthy descriptive writing without analysis. The paper provided candidates with the opportunity to develop their essay writing and to include source material as and when necessary.

There appears to be an increasing tendency for candidates to analyse and produce judgements in the main body of the answer and have cursory conclusions. Candidates can indeed sustain arguments by these means and this approach does not, in itself, prevent access to the highest levels. However, in some cases, judgements on individual issues and factors tended to be somewhat isolated, and ultimate conclusions were either only partially stated or implicit. Consequently, candidates should be aware that considered introductions and conclusions often provide a solid framework for sustained argument and evaluation.

The answers of a minority of less successful candidates in Section A suggested that they lacked the detailed knowledge base required to tackle Questions 1 and 2 and produced a catch-all commentary on the stipulated topic (rather than the specific issue), with obvious repercussions. The best answers to these questions – and indeed those on the c1760-1830 British option - showed some impressive study of late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> French and British history, with students producing incisive, scholarly analysis.

When attempting the Section (B) questions, a small number of candidates engaged more with the general debate of the set controversy, rather than the specific demands of the question and source package. This was most evident on Question 5, although it was still a small minority. The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

## Question 1

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to discuss the extent to which the financial weaknesses of Louis XVI's government were responsible for the collapse of absolute monarchy in France in 1789. The best responses offered a clear focus on the stated factor and an informed assessment of the role of other factors (such as the Louis XVI's personality, the unpopularity of Marie Antoinette, the role of the army and the privileged orders, the economic crisis of spring 1789, and popular pressure, particularly in Paris). Weaker answers tended to (1) offer unsupported assertions regarding the reasons for the collapse of absolute monarchy (2) lack focus on key events/developments in 1789 (3) produce narratives with weak links to the question (4) confuse developments in 1789 with those of 1792.

There is no doubting that the financial situation the government was in in 1789 was dire. The taxation system was dominated by the farmers General, whose corrupt practices of venality and inefficiency meant that the government was receiving little money, despite there being

(Section A continued) constantly on foreign loans and high levels of taxation, which was felt most by the Third Estate who resented the government as a result.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Here, in this Level 5 extract, the candidate provides a sustained analysis of the financial weaknesses of Louis XVI's government, offering range and depth in the process. Note also how the analysis is focused on the question. The candidate then moves on to discuss several other relevant factors in the same way.

## Question 2

The best responses to Question 2 had a strong focus on how far Napoleon's domestic reforms were designed to consolidate his own power and addressed other motives too (e.g. the need to create national unity, heal internal divisions and promote efficiency). Stronger candidates also considered a range of relevant developments or measures such as links with the Papacy, the return of émigré aristocrats, the Civil Code, reforms in education, secularisation of Church lands, and the legal and administrative reforms. Weaker answers fell into several categories (1) narratives about Napoleon's major domestic measures between 1799 and 1807 with few or no links to the issue of consolidating power (2) responses which focused overwhelmingly on just one or two areas such as the reform of education or restoration of links with the Papacy (3) essays with one side of the argument poorly developed. A significant minority of candidates did not move beyond the issue of consolidating power.

Napoleon's reforms such as the use of patronage is clearly down to his own wish to consolidate his personal grip on power. The idea of patronage was to gain maximum support of the French people he now ruled - This allowed for his regime to be stable unlike the previous revolutionary regimes under, for example, Robespierre.

One of Napoleon's first steps to consolidate his own personal grip

(Section A continued) on power was through the setting up of a Senate, the legislature and tribunate. He saw the key to previous regimes failing was due to the nature of divided government, here Napoleon filled both the Tribunate and legislature with his own supporters - He clearly had control of the government. Therefore, his reforms of government consolidated his grip on power.

Furthermore, Napoleon never sought to restore the hated émigré land which proved vital in consolidating his personal grip on power. This move was popular amongst the people of France as the defection of the Emigrés was still bitter in their memory. This move by Napoleon was clearly made to gain large support which would give him overwhelming power in France.

Additionally, Napoleon made no mistake in wanting to gain the support of the *Paris Nationaux* (those that purchased church land). A natural ally of the ruling power, he understood Louis XVI's mistake in not gaining the middle-class or bourgeois support and this reform clearly shows that Napoleon set out to gain total control of France by the use of clever reform whilst not totally destroying the gains and principles of the revolution.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This borderline Level 3/4 response puts forward the view that Napoleon's domestic reforms were primarily concerned with consolidating his own power.

Here, the argument is focused on consolidation and based on reasonable range and depth, but elsewhere the candidate's response only implicitly acknowledges that there were other reasons for these measures.



### ResultsPlus

#### Examiner Tip

Make sure that your response to a 'stated factor' Depth question considers other factors too. Otherwise, you will not achieve a very high mark.

### Question 3

The best responses assessed in depth how far attempts at political reform in Britain in the years 1760-85 were driven by 'committed individuals'. These answers focused on individuals such as Wilkes, Wyvill and Burke but also recognised that other, broader, causes played a part (e.g. relations with America, resentment of George III and the growing importance of commercial and industrial centres). Low scoring candidates offered no real knowledge or development concerning the role of 'committed individuals'. Typically, these were (1) weak narratives or focused but largely unsupported responses (2) answers which drifted from the time frame of the question and produced accounts of the political system in the 1790s. A few offered a very narrow range (e.g. just the career of Wilkes).

(Section A continued) Wyvill is an individual who could be seen to have driven the reform movement as he set up the Yorkshire Association to allow the middle classes to discuss reform, with membership peaking at 5,000 in 1783. This, like Paine & Wilkes shows that there was a conscious movement for reform from the public, however it had to be orchestrated and driven by organised individuals. <sup>Although</sup> ~~there~~ it must be noted that the main aim of this association was economic reform, rather than political reform which suggests many of these individuals capitalised on reform agitation and used it to benefit themselves.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This candidate has produced a high Level 4 answer by analysing the role of a number of committed individuals within the context of the broader forces pushing for reform. Here, Wyvill's activities are linked relevantly to the wider reform movement.

## Question 4

The majority of candidates were able to offer an explanation of the defeat of radicalism in the years 1793-1815. Stronger responses often demonstrated impressive range and depth by examining the role of popular patriotism (due to the conflict with France) and the evangelical revival and then balancing these against the impact of government repression. Low scoring responses typically offered (1) a descriptive account of radicalism in the years 1793-1815 with few or no links to the question (2) a narrow focus on one of the factors which largely or wholly ignored the role of the others.

Some historians have taken the view, however, that this was primarily due to the activities of the thriving Loyalist movement. Indeed, Pitt himself acknowledged that the government's ~~measures~~ legislation would have been largely ineffective without the continual support of the popular patriotic movement, and that the radicalism was, in fact, forced underground more by a general sense of anti-reform sentiment than government action. This interpretation is highly valid,

(Section A continued) Since the Loyalist movement often responded quicker and with more effective, direct action. The Association Movement, for example, funded by John Reeves was instrumental in pressuring the public to stand firm with the establishment.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate has produced a top Level 4 answer by analysing the three stated factors and assessing their contribution to the defeat of radicalism in Britain in the years 1793-1815. A notable feature of this response, shown in this extract, was the candidate's ability to establish relevant links between the factors.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

If you use the key phrases from the question throughout your essay, this will help you to write a relevant analytical response.

## Question 5

This proved to be an accessible and popular question. Many candidates made good use of the sources and their own knowledge to develop a confident line of argument about the relative importance of Louis XVI's flight to Varennes (June 1791) in bringing about the downfall of the monarchy. The best responses were firmly focused on the relative importance of the stated factor and examined the debate thoroughly in the light of the issues raised by the sources. At this level, candidates were also likely to recognise the interaction of factors or links between the sources (for e.g. Louis XVI's duplicity shown by the Varennes episode was further exposed by his attitude to the 'new constitution'). Weak answers tended to (1) generalise about the reasons for the downfall of the French monarchy in 1792 without offering specific development on the issue of Louis XVI's mistakes and misjudgements (2) describe (rather than assess) the evidence for the end of the monarchy presented in the three sources with little or no integration of own knowledge for support.

Despite its clear impact, Source 1 argues that the Flight to Varennes 'did not... put an end to the monarchy.' While it did increase the popularity of republicanism, the Champ de Mars massacre showed that the moderates could still control the radicals, forcing their leaders into hiding. It would take another mistake from Louis to give the radical movement enough strength to finally overthrow the throne. Louis failed to adjust to the situation after the Flight to Varennes and Source 2 shows that, despite his acceptance of the constitution, he still felt ~~he~~ 'would' that he would benefit from the subsequent upheaval. ~~Source 2~~ Source 3 ~~it~~ shows how he sought to achieve this, through his 'complicity' in hurling 'France and the Revolution into the turmoil of war.' Source 3 suggests that it was this war that brought about the 'overthrow of the throne', thereby supporting the assertion in Source 1 that 'the Flight to

(Section B continued) ...verennes did not put an end to  
the monarchy.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This Level 2 response illustrates two common weaknesses in answers to the Controversy question. The candidate offers only a basic support/challenge approach derived from the sources and provides little detailed own knowledge.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

When planning your answer, read through the sources carefully and list all the support and challenge points you can. This will help you to cross-reference effectively in your answer.

## Question 6

This also proved to be an accessible question. The strongest candidates offered a sustained source-led analysis with impressive range and depth to reach a judgement about the extent to which the Peninsular War destroyed Napoleon's Empire. At this level, responses confidently weighed the stated factor against the impact of the Russian campaign, the role of Wellington and declining popularity in France, integrating relevant own knowledge where appropriate. Weaker answers often (1) adopted a 'potted' summary approach to the sources or else included little or no own knowledge in support of their argument (2) uncritically accepted the view that the Peninsular War destroyed the French Empire and failed to consider properly the other arguments set out in the sources (3) relied on largely narrative accounts of Napoleon's later campaigns.

Source 5 states it was the Russian 'heart attack' that destroyed Napoleon. The Russian war was so dire because Napoleon completely mis-judged and underestimated them. He disregarded the weather by not bringing winter clothing, he didn't bring enough food supplies which back-fired as the Russians destroyed all resources that the French may use, Napoleon didn't even bring a map. All these factors and the Russians tactical genius completely undermined Napoleon's attack. He lost 300,000 men which he was able to replenish when he return but one major problem was his new men didn't have the passion of *La Gloire*, didn't have any revolutionary views, many were not even French! His new army were untrained and didn't want to fight for the cause, he was set up for a loss. Historian R.S Alexander said 'Russia was Napoleons biggest fault as it also de-moralised him, his troops and his people', it was said to be a down hill slope until his destruction of his empire.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This Level 3 response illustrates a common limitation in answers to a Controversy question. Although the candidate examines the arguments in Source 5 about the impact of the Russian campaign reasonably well, no attempt is made to cross-reference this extract.

Source 4 and Source 6 both contain material to support this viewpoint but they are not used here.

## Question 7

The best responses demonstrated a firm grasp of the controversy and thoroughly assessed the source arguments about the reasons for the 'threat of revolution' in Britain in the years 1815-1820. Typically, these answers were firmly tied to addressing the debate within the sources (Oliver and other spies acted as *agents provocateurs*, spies gathered useful intelligence about the state of popular feeling, and real discontent did exist due to difficult social and economic conditions at the time) and reached an informed judgement. Low scoring candidates tended to produce (1) a largely unsupported commentary on the dangers of riot and revolution in Britain in the period 1815-20 which was inadequately linked to the sources provided (2) a basic 'potted' source by source commentary with little or no cross-referencing which prevented the development of a support/challenge approach (3) a generalised narrative account of spy activity in the immediate post-1815 period in Britain which barely addressed the question.

Source 9 also puts forward the Stanger argument that it was economic 'distress' that caused the threat of revolution. After end of the war with

(Section B continued) France in 1815 radicalism surged due to a greater sense of freedom to criticise the government, but primarily due to the terrible state of the economy. Source 9 mentions the 200,000 'discharged soldiers' who returned to Britain seeking employment, and the 'price and wages' ~~to~~ fall due to the abandonment of industries needed during the war for armaments, but no longer sought after. This distress was reflected in the figures of poor relief which rose from approximately 2 million in the 1790s to 7 million by 1815.

Added to the effects of the end of the war was bad harvests in 1815-17, which culminated in protest such as the Corn Law riots. The law was introduced to protect agriculture in Britain, but the lower classes saw it as a gross injustice ~~against~~ since it favoured the upper classes. \* Thousands took to the streets in their distress in 1815, shouting 'bread or blood' and burning ~~offices~~ offices of politicians. Furthermore, the protests in 1815-20 were mostly made up of workers from the

(Section B continued) depressed lower classes. Brandreth, who led the Pentrich Rising, for instance, was an unemployed tinner, and the smaller mass meetings in 1820 in ~~Heckley~~ Sheffield and Barnsley were organised by unemployed weavers.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This high Level 4 response integrates source material and the candidate's own knowledge to good effect. In this extract, the candidate develops a detailed argument based on economic discontent which challenges the stated claim about the government's use of spies.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

During the planning stage, after you have identified the key issues raised by the sources, add your own knowledge to these points. That way you'll find it easier to integrate the two elements in the actual essay.

## Question 8

On Question 8, the strongest candidates made good use of the sources and their own knowledge to develop a confident line of argument about the extent to which the Industrial Revolution provided a 'step forwards' for British workers in the years c1780 to 1830. At this level, responses offered a sustained source-led analysis with impressive range and depth. Indeed, several in this category extensively cross-referenced the sources to develop a nuanced analysis which emphasised that economic change brought poverty and improvement to different groups of manual workers. Weaker candidates tended to produce (1) a largely unsupported commentary on the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the workers between 1780 and 1830 (2) a basic 'potted' source by source commentary with little or no cross-referencing which prevented the development of a support/challenge approach (3) a generalised narrative account of the British economy and/or working class life from 1780 to 1830 which barely addressed the question.

The optimist case relies largely on wage data and suggests that there was an increase in wages in the period. This argument is highlighted in Source 10 by George, who claims that 'wages show'... 'a material advance'. This is supported by Feinstein who claims that between 1770 and 1830, wages rose by 20%. Perkin in Source 12 also intimates this claiming that most workers 'did not consider themselves badly paid'. Perkin also highlights the ambiguity of wage

(Section B continued) data in the period by suggesting 'periods of slump or short working time' meant bad pay for workers. Studies, such as Flinn's, which find that wages rise slowly from 1780-1830, do not take into account ~~periods~~ 'short working time' as is suggested by Perkin, such as seasonal agricultural workers who could face up to 40 weeks of very low (6s a week) wages. George and Perkin both suggest rises in wages were 'a step forward', however both criticise historians writing before 1980 for being overly optimistic with regard to wages, and this is perhaps the case for George and Perkin, writing in 1931 and 1969. Morgan contradicts the claims of wage rises by claiming that 'few families were ever in a position to afford' adequate housing. This is supported by Fox's findings that family budgets suffered a decline in depressions and George also points out that certain trades ~~by~~ such as 'hand-loom weavers' suffered a decline in wages. The same is true of calico printers who suffered a fall in wages 1780-1830 from 6s a week to 35d.



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**Examiner Comments**

This Level 5 response has several strengths. In the extract shown about the optimist interpretation of late 18th and early 19th century working class living standards in Britain (1) the arguments put forward by Source 10 and Source 12 are cross-referenced (2) key points are supported by detailed own knowledge (3) the other source (Morgan) and additional own knowledge are used effectively to qualify the optimist view. Later on, the candidate offers a detailed evaluation.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

### In Depth Study question

- Candidates must provide more factual details. Candidates need to ensure their subject knowledge conforms to the specification. Weaker responses usually lacked range and/or depth of analysis.
- Stay within the specific boundaries of the question – for example, some candidates explored issues outside of the relevant time periods.
- More candidates would benefit from planning their answers more effectively.
- In order to address the question more effectively, candidates need to offer an analysis not provide a descriptive or chronological account. Many candidates produced answers, which were focused and developed appropriately.
- Some candidates need to analyse key phrases and concepts more carefully.
- Some candidates could have explored links and the interaction between issues more effectively.

### Associated Historical Controversy question

- It is suggested that the students who perform best on Section B tended to be those who read the sources carefully, accurately and critically; recognised themes and issues arising from the sources, then used these to address the question. Some candidates potentially limited themselves by closing off potential areas of enquiry by seeking to make the evidence of the sources fit the contention in the question, without full thought to the issues within the sources, or by using the sources to illustrate arguments without relating evidence to other sources or own knowledge.
- Candidates need to treat the sources as a package to facilitate cross-referencing and advance a convincing line of argument. Many weaker candidates resorted to 'potted' summaries of each source which failed to develop a support/challenge approach.
- Candidates need to integrate the source material and their own knowledge more effectively to substantiate a particular view. Weaker responses were frequently too reliant on the sources provided and little or no own knowledge was included.
- Candidates should avoid memorised 'perspectives' essays and base their responses on the issues raised by the sources instead. The Associated Historical Controversy question is an exercise in interpretation **not** historiography.
- That said, there were very few really weak responses. The impression was that the substance of the source at least enabled candidates offer some development and supporting evidence. In such cases though, candidates often struggled to extend issues with own knowledge, or really analyse the given views.
- There was also a correlation between those candidates who reviewed all sources in their opening paragraph and high performance. Whilst a telling introduction is not essential, the process of carefully studying the sources to ascertain how they relate to the statement in the question, prior to writing the main analysis, allows candidates to clarify and structure their arguments.

## **Grade Boundaries**

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