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Examiners' Report
June 2011

GCE History 6HI03 E

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June 2011

Publications Code UA028163

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates in the second session of the 6HI03 E examination. Indeed, at the end of two years of modular study, many candidates wrote with sophistication and insight.

The paper requires candidates to answer two questions (a Depth Study question and an Associated Historical Controversy question) in 120 minutes. Predictably, some candidates were able to write at considerable length in this time but their responses sometimes lacked focus on the question. Relevance rather than length is the key to high marks as 'kitchen sink' responses will take a candidate only so far. Examiners want to see that candidates can use the sources and their own material effectively to answer the question set.

Centres should note that the amount of space provided in the booklet for answers is more than we would expect any answer to take. It should not be seen as a recommendation of the amount candidates should write.

Although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on Option E of students having insufficient time to answer both questions. The ability range of those entering was wide but the paper appears to have worked in the sense that the most able were stretched and the less talented were still able to attempt answers to both parts of the examination. There were also very few rubric errors. As expected, there were far more entrants for E2 (A World Divided: Superpower Relations, 1944-90) than for E1 (The World in Crisis, 1879-1941). The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

Question 1

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to discuss to what extent the system of European alliances was responsible for the outbreak of the First World War. Weaker responses tended to offer (1) a general survey of the causes of the First World War which lacked focus on the alliances (2) a descriptive account of the key events leading to the crisis of 1914 which failed to analyse the role of the alliance systems (3) a commentary on the formation and features of the major alliances which failed to assess the contribution they made to the outbreak of war. Conversely, the best responses offered a sustained evaluation of the responsibility of the European alliance systems using an agree/disagree essay structure.

Nonetheless, the alliance system was ultimately the cause of the war in 1914 as it was indeed the system which required Germany to support Austria-Hungary with respect to the Dual Alliance. It could certainly be argued that if the Dual Alliance ~~had~~ hadn't occurred, it would've been very unlikely for Germany to issue the 'blank cheques' in both the Bosnian and July crisis. If Germany hadn't promised the Blank-Cheque in the Bosnian Crisis, it is certain that Austria-Hungary may not have had as much confidence to

(Section A continued) annex Bosnia-Herzegovina and ~~tension~~ the emergence of terrorist organizations, such as the Black Hand (responsible for the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand) could've been stopped as well as avoiding tension between Austria-Hungary and Serbia in 1914. In parallel, if the Dual Alliance hadn't existed, Germany's blank cheque in the July crisis would've been unlikely and Serbia may not have had the confidence to issue the infamous ultimatum. Hence, this shows

that the alliances such as the Dual Alliance had the direct
consequently, the responsibility to the outbreak of war in
1914.



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Examiner Comments

This Level 3 response addresses the issue of the responsibility of the alliance systems with reasonable range and depth. It later considers the role of the Triple Entente. However, other sections of the essay lose focus by examining the arms race and German territorial ambitions without linking them to the impact of the European alliance systems.



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Examiner Tip

Make sure you don't answer an 'agree-disagree' question with a 'stated factor' approach. Question 1 requires a 'little responsibility - greater responsibility' structure.

Question 2

Quite a few candidates who attempted this question were let down by a lack of detailed knowledge about (1) the peace treaties concluded between 1919 and 1923, and (2) Wilson's 14 Points. Several responses offered sketchy or inaccurate accounts of both. Many of the weakest candidates relied on a simple description of the Versailles Treaty, together with a few basic references to some of the other treaties. The best responses were able to provide an assessment of how far Wilson's 14 Points shaped the peace treaties by referring to a range of relevant issues, including the creation of the League of Nations, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the extent of national self-determination and the self-interest of the Allied powers.

One way in which the Peace Treaties of 1919-23 were based firmly on Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' was in much of the territorial adjustments which occurred. Indeed, Wilson pointed out that he wanted Poland to be newly set up Poland to receive a corridor to the ocean to make it economically viable, Belgium to see the occupation of Belgium to end and for France to receive Alsace-Lorraine, a region which it had lost to Germany in the Franco-Prussian war of 1871. In all of these aims Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' were successful with for example the 28th of June Treaty of Versailles gave returning Alsace-Lorraine to France and granting Poland the previously German lands of Posen and West Prussia to give it a corridor to the sea. Hence in terms of ~~the~~ the 'Fourteen Points' territorial demands, the Peace treaties of 1919-23 can be seen to be based firmly on Wilson's 'Fourteen Points'. However, whilst these small territorial adjustments were a key part of the treaties, arguably Wilson's primary territorial idea of 'national self-determination' was not applied as successfully, and indeed with the ~~Association of Nations~~, in terms of major territorial adjustments Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' can be seen to have firmly shaped the 1919-23 Peace Treaties.



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Examiner Comments

This Level 5 response offers a precisely focused analysis with detailed support for the argument put forward. This extract also makes several effective links to the question.



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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 3

This proved to be a popular question. Most candidates were aware of the main features of, and the major developments under, detente. Consequently, the majority of responses offered some assessment of whether or not US-Soviet relations fundamentally improved in the 1970s, with particular emphasis placed on SALT I and II, the Helsinki Accords and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Indeed, the strongest candidates demonstrated impressive range and depth in precisely focused answers. Weaker candidates tended to (1) write extensively about the causes or origins of detente (2) produce lengthy accounts of Ostpolitik (3) confuse 1970s detente with 1950s peaceful coexistence.

The USSR could also not sustain much more economic strains from wars which is why they agreed to detente and the SALT treaties. With many problems occurring before the 70s such as the Hungarian and Polish uprisings it was clear that they needed to strengthen their influence in their 'buffer zone'. With the previous leaders of the Soviet Union and USSR creating foreign policies such as peaceful coexistence and new course, which took a lighter approach than the West, it could be easily said that at the beginning of the 70s relations were far better than at the end of the 70s.



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This Level 2 response does not address the question properly. Instead of considering whether or not US-Soviet relations fundamentally improved in the 1970s, the candidate offers some partially developed statements on the causes of detente.

Question 4

This was another popular question. Most candidates were able to explain how the concept of MAD, the substitution of the nuclear arms race for armed conflict, and the acceptance of limited war had a stabilising effect. They also pointed to the destabilising impact of the spiralling arms race, fears about the nuclear 'superiority' of the other side, and nuclear brinkmanship. The best responses were able to analyse the Cuban missile crisis as an example of increased stability (due to the measures taken afterwards) and as a case study of the dangers created by the nuclear arms race. Weaker candidates tended to (1) produce a chronological narrative of the nuclear arms race with little or no reference to the stabilising-destabilising debate (2) offer general statements in place of detailed supporting evidence (3) focus almost exclusively on the Cuban missile crisis (4) adopt a 'stated factor' approach to the question.

It could certainly be said that by merely having the weapons there, it would increase the superpower's risk of using them, thus making the world a more dangerous place, rather than having a stabilising effect. The policy of brinkmanship was proved to be particularly dangerous in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, where nuclear destruction could have been moments away. However, the Cuban Missile crisis, although being a critical moment of high tension, actually had a stabilising effect on the superpowers. It highlighted the potential dangers of nuclear weaponry, and the hostility the arms race caused, so the superpowers became keen to avoid the situation again. The installation of the Hot-line telephone link in 1963, and the Partial Nuclear Test ban treaty ratification in 1963 ~~show~~ consequences of the Cuban Missile Crisis proved to have a stabilising effect, by allowing greater communication between the two sides and a start of limiting the impact of nuclear weapons and the potential of Mutually assured destruction, and therefore having an inherently stabilising effect on the superpowers between 1949 and 1963.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has produced a good Level 4 answer by offering detailed knowledge within a focused analytical structure. Here, the stabilising and destabilising effects of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis are clearly explained.

Question 5

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to discuss the role of British and French interests in the failure of the League of Nations and weigh the stated factor against others (such as American isolationism, the return of 'power politics' from 1931 and the unrealistic assumptions underpinning the League). Better responses integrated source material and candidates' own knowledge to develop an argument about the League's failure based on the issues raised by the extracts. These responses cross-referenced the sources extensively to support or challenge particular viewpoints in the process of reaching a judgement. Weaker candidates often relied almost exclusively on the source material and introduced very little own knowledge to develop a line of argument. In addition, some low-scoring answers merely offered 'potted' summaries of each source (often with a little own knowledge included) which prevented cross-referencing and the development of a support/challenge approach. A number of candidates did not pick up on the significance of 1931 in Source 2.

The loopholes within the League's constitution can also be referenced as reasons for its failure. This view is supported by Source 3, taken from David Thomson's 'Europe Since Napoleon', which claims that the league only 'offered ~~prospects~~ prospects of peace ... if certain assumptions about the post-war world proved correct', for example if a country did not declare war then the League could not become involved or that 'governments would want peace' and 'have the will to use the new machinery'. The League's success was based on these fundamental assumptions, it could not force a country to agree to ~~use it~~ enforce its recommendations and according to Article 15 it was based on ~~a~~ the recognition ~~&~~ not to interfere in internal issues of member states. It could be argued that Source 3 explicitly states that these 'loopholes' were primary causes

in its failure - 'Once these were disappointed, there remained no cohesive force which might give the League of Nations the vitality and vigour of action that it needed'. Thus

it seems that the 'loopholes' within the League ensured its failure - as it was based on the assumption that countries were willing to co-operate.



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Examiner Comments

This Level 3 response illustrates a common limitation in answers to an Associated Historical Controversy question. Although the candidate examines the arguments in Source 3 reasonably well, no attempt is made to cross-reference this extract. For example, Source 2 with its emphasis on power politics could be linked to Source 3's discussion of unrealistic assumptions.



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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

On this question, the majority of responses were able to offer an explanation for Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union in June 1941 based on the competing views set out in the three sources. Most candidates could also draw on a sound knowledge of the key events from the late 1930s which led to Operation Barbarossa. Once again, stronger candidates integrated cross-referenced source material with their own knowledge to put forward a substantiated judgement. Lower scoring responses typically adopted the 'potted' summary approach to the sources or else included little or no own knowledge. A few of the weaker candidates uncritically accepted ideological motivation and failed to consider properly the other arguments (e.g. economic and military) set out in the extracts.

The role of ideologies seems of limited importance but it certainly contributed to Hitler's will to destroy the USSR. This can be seen in SOURCE 6: "The racial

obsessions of Nazism, its hostility to Bolshevism... took final shape in the great war in the east." Historical evidence such as the "Mein Kampf" book of 1926 and the Hossbach Conference of 1937 show that Hitler had been obsessed with the destruction of the slave nations. However this can only be treated as a long-term and indirect cause as the actual invasion plan Barbarossa was only created in 1941 and the Z plan of 1938 did not mention it at all. Hence the ideology can be seen as a useful tool of propaganda that could justify less glorious economic reasons for the invasion.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This Level 4 response provides a good example of how to use own knowledge to evaluate a claim made in a source. Here, the candidate uses own knowledge effectively to scrutinise the argument (made in Source 6) that ideology played a key role in Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union in 1941.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

To gain high marks on the Associated Historical Controversy question, you must have a sound subject knowledge. Check the specification for the key topics.

Question 7

Most candidates found this question accessible. Overall, the sources were used effectively and appropriate own knowledge was included to develop the argument. Having said this, candidates were generally more confident when discussing the role of ideology and specific individuals such as Stalin, and less confident when assessing the impact of traditional great power rivalry. Stronger responses offered a sustained analysis based on the cross-referencing of the extracts and the integration of source material and own knowledge. Low-scoring candidates tended to exhibit three main weaknesses - (1) relying on a memorised perspectives essay (covering the orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist interpretations) which was inadequately linked to the sources provided (2) poor or non-existent integration of source material and own knowledge (3) assuming that traditional great power rivalry and ideological conflict were the same thing.

(Section B continued) Source 9 strongly disagrees with the view of Source 7. Source 9 says completely disagrees with the view the cold war started due to ~~the~~ traditional great power rivalry, but due to Stalin and the influence and power, he was able to create for himself. The source strongly and openly states that 'Stalin's centrality to the origins of the cold war is clear'. It even goes on and suggests that even if you had gotten rid of the other leaders, but left Stalin, you would still have conflict. Source 9 suggests that Stalin had such an influence on his country and his views, that it was clear that it 'was going to be a cold war, whatever the west did'. This may



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Examiner Comments

This Level 2 response has two major weaknesses. First, the candidate uses the sources to note some points of support and challenge but does not develop them further. Second, in this paragraph, there is virtually no supporting evidence drawn from the candidate's own knowledge.



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Examiner Tip

Plan your answer around all the key issues raised by the sources and pick out useful quotations from each extract. That way, you won't overlook, or oversimplify, any of the sources when writing your response.

Question 8

This proved to be a highly 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 Reagan's policies towards the Soviet Union in bringing the Cold War to an end. The strongest candidates offered a sustained source-led analysis with impressive range and depth. Many in this category provided extensive cross-referencing of the sources to emphasise, for example, how economic issues influenced the actions of Reagan, Gorbachev and East Europeans in the 1980s. Weaker candidates tended to produce (1) a memorised 'end of Cold war' essay (often surveying the triumphalist, ideationist etc. perspectives) which was inadequately linked to the sources provided (2) a 'potted' source by source commentary with little or no cross-referencing which prevented the development of a support/challenge approach.

Mikhail Gorbachev and his new political ideas were the cause of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the corresponding end to the Cold War. With the

(Section B continued) "entire Warsaw Pact in obsolescence", Gorbachev recognised the need for social and political change. Through his plans of glasnost and perestroika, he aimed to create a stable, Socialist Soviet Union working with America and the rest of the world. He also knew that "no social change was possible without ending the arms race with the West", due to the "gigantic sums spent on the military". The need for Gorbachev's reforms lay in the long-term choices of Soviet leaders to compete for nuclear and political parity, not the short-term threats of Reagan.

Indeed, even Source 11, which addresses the short-term triggers which brought about the end of the Cold War, credits Gorbachev's role. Smith attributes the changes in Europe to the actions of the common people in 'revolutions from below'. Popular protest movements, such as Solidarity in Poland and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, played a large part in the physical dismantling of the Eastern bloc, but they were only possible due to Gorbachev's policies, such as abandoning the Brezhnev doctrine and

his UN speech at the end of 1988, when he declared that "Marxist-Leninism is not for everyone". His "freedom of choice" he offered was the reason that the revolts of 1989 succeeded where those of earlier years (eg. Hungary 1956) didn't.



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Examiner Comments

This Level 5 response possesses several strengths. Here, the candidate uses Sources 12 and 11, together with own knowledge, to develop a well-informed case for the central importance of Gorbachev's role in ending the Cold War. Elsewhere in the essay, a similar integrated approach is used to examine other relevant factors, including the role of Reagan and economic pressures.

Paper Summary

A general summary of the areas for improvement in the approach to the Depth Study question and the Associated Historical Controversy question on Option E may prove of benefit to centres.

Depth Study question

1. Candidates need to ensure that their subject knowledge conforms to the specification. Weaker responses usually lacked range and/or depth. A few discussed a period or development which was not the focus of the question.
2. Candidates need to be more aware of the time frame attached to a question. Many lower scoring responses devoted much time and space to discussing the years either before or after the period targeted by the question.
3. In order to address the question effectively, candidates need to offer an analysis not a descriptive or chronological account.
4. Candidates should not adopt a 'stated factor' approach to questions which require an 'agree-disagree' structure.

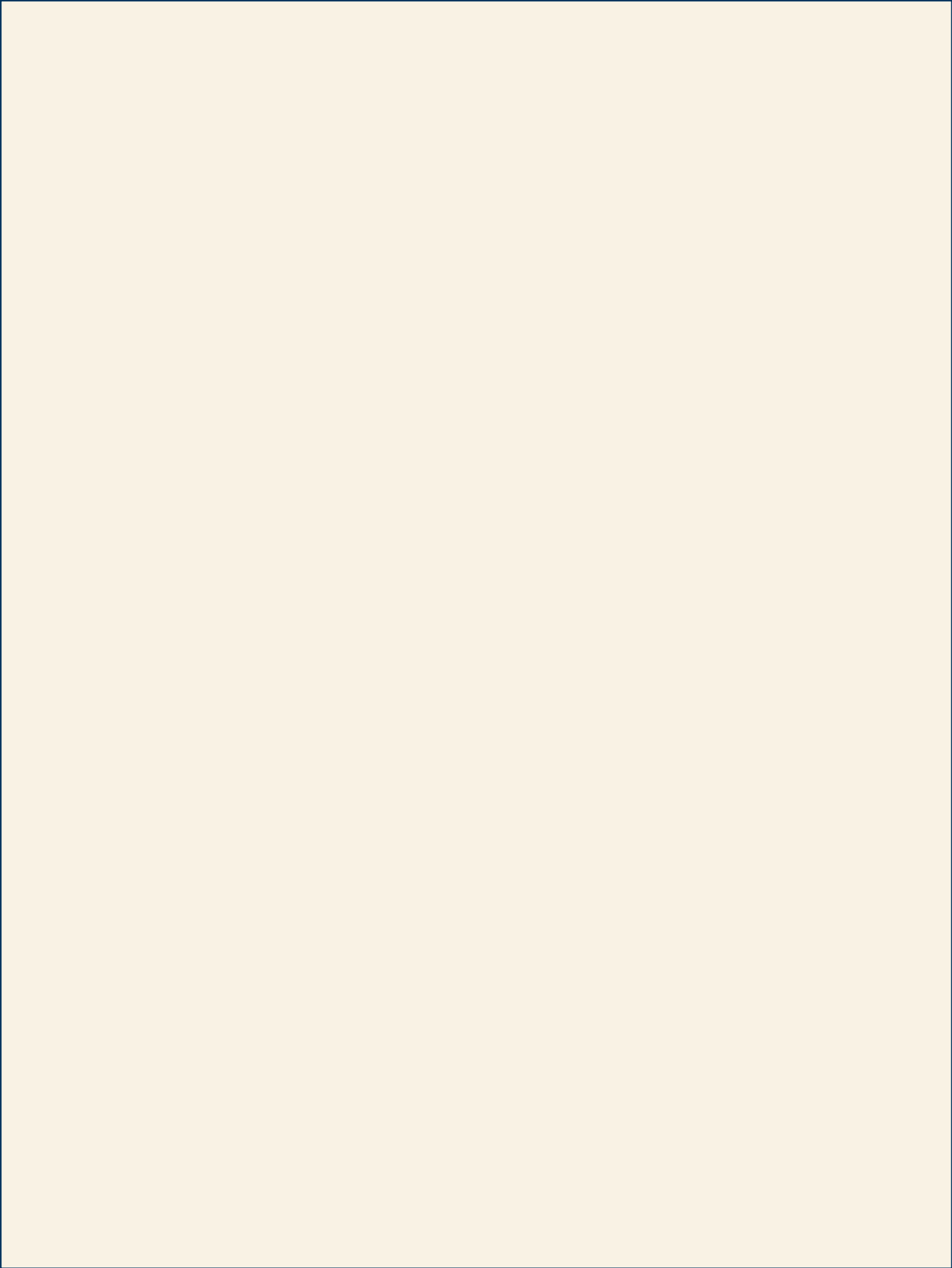
Associated Historical Controversy question

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Candidates should not provide extensive and unnecessary accounts of the provenance of each source.

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