

Examiners' Report

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in History (6HI01) Paper B

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Summer 2016

Publications Code 43890

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REPORT ON EXAMINATION 6HI01 OPTION B JULY 2016

Q1. Some candidates were unclear about the precise nature of papal financial demands, claiming that the pope had the power to levy taxes directly on the German people. Better answers were aware of the substantial fees levied when clergy took up their offices and, of course, the growing scandal of the sale of indulgences. Most answers developed a good discussion of other relevant factors. They pointed out that dissatisfaction with the German Church was not focused on doctrinal matters, but rather on the poor and largely corrupt state of the church. The work of humanists was well known, especially Erasmus' printed works. A few answers failed to mention the importance of Luther and the 95 Theses in sparking the German Reformation.

Q2. Some answers had a fairly narrow focus, and dealt almost exclusively with the political nature of the Empire, the limited powers exercised by the Emperor, and the role and influence of the princes. Better answers considered Charles' distractions, in Spain and throughout Europe, and the importance of the printing press in the spread of Luther's message. The best answers ranged over the whole chronology, noting the significance of the Schmalkaldic League, Charles' victory at Mühlberg, and the course of events which led to the Religious Peace of Augsburg.

Q3. There were too few answers to allow for a meaningful report.

Q4. The role of the Jesuits in the success of the Counter-Reformation was well known by most candidates. There were good discussions on the semi-military nature of the order, along with the role of Ignatius Loyola and the strong support provided by successive popes. The importance of Jesuit education was well known, but some answers were uncertain of the significance of the links made with European rulers. Most candidates understood the role of the Council of Trent in the Counter-Reformation, and noted that the growing doctrinal divisions within Protestantism mean that Protestant groups were unable to provide a united front against the militant Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation.

Q5. Candidates were aware of the growing religious divisions which contributed to the division of the Netherlands by 1585. They noted the rapid growth of Calvinism in the northern provinces, which led to the migration of many Catholics to the safety of Spanish rule in the south, and the formal separation of the northern and southern provinces by the Unions of Arras and Utrecht. Economic factors were well known, with some good discussions on the reasons for the growing economic strength of the north, southern weaknesses, and the growing inability of Spain to finance its intervention in the Dutch provinces.

Q6. There was a small number of answers to the question, but they were almost uniformly excellent. Maurice of Nassau's military reforms were well known, including the new military formations, the standardisation of weaponry, and the musket and ball tactic used in battle. Oldenbarnevelt's leadership was considered in some depth, including his reforms in government, and the substantial development of the northern provinces as a major economic power. The military and financial assistance provided by Elizabeth of England was noted, and the growing military decline of Spain was mapped well.

Q7. Some candidates' answers began well, with reference to the stated factor, including the Malleus and other printed works as well as the significance of transcripts of trials. However, many answers then went on to note the role of Hopkins in East Anglia, and of other prominent individuals in Europe, in intensifying the witchcraze, and thus melded Q7 with Q8 to little effect. There was some useful commentary on religious divisions and economic change, but some answers failed to mention the significance of border areas and the limits of imperial power in Germany in causing the witchcraze.

Q8. The stated factor on the role of different legal systems in the intensity of the witchcraze was understood by most candidates, though many answers were far better on the inquisitorial system and the use of torture than the medieval accusatorial system: only a few understood the importance of the Carolina. The role of prominent individuals was handled well, with Queen Christina of Sweden referenced more extensively than in previous years.

Q9. Some of the best answers on the plantation policy made a strong case for the importance of religious divisions, referring to the role of Scottish undertakers and to the role of religion in sparking the rebellion of 1641. Candidates were aware of the role of Strafford and the policy of thorough, and the problems he encountered with the Graces. Less secure answers focused almost entirely on the flight of the Earls and the destruction of the Munster plantation.

Q10. There were too few answers for a meaningful report.

Q11. Answers displayed a strong understanding of the role of religion in causing the outbreak of war in 1618. Many noted that the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555 had begun to unravel with the growth of Calvinism and the aggressive Catholicism displayed by the Counter-Reformation, and candidates understood the role of religion in the Bohemian revolt. Most discussed the importance of Ferdinand's election as emperor in 1618. Not only did this event spark the outbreak of war, but it also added to the concerns of many rulers at the growth of Habsburg power within Europe.

Q12. There were too few answers for a meaningful report.

Q13. Many answers focused on the financial and religious settlements, and the problems caused by the divisions over prerogative powers. Candidates noted that the financial settlement was never secure simply because parliament would not provide Charles with sufficient money to finance the state. There was some detailed discussion of the religious settlement, with answers commenting that the toleration promised at Breda was not put into practice, partly thanks to the revival of Anglicanism as a religious and political force. Many answers referred to Clarendon's role, though the details of the Clarendon Code and its significance were often lacking. The failure to establish clearly the extent of the crown's prerogative powers was addressed, and the problems which this caused in successive foreign policy issues.

Q14. There were too few answers for a meaningful report.

