

Examiners' Report
June 2016

GCE History 8HI0 1F

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see responses of a decent standard from candidates attempting the new AS Paper 1F which covers *In search of the American Dream: the USA, c1917–96*. The paper is divided into three sections. Section A and Section B contain a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in breadth (AO1) by targeting five second order concepts – cause, consequence, change/continuity, similarity/difference and significance. Section C contains one compulsory question that assesses the ability to analyse and evaluate historical interpretations (AO3). Candidates have to answer three questions – one from each Section.

Generally speaking, candidates found Section C more challenging mainly because some of them were not entirely clear about how to analyse and evaluate the extracts they were presented with. Moreover, the detailed knowledge base required in Section C to add contextual material to support/challenge points derived from the extracts was also often absent. Having said this, although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer questions from Sections A, B or C. The ability range was wide, but the design of the paper allowed all abilities to be catered for. Furthermore, in Sections A and B, few candidates produced wholly descriptive essays which were devoid of analysis and, for the most part, responses were soundly structured. The most common weakness in Section A and B essays was a lack of knowledge. It is important to realise that Section A and Section B questions may be set from any part of any of the four themes, and, as a result, full coverage of the specification is enormously important.

The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

Question 1

This was the more popular of the two questions on Section A of the paper. Students on the whole answered this question well, although some otherwise sound or strong responses had limited material on the given factor of federal legislation.

A number of candidates tended to treat any action by any part of the federal government as federal legislation, for example treating Supreme Court decisions as evidence of the importance of legislation in improving civil rights. Responses covered a range of other issues, most notably the role of Civil Rights leaders and the actions of the movement. This was usually done with at least some level of analysis in terms of the question.

Less successful responses tended to comment on main events and personalities of the Civil Rights movement with descriptive material, such as offering too detailed an account of Rosa Parks or MLK. Some responses only covered the early part of the timeframe, in such cases usually stopping at 1968. The strongest responses were often able to connect other issues, such as the campaigns, with specific pieces of legislation, exploring the relationship.

(Section A continued) hadn't being enforced and therefore they enforced it more; this led to improvements in Black Americans civil rights. Many of these campaigns and demonstrations were highlighted in the media which gained more support for black Americans.

The most important reason for improvements in black American civil rights in the years 1955 to 1980 was the media. This meant that black Americans civil rights improved because it showed to the whole of America and the world the shocking violence and hatred shown towards black Americans, this gained them sympathy which meant that their civil rights improved because it put pressure on the government to improve their rights. For example on the first October 1961 at the Greensboro sit in, the media showed well dressed; calm black students sitting at a lunch counter in a department store being assaulted by whites. This improved civil rights because people began to see that black Americans were ^{human and peaceful.} ~~not~~. Martin Luther King was very keen on appearing well in the media because it showed that they weren't harmful and deserved respect. The media also

students. Images ~~spread~~ spread across the world and this forced Kennedy on the 12th May to send in federal troops to stop the violence. This is a good example of how ~~the~~ the media forced federal intervention and the improvement of black American civil rights and legislation is what improved civil rights in the eyes of the law

Another reason for improvements in black American civil rights was because of federal legislation. This meant that black American



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Examiner Comments

This partial example displays the features of a level four response. This essay demonstrates secure understanding of the demands of the question, applying sufficient knowledge to a convincing analysis. There is a clear causal focus, exploring the role of the media, and attempting to examine its importance in relation to other factors. Argument is largely coherent, logical and organised, and supporting material is used to reach judgements which are well reasoned. It is worth noting that even at level four, the level descriptors are qualified; the higher demands of level five are not required at AS level.



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Examiner Tip

Higher level responses tended to offer clear reasoning and justification or decisions, or 'consideration of criteria'. This need not laboriously laid out in generic terms; in this question, candidates justified 'most important reason' in terms such as how wide an impact a particular factor had, or the difference that it actually made to the lives of black Americans – e.g. giving consideration to the concepts of de jure and de facto.

Question 2

This question produced a broad range of responses.

Most candidates displayed confidence in the events of and issues surrounding the Vietnam War; however, some needed more focus on the precise demands of the question. A significant minority of candidates wrote about the causes of government unpopularity rather than the consequences of the Vietnam War, and thus digressed into coverage of issues such as Watergate, with limited success.

A smaller minority confused issues, such as which presidents were involved at what stage of the war, or even confusion between Korea and Vietnam.

In terms of focused consideration of the consequences, candidates tended to address themes such as the media, student and wider public protest, the economic costs and the impact this had on the ability to undertake planned social reform, and attitudes within government, as well as attitudes to government. One common feature of stronger responses was an ability to convincingly link the Vietnam War to later events and problems in the 1970s.

SECTION A

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number:

Question 1

Question 2

Government unpopularity was not the main consequence of US involvement in the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 1970s as there are a general other factors which contributed to the US involvement in the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 1970s.

During the 1960s and 70s the US gov was not very popular with its people due to the past presidents not doing enough for the country. For example even though water happened over 20 years ago (during FDR's) people still did not like the gov due to the fact

~~that they joined to the war~~

Government unpopularity was the main consequence of US involvement in the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 1970s. However, there are also so other consequences to discuss.

The US involvement in the Vietnam

(Section A continued) war took all of the government's attentions. They were so focused on this war that they dismissed problems happening in their own country. Millions and millions of dollars were spent funding machinery and food to soldiers. People back in America really started to dislike their place in the Vietnam war. Protests and marches were held, president Kennedy was becoming unpopular because of the Vietnam war.

Despite this, the gov. still carried on promising to win but they did not. Thus, the gov. became very unpopular with the people. Presidents lost their good reputations because of the war. It took years after the Vietnam war for the gov. to

build up the people's trust again as the war was a disaster for the country's reputation.

Another consequence of the US involvement in the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 1970s was the deaths of millions of soldiers which contributed heavily to

(Section A continued) the unpopularity of the government. This war was not America's to fight but yet they did and by doing this, millions died for the cause. This is long-term as a death of a loved one can never be forgotten, millions of grieving families looking for someone to blame thus they turned toward the US government. A fatal consequence of their involvement in the Vietnam war.



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Examiner Comments

This partial example displays the features of a level two response. There is some focus and limited analysis of issues related to the question. However, whilst there is an understanding of the question and an attempt to develop, the supporting material is limited, and at times makes erroneous claims. At times there is some shape, but much of the response is limited in terms of organisation and coherence.



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Examiner Tip

When considering the importance of a factor, higher level responses tend to explore the importance of a given reason in its own right. For example, brief yet effective counter argument was offered considering the notion of the 'silent majority' in relation to support for the government.

Question 3

This was a popular question, and in the main, candidates demonstrated the abilities required for success: knowledge of issues related to the position of women in the USA, a broad coverage of the period, and an ability to focus these on the issue of change.

In particular, many candidates showed a really good understanding of the period, with detailed own knowledge. This question also tended to produce considered and focused conclusions examining the extent of change.

Where some candidates were less successful, it tended to be due to either, or both, of the following two factors. Firstly, responses which offered a considerable amount of knowledge, but with less focus, analysis and evaluation of change, with some responses offering detailed narrative with limited reasoning and judgement. Secondly, a minority of responses did not sufficiently cover the chronology, such as responses which stopped with the end of WWII.

Higher level responses often gave clear consideration to themes, with some structuring essays around these, exploring the relationship between economic, political and social issues across the period.

(Section B continued) being 1978 highlights that these attitudes still remain at the end of the period. ¶¶ Thus, the position of women hasn't changed. ¶

However, due to the fact women had jobs and had a steady income is ¶, by itself, an very important factor in supporting the view that women's position had changed dramatically. ~~This~~ They earned their place in the workplace during the second world war. This was a vital opportunity in securing women a place in the world of work because men were off fighting meaning jobs they had left needed to be filled up. This is why the number of women who had jobs increased because they worked in munition factories and other practical jobs usually associated with men.

A significant statistic is the fact that in 1917, 7% of the workforce were women, and in 1980, that 40% of the workforce was women the demonstrates the fact that women's freedom and

opportunities had improved massively. Therefore, the overall position of women had change drastically too.

Ultimately, I believe that the position of women had changed to ~~some~~ a certain extent during the years 1917 to 1980. The fact that women still earn significantly less throughout the period suggests that ~~the~~ their position hasn't changed. Also, the attitude towards women hadn't changed much as the US didn't sign the UN's bill in 1978, to stop

(Section B continued) unequal pay ~~it~~ suggests that they still underrepresent ~~and equal~~ the part played by women in the workplace. This implies that ~~attitude~~ the position of women hasn't changed because this attitude was very prominent in the 1910's and 1920's, which was at the start of the period. However, other aspects had ~~improved~~ vastly improved. The fact that 40% of the workforce in ~~1917~~ 1980 shows that ~~the~~ their position has changed massively, because in 1917 it was only 7%. Also, women began to do things which were commonly associated with men, such as drink and ~~to~~ smoke. Flappers also suggest that women had more freedom and more leisureable experience. ~~Therefore~~ Overall, this would suggest that the women's position had improved to some extent.



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Examiner Comments

This partial example displays the features of a high level three response. There is a clear attempt to engage with the targeted second-order concept of change, and the candidate demonstrates understanding of the issues demanded by the question. The answer is organised and coherent, and reasoning given for judgements. Analysis is supported by some depth of knowledge, as well as some range, both in terms of issues, and the chronological range demanded by the question.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should pay careful attention to the particular demands of the question. Responses which attempted to examine the degree of change throughout each of their points were more likely to make better use of the material they offered, than those which organised their work in paragraphs presenting arguments for and against change in the period, without exploring the extent of this change.

Question 4

This was the less popular of the two Section B questions, and a wide range of responses were offered. In the main, knowledge of the two periods, and the issues related to communism in the USA, were good, although this tended to be stronger on the post-WWII era than the red scare in the period after WWI. What tended to discriminate in candidate performance was the ability to focus on the second-order concept. A significant number of candidates lacked a consistent focus on comparisons between the respective government responses to communism in the two given periods, and thus did not always attain the mark that their knowledge alone may have allowed them. That said, at least an equal number of candidates seemed to really understand the demands of the question, with higher level responses making and exploring direct comparisons.

Candidates explored a range of issues within the USA, such as immigration, union activity, individual cases such as that of Sacco and Vanzetti, fears of communist infiltration, the actions of politicians such as Nixon and of course McCarthy, as well as linking these to international events and were able to link the Red Scare clearly to events in US foreign policy, with those in the higher levels maintaining a clear focus on the government response.

The degree to which the influence of communism affected America after the First and Second World Wars varies significantly. However, there were key similarities between the responses, as well as external factors such as ^{like} economics, that ~~caused results~~ were responsible for the difference.

~~The~~ Both responses to Communist influence following the wars are known as 'Red Scares' and were extremely similar in many ways. For example, both Red Scares caused ~~the~~ citizens to feel more paranoid and suspicious - many people were afraid to express their beliefs in fear of being labelled a communist. As well as this, the government heavily suppressed communist views and promoted their own anti-communist propaganda ~~is~~ following both World Wars. Intolerance towards immigrants, particularly from the Eastern countries, grew following both wars, which is reflected in the ~~governments~~ number of immigrants.

allowed into the country; ~~as~~ it decreased during each Red Scare.

However, the responses to ~~each~~ communist influence following both wars varied in many ways. The Second 'Red Scare' was taken considerably more seriously than the first for multiple reasons. The Cold War with Russia and other Communist states ^{was} ~~were~~

(Section B continued) extremely influential in escalating the Second Red Scare, as well as the Cuban revolution, which worried many Americans because it was so close to US soil. In addition to this, the arms race between America and the USSR caused many Americans to believe in a potential nuclear war - the Cuban missile crisis further escalated this fear, which was considerably more widespread than the first Red Scare. As well as this, the



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This partial example displays some of the features of a level three response, albeit at the lower end of the level. There is focus, demonstrating understanding of the issues demanded by the question. The answer is organised and coherent. However, attempts at analysis lack depth, and on occasion, the lack of substance is to such a degree as mean the analysis is limited. There is some attempt to give reasoning to judgements.



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On questions where candidates are expected to make comparative judgements over the nature or features of two given periods, it is more effective to do so with multiple direct comparisons, rather than separate sections on these periods, with the explicit comparisons being only made in the conclusive sections.

Question 5

A wide range of views were expressed but the question was generally well answered, in terms of focus, and understanding, of both the extracts and the issues arising from these.

Most candidates were able to use the extracts in order to develop arguments relating to the given question on the impact of Reagan's government. What really discriminated with regards to how well candidates performed was the approach taken to the use of extracts. Some candidates largely used the extracts as sources of information, identifying facts in the extracts as if it were their own knowledge, with fairly limited consideration of the arguments made, and thus were limited in their tendency to see these as interpretations on the issue.

An issue that limited the quality of some responses was a loss of focus on the extracts; in some cases, candidates became side tracked with their own knowledge with limited reference to the extracts.

A final issue that distracted from responses which were in many cases strong, was a tendency to regard this as an exercise in source analysis: focusing excessively heavily on the comparative 'reliability' and 'usefulness' of the extracts; an approach which adds little to the consideration of secondary interpretations. These issues said, the majority of responses were able to engage with a focused consideration of the given interpretations in a manner suited to achieving the higher levels. Stronger responses were able to use the extracts in conjunction with contextual knowledge to elaborate further on the question of the impact of Reagan's policies on the US economy. What tended to discriminate between responses at the higher end was an ability to use the two extracts together to highlight the range of conflict that exists in historical interpretation, debating and analysing this with the presented evidence and contextual knowledge to reach their own supported views. Better responses showed a wide range of material on not just Reagan, but the later Presidents who were affected by Reagan's economic policy.

Both Gasson and Bailey (hereforth Gasson), and Farmer and Saunders (hereforth Farmer) show decidedly different interpretations of the effects of Reagan's economic policies on the US economy. Gasson focuses on the large budget deficits, claiming that whilst they fueled economic recovery between 1983- mid 1988, financing the deficits 'generated certain problems.' Farmer on the other hand presents the view that 'the economy did improve' thanks to Reagan. His 'mastering' of Congress and his economic policies helped reduce unemployment and fuel economic growth. However, most of Reagan's economic policies were limited in their success, and his spending on defence had serious long term negative impacts on the US economy.

Farmer writes that Reagan 'hit the deck running, mastering Congress: We know this to be true as he was able to unite Republican and Democrat members of Congress and as such was able to pass the ERTA and the ORA ~~on~~ in the same year. These acts cut personal and business tax by 25% and reduced the level of Federal Spending. One of Reagan's main economic policies was to cut personal and business tax, as this was part of Reagan trying to ~~employ~~ use supply-side economics. By reducing tax, businesses can produce more, driving down the price of products and also increasing employment and wages. Therefore, personal

(Section C continued) tax does not need to be as high as the public will be spending more. As both Gason and ~~Farmer~~ Farmer rightly point out, this was one of the main reasons for economic recovery in the 80s. Reagan was able to successfully reduce inflation.

However, Farmer fails to consider the long term impacts of Reagan's spending on defence. He claims that it was a positive, and improved the economy, as 'it created jobs and helped to fuel the economic recovery.' Whilst short term this may be true, the excessive spending on defence actually put the government into a lot of debt, which continues to effect America. Therefore, ~~we cannot say that~~

I would argue that ~~Reagan~~ Extract 2 lacks accuracy, and this can be seen especially due to the use of language such as 'mastery' and 'hit the deck running,' which suggests that this is not a balanced account of the impact of Reagan's economic policies.

Garson, on the other hand, acknowledges that whilst the US ~~enjoyed~~ enjoyed economic recovery from 1983-85, 'the consequences of large budget deficits were profound.' We know this is true as it meant that, in the long term, the US economy was damaged. In order for Reagan's deficits to be ~~subsidised~~ ^{financed} he needed high interest rates.



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This partial example displays the features of a level four response. The candidate displays a confident understanding of the extracts – seeing these as interpretations, analysing their arguments and the evidence offered, in the light of a clear understanding of the issues raised. Contextual knowledge is applied to examine these arguments. Overall, the response offers a reasoned discussion, comparing and analysing the given views towards a reasoned overall judgement.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Good responses often used the introduction to set up the debate, by identifying the main arguments offered by the two interpretations, following this by comparing and exploring these in the main essay.

Paper Summary

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

Section A/B responses:

Features commonly found in responses which were successful within the higher levels:

- Candidates paying close attention to the date ranges in the question
- Sufficient consideration given to the issue in the question (e.g. main factor), as well as some other factors
- Explain their judgement fully – this need not be in an artificial or abstract way, but demonstrate their thinking in relation to the concepts and topic they are writing about
- Focus carefully on the second-order concept targeted in the question
- Give consideration to timing, to enable themselves to complete all three question with approximately the same time given over to each one
- An appropriate level, in terms of depth of detail and analysis, as required by the question – e.g. a realistic amount to enable a balanced and rounded answer on breadth questions

Common issues which hindered performance:

- Pay little heed to the precise demands of the question, e.g. write about the topic without focusing on the question, or attempt to give an answer to a question that hasn't been asked – most frequently, this meant treating questions which targeted other second-order concepts as causation questions
- Answer a question without giving sufficient consideration to the given issue in the question (e.g. looking at other causes, consequences, etc, with only limited reference to that given in the question)
- Responses which only gave a partial response, e.g. a very limited span of the date range, or covered the stated cause/consequence, with no real consideration of other issues
- Assertion of change, causation, sometimes with formulaic repetition of the words of the question, with limited explanation or analysis of how exactly this was a change, cause, of the issue within the question.
- Judgement is not reached, or not explained
- A lack of detail
-

Section C responses:

Features commonly found in responses which were successful within the higher levels:

- Candidates paying close attention to the precise demands of the question, as opposed to seemingly pre-prepared material covering the more general controversy as outlined in the specification
- Thorough use of the extracts; this need not mean using every point they raise, but a strong focus on these as views on the question
- A confident attempt to use the two extracts together, e.g. consideration of their differences, attempts to compare their arguments, or evaluate their relative merits

- Careful use of own knowledge, e.g. clearly selected to relate to the issues raised within the sources, confidently using this to examine the arguments made, and reason through these in relation to the given question; at times, this meant selection over sheer amount of knowledge
- Careful reading of the extracts, to ensure the meaning of individual statements and evidence within these were used in the context of the broader arguments made by the authors
- Attempts to see beyond the stark differences between sources, e.g. consideration of the extent to which they disagreed, or attempts to reconcile their arguments

Common issues which hindered performance:

- Limited use of the extracts, or an imbalance in this, e.g. extensive use of one, with limited consideration of the other
- Limited comparison or consideration of the differences between the given interpretations
- Using the extracts merely as sources of support
- Heavy use of own knowledge, or even seemingly pre-prepared arguments, without real consideration of these related to the arguments in the sources
- Statements or evidence from the source being used in a manner contrary to that given in the sources, e.g. through misinterpretation of the meaning of the arguments, or lifting of detail without thought to the context of how it was applied within the extract
- A tendency to see the extracts as being polar opposites, again seemingly through expectation of this, without thought to where there may be degrees of difference, or even common ground

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