



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In History (8HI0/1B)

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1B: England, 1509–1603: authority,
nation and religion

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PE report 8HI0 1B

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range in this, Advanced Subsidiary Level, paper 1B.

The paper is divided into three sections. Section A comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting the second order concepts of cause and/or consequence. Section B offers a further choice of essays, targeting any of the second order concepts of cause, consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, and significance. Section C contains a compulsory question which is based on two given extracts. It assesses analysis and evaluation of historical interpretations in context (AO3).

Candidates in the main appeared to organise their time effectively, although there were a few cases of candidates not completing one of the three responses within the time allocated. This was most evident on Section C, as would be expected, although there seemed to be fewer instances of this than has been seen in some previous years. The responses that managed time most effectively planned time accordingly in the first place and offered more direct responses. Where responses indulged in lengthier contextual descriptions of, say, changes in the Tudor period (for Question 2), or descriptions of the extracts and problems Elizabeth faced (Question 5), they were both less likely to produce responses at the highest level, but also experience time pressure issues. Those who produced responses that focused sharply on arguing and analysing the given issue in the question, and on Question 5 the given views, rather offering extensive explanations and quotes, were more likely to produce an effective response.

In sections A and B most candidates were well prepared to write, or to attempt, an analytical response. Stronger answers clearly understood the importance of identifying the appropriate second order concept that was being targeted by the question. A minority of candidates offered substantial knowledge, but did not effectively direct this towards the conceptual demands of the question. In the main though, candidates were able to apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner suited to the different demands of questions in these two sections: in terms of the greater depth of knowledge required where section A questions targeted a shorter-period, as compared to the more careful selection generally required for the section B questions covering a broader timespan. One of the central features of responses attaining the highest marks was an ability to consider and evaluate in relation to the specific demands of a particular question. For example, some candidates offered detailed explanation of changes, but the strongest responses tended to offer greater consideration of the extent of change.

Candidates do need to formulate their planning so that there is an argument and a counter argument within their answer; some candidates lacked sufficient treatment of these. The generic mark scheme clearly indicates the four bullet-pointed strands which are the focus for awarding marks and centres should note how these strands progress through the levels. Candidates also need to be aware of key dates, as identified in the specification, and ensure that responses sufficiently cover the given period, and do not spend time detailing issues that are outside the timeframe of that particular question.

In Section C, the strongest answers demonstrated a clear focus on the need to discuss different arguments given within the two extracts, clearly recognising these as historical interpretations. Such responses tended to offer comparative analysis of the merits of the different views, exploring the validity of the arguments offered by the two historians in the light of the evidence, both from the within the extracts, and candidates' own contextual knowledge. Such responses tended to avoid attempts to examine the extracts in a manner more suited to AO2, assertions of the inferiority of an

extract on the basis of it offering less factual evidence, or a drift away from the specific demands of the question to the wider taught topic. A small minority did approach the question in a manner which would be more suited to an AO1 (i.e. Section A/B) response, engaging with the issue in the question and showing understanding, but tending to neglect the extracts, or treat them more as sources of information, rather than interpretations.

Question 1

Question 1 was the less popular choice with candidates in Section A of the paper. The vast majority of candidates were able to engage with the conceptual demands of the question sufficiently, and apply appropriate knowledge in order to allow them to access levels three and four. What distinguished within these tended to be down to their ability exemplify resistance, and their ability to focus on the varying motivations within these examples. A minority offered limited material on actual cases of resistance, with some attempting to discuss in generic terms issues such as taxation and the cost of war, or religious policies as an alternative factor, but lacking secure linkage to actual resistance, offering what amounted to more speculative responses.

More secure responses typically offered material on the major rebellions of the period, from the Amicable Grant through to the Revolt of the Northern Earls, with a fair balance across these. A Minority did stray into plots against Elizabeth after 1569. Many responses were successful in selecting certain examples of rebellions to demonstrate a particular factor, e.g. say the Amicable Grant for economic factors, or the Western Rebellion for religious factors. The strongest responses were though more likely to explore the varied motivations within these and some effectively explored their relative importance, whilst highlighting the difficulty in disentangling the various motivations. Some responses structured their responses around the major rebellions – effectively as case studies. Secure responses were also effective in making clear attempts to pull the various examples together, giving consideration to frequency or consistency across the period as part of their critical judgement.

Question 2

Question 2 was the more popular of the two within Section A. The vast majority of candidates attempting this question seemingly found it accessible and straightforward, and thus it was generally well answered. Most candidates were able to offer a reasoned consideration of both religious change, and the factors behind this. What distinguished within responses at level three and above tended to be down to two issues. Firstly, how precise the focus was, in particular their ability to shape material in relation to reasons, and secondly, the quality of knowledge. Factors inhibiting success tended to be not addressing the full range of the question, e.g. partial chronology, or a failure to clearly distinguish between different factors, or insecure knowledge. A number of candidates had success by essentially focusing on a particular monarch to illustrate one factor, e.g. Mary for the given issue of personal beliefs, then say Henry for dynastic concerns, although strongest responses were more likely to explore the range of motivations that existed within their reigns.

Stronger responses had a clear focus on religious change, and were also clear in distinguishing the beliefs of individual monarchs from other factors. Less successful responses tended to drift to some degree towards description of Henry's desire for an annulment and the Break with Rome. More astute responses clearly identified and explored the extent to which this was driven by dynastic and diplomatic concerns, often tying this to effective argument drawing on knowledge of Henry's reversal of some aspects of the Reformation to demonstrate his religious conservatism. A range of related issues were explored within stronger responses, such as the influence of Anne Boleyn, Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, the Royal Injunctions of 1536 and 1538, and the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Candidates were largely secure when addressing Edward, although some were dismissive of his influence due to his age. Common examples explored under Edward included the abolition of the Chantries, the 42 Articles and the Prayer Books, whilst also noting the influence of Somerset and Northumberland and especially Cranmer. Mary's Catholicism was cited by the vast majority, discussing issues such as the restoration of papal authority, heresy laws, and the reversal of previous legislation and the failure to restore the monasteries. With regards to Elizabeth, most candidates showed understanding of her own Protestantism. Arguments that religion under Elizabeth amounted to a 'middle way' shaped by political concerns were popular amongst many candidates, although some went beyond this, e.g. arguing that Elizabeth's personal views were significant in shaping a religious settlement that was clearly Protestant, yet which sought to reject many aspects which either more radical Protestant influences or Catholic bishops would have preferred.

Question 3

Question 3 produced a wide range of responses, the majority of which achieved levels three and four. At the higher end, there was an impressive knowledge of the role of parliament in the years 1509-88, with candidates drawing upon relevant knowledge from across the course studied to explore the extent of change. Commonly covered issues included the religious developments during the Reformation Parliament, the emergence of the concept of King-in-Parliament, the growth of social legislation, the changing make up of parliament, the frequency which parliaments met, supply, and incidents of tension over parliamentary attempts to discuss prerogative matters during Elizabeth's reign. Lesser coverage was given to Mary and Edward, although consideration of Mary's attempts to reverse religious changes did feature, as did Edward's passage of religious and social legislation.

Whilst the mainstay of developments considered stemmed from the reign of Henry VIII – as might be expected – most candidates were able to offer sufficient range and balance, and many were able to examine arguments for and against, and reach judgement which challenged or accepted the premise of the question to some degree. Factors limiting the success of responses were largely (i) limited material, and thus a lack of substance behind attempted argument, (ii) potentially relevant material, not convincingly connected to the issue of parliament's role, and/or the second-order concept of change, and (iii) not addressing the chronological demands of the question. Some candidates were successful in framing an analysis of change and continuity within what was an essentially chronological structure, whilst others took a more thematic approach, exploring the extent of change and continuity within particular themes across the period. A minority did demonstrate misunderstanding of issues, e.g. seeing parliament as the body which oversaw Edward's minority, or Henry as having sat in and tyrannised parliament.

Candidates should be minded to address the full question, both in terms of the given date range, and the extent of change – in some otherwise well-argued responses, areas of continuity were at times given limited treatment, making it difficult to address the extent of change.

Question 4

This was a popular choice of question within Section B, and produced a range of answers, the bulk of which were within levels three and four. There was a sound grasp of the role played by the migration of foreign workers, and in the main convincing analysis in relating this to the question's demands, with most candidates demonstrating sufficient knowledge and understanding to discuss a range of issues of significance to the domestic economy in the given period.

The given issue of the migration of workers was largely understood and addressed with some depth, alongside other issues commonly covered, such as innovations in cloth production, developments resulting from the growth of London, overseas exploration and the consequences of broader developments in agriculture. The majority of discussion of foreign workers centred on their influence in textiles, as would be expected, although a small number of responses did examine the contribution made by German miners. Similarly, a number of candidates questioned the extent to which developments relating to foreign workers were significant, seeing them as being limited when considered against the wider economy. Such responses tended to be explicitly critical throughout their responses, without being artificially so, e.g. with regards to the given issue, making clear distinctions over the direct contribution of foreign workers in a particular trade or area, and their wider significance, such as the spread of techniques they brought, their contribution to the revival of a particular sector, or attempting to qualify the extent to which their influence did or didn't spread beyond a particular area.

Generally, most candidates were clearly able to focus the material they had towards the demands of the question. Where responses were less successful, it tended to be down to not consistently relating material to the demands of the question, such as a lack of focus on significance, or how the material being considered related to developments in the domestic economy. There were a minority where knowledge was insufficient or confused, but these were thankfully rarely found.

Question 5

Most candidates were able to access the higher two levels, generally by recognising and explaining the arguments in the two extracts, and building on this with own knowledge. The strongest responses tended to offer a comparative analysis of the views, discussing and evaluating these in the light of contextual knowledge. Most candidates were able to identify the differences between Extract 1 and Extract 2, e.g. how Extract 1 offers argument to support the contention that Elizabeth's government had successes in dealing with the problems faced, whereas Extract 2 emphasises that the efforts of Elizabeth's government were insufficient in the face of the multiple problems the nation faced in the 1590s.

Where candidates were less successful, this tended to be (i) limited use of contextual knowledge, or offering valid contextual knowledge, but with limited linkage to the discussion of the views, or (ii) a tendency to describe and explain the extracts and see them more as sources of information, rather than attempt to discuss and assess the arguments they offered. Thankfully very few responses became side-tracked in an attempted analysis of the provenance of the extracts.

Candidates' knowledge and understanding of issues was varied, with knowledge of monopolies and relations with parliament, efforts to alleviate the consequences of bad harvests and dearth, the impact of war. A discriminating factor in success was to some extent was the deployment and development of knowledge offered, i.e. the difference between referencing an issue with contextual knowledge linked to the extract, and, at the higher levels, exploring this in relation to the precise focus of the question, and assessing the validity of argument. With regards to judgement, it was pleasing to see a substantial number of candidates offer reasoned and considered assessments of the merits of both arguments, regardless of their ultimate decision. Overall, Question 5 produced a strong response from a good number of candidates.

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 reasoning in relation to the concepts and topic they are writing about in order to justify their judgements
- Focus carefully on the second-order concept targeted in the question
- Give consideration to timing, to enable themselves to complete all three questions 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 where when responses:

- Answers which 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
- Where a response does not give sufficient consideration to the given issue/proposition in the question (e.g. looking at other causes, consequences, etc, with only limited reference to that given in the question)
- Answers 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
- Arguing one extract is superior to the other on the basis that it offers more factual evidence to back up the claims made, without genuinely analysing the arguments offered
- 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