



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel
In GCE History (8HI0/1C)
Advanced Subsidiary

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1C: Britain, 1625-1701: conflict,
revolution and settlement

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

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 lacked focus or included material from outside the parameters of the question, 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 more 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 of the two questions in Section A, and produced a range of responses, the majority of which were able to reach the higher levels. Stronger responses focused carefully on the chronological demands of the question, discussing a range of events and issues to provide balance across the period 1640-49. Such responses also considered the analytical demands of the question, focusing carefully on factors hampering compromise in the given period, with at least some balance across the actions of Charles and other factors (most typically Parliament and the New Model Army, and to a lesser extent the Scots), whilst also carefully exploring how these factors contributed to the failure to reach compromise. Candidates were not expected to mention every event in the period, and responses at the higher levels were effective in their selection of material, e.g. selecting examples such as the King's involvement in the Army Plots, the attempted Five Members' Coup, his attitude to negotiations from 1646 and responsibility for the Second Civil War.

A number of responses made use of material from before 1640; at times this was effective, e.g. using it to argue that Charles I's actions in this period created a lack of trust which made compromise more difficult later. However, on some occasions material on the earlier period was not effectively linked or came at the expense of material from 1640-49.

The strongest answers made good use of criteria, considering not just the impact of Charles or Parliament's actions but also how frequent, disruptive or sustained the impact was across the period. Strong answers also linked actions of the protagonists, for instance, showing how the divisions present in Parliament in 1641-42 and 1646-47 may have influenced some of Charles' own action, such as his attempts to 'divide and rule'.

Question 2

Question 2 was the more popular of the questions on Section A, and the majority had the requisite knowledge and analytical development to reach levels three or four. Stronger responses targeted the role played by the strength of anti-Catholic sentiment in causing instability in the reigns of Charles II and James II and included an analysis of the links between key factors and a clear focus on causation. Sufficient knowledge to develop the given factor strength of anti-Catholic attitudes was displayed in most cases, with the most cited examples being the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis, various ways in which James was deemed to be threatening to impose Catholicism, and to a lesser extent, relations with Louis, e.g. the secret terms of the Treaty of Dover. The majority were able to analyse how these contributed to instability. More successful responses tended to recognise the relationship between anti-Catholicism and other factors, e.g. the extent to which James' actions demonstrated the relationship between Catholicism and absolutism in the minds of the political nation. Stronger responses also considered criteria, e.g. the extent to which the Exclusion Crisis was significant in degree and being a sustained issue over three parliaments but was ultimately overcome. Some responses did confuse material from earlier in the period, e.g. discussion of Charles I and Arminianism. Commonly considered alternative factors were parliamentary opposition over finance and taxation, domestic discontent due to the Anglo-Dutch wars and fears of absolutism. Some candidates did seem keen and able to offer precise detail concerning issues such as the Restoration Settlement but were less secure in relating this to the analytical demands of the question.

Higher scoring answers were usually clearly organised and effectively communicated, with judgements made about the relative importance of anti-Catholic attitudes were reasoned and based

on clear criteria. Weaker responses tended to be generalised and tended to offer a fairly simple, limited analysis of the role played by anti-Catholic attitudes in causing instability. Low scoring answers also lacked consistent focus, or were fairly brief, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

Question 3

Question 3 was the less popular of the two options in Section B, but produced a good number of strong responses. Most candidates clearly understood that Bacon made no actual scientific discovery or breakthrough himself and that his claim to significance was entirely philosophical, articulating a scientific methodology that began to underpin scientific discovery, and which challenged existing sources of authority such as the Church. Many added that Bacon's importance was only truly understood after his death, but thereafter take-up of his empirical approach grew so that the accumulation of data and observation became the basis by which many notable scientists and mathematicians (Newton, Harvey etc) made their discoveries and published their findings. Candidates were also aware of Bacon's influence within the Royal Society, being seen as its guiding spirit. There was also consideration of how his influence also extended into the thinking of Locke and Hobbes who applied his methodology to areas of religious toleration and social organisation.

By way of counter argument most then explored the role of the Royal Society in helping to create an organisational framework for scientific enquiry. Many commented that its membership was open to all and, hence, there was an opportunity for non-conformists, whose minds were naturally, 'open to new ideas' to participate in public debate. In particular, candidates laid stress on the importance of the Society in acting as a forum in which new ideas and observations then acted as a spur for further discovery. Candidates also explored the powerful influence of individual scientists, particularly Newton – there was much precise knowledge of his powerful contributions to scientific and mathematical advancement. Conclusions then tended to focus on the relative importance of the methodology established by Bacon, weighed against the huge and lasting significance of exceptional scientists, such as Newton, and the role of the Royal Society in acting as a forum for scientific enquiry and advancement.

Question 4

This was the more popular choice of question in Section B, and produced a range of answers, the bulk of which were within levels three and four. The two main discriminating factors in the success of responses was the quality of knowledge, and the degree to which responses were focused on the conceptual demands of the question. Those candidates which marshalled the material they had to offer towards an analysis of change and continuity were most successful.

Most responses offered some degree of assessment of the extent of change, and the majority had some awareness of key issues which could be related to the question's demands, typically issues such as the influence of immigration, 'new draperies' and other innovations, the nature of the domestic system, and the significance of textile production as England's largest domestic industry. However, there were a number of misconceptions evident, to varying degrees, e.g. that cloth production and/or exports were limited or non-existent before the 17th century, that cotton came to dominate in the period, that the success of cloth production was almost solely down to Dutch migrants, or that the bulk of colonial, triangular or East Indian Company trade was in cloth. A number of responses attempted to answer a somewhat different question, comparing the cloth trade to other sectors of the Stuart economy.

More successful responses were able to offer sufficient material to explore the extent to which there was change, e.g. recognising the growth of, but essential continuities within, the domestic system, or

demonstrating nuanced understanding of how traditional and 'new draperies' coexisted. A number cited precise details, such as figures for the volume or cloth produced or percentages of exports; stronger responses tended to be more able to examine these in context to demonstrate change/continuity. Where candidates were clearly able to focus the material they had towards consideration of change across the period, they were successful, and a good number critically explored this with consideration of how widespread changes were across sectors or geographically, across the time period, or with quantitative considerations, such as the value to the economy or numbers employed.

Question 5

On Q5, stronger responses developed a clear extract-based analysis of the proposition that the Toleration Act of 1689 did not promote religious tolerance. Such responses explored most of the arguments raised within the extracts, e.g. Extract 1's arguments was a limited measure when what many desired was a comprehensive Church of England, or the emphasis on the 'humiliating conditions' under which dissenters were allowed to worship, and how the result amounted to them being 'second-class citizens', in contrast to Extract 2's emphasis on how this was a solution to a 'longstanding problem', which marked a turning point in rejecting attempts at forced conformity, and how this began to allow dissenters a pathway into 'English public life'.

Contextual knowledge was also used effectively to examine the merits/validity of the views put forward in the extracts, e.g. the Act was a reactionary attempt to maintain order and preserve the Anglican Church rather than extend religious toleration, the laws enforcing uniformity (Test Act and Act of Uniformity) were not repealed, many Catholics enjoyed a degree of de facto toleration, the power of the Church courts was severely weakened by the Act and was firmly linked to issue of religious toleration and the extracts. Stronger responses were also focused on the precise question (the Toleration Act of 1689 did not promote religious tolerance), rather than a more general debate on the impact of the Glorious Revolution and put forward a reasoned judgement on the given issue, referencing the views in the extracts. Weaker responses showed some understanding of the extracts but tended to select quotations, paraphrase or describe, without proper reasoning. Less successful responses often relied heavily on the extracts as sources of information, and where used, contextual knowledge tended to be illustrative, e.g. lacking deployment to discuss the views in the extracts or being of limited relevance to attempts at discussion.

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 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:

- 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