



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

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

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1H: Britain transformed, 1918–97

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PE report 8HI0 1H

Question 1

This was the most popular of the two choices in Section A. Most candidates understood the analytical demands of the question, and overall knowledge was good, and thus most responses were able to access levels three and four.

Most responses considered two or more of a range of factors to account for the changing political landscape. With regards to the given issue, most were able explain some aspects of the impact of the Representation of the People Act and/or Equal Franchise Act. Stronger responses were able to clearly relate this to different political parties, mostly commonly Labour, but with a good many offering argument along the lines of how the Conservatives were better placed to respond to the changing franchise than the Liberals. Responses also detailed the rise of the Labour Party and the decline of the Liberals, with more effective responses tending to be those who actually analysed the reasons for these phenomena, within which there were astute arguments over Labour and trade union organisation, or the impact that war, scandal and division had on the Liberal Party. Stronger responses tended to offer a degree of balance in their coverage of issues and the full period in question, e.g. exploring the dominance of the Conservative Party throughout the period, the impact of the Depression, and to a lesser degree, extremist influences on both the left and right.

Some responses include a range of relevant factors to show understanding, though lacked focus on the changes to the political landscape; relevant contextual knowledge was evidenced, mainly as a narrative to show the fortunes of each political party; key factors were addressed but not necessarily applied to the changing political landscape. More successful responses were able to go beyond descriptions and explanations of particular reasons, in order to explore and assess the impact this actually had on the political landscape. Those who were able to precisely examine and substantiate arguments as to whether changes to the franchise or other factors were more responsible for changing the political landscape were best placed to reach the highest levels, particularly where they explored the relationship between different factors, or weighed their relative importance.

Question 2

This was the less popular option in Section A, and it produced a range of responses. The majority who tackled this question it posed difficulties. Some responses lacked clear focus on the question, or offered a narrow range of relevant material, e.g. they focused solely on the NHS when addressing welfare provision, or focused heavily on its early implementation in the 1940s. A significant number of responses were not thorough in their coverage of relevant factors beyond that given in the question (cost), whilst a number of others offered material on NHS and welfare benefits, but had limited focus on cost as an issue.

More successful responses tended to be able to reach the higher levels by demonstrating an understanding of the analytical demands of the question, and provide a broader range of relevant contextual knowledge. Key factors such as poor industrial relations and Britain's economic decline were referenced, alongside cost issues specific to welfare provision, though specific, detailed supporting knowledge was not always provided. Some candidates did offer detailed evidence, but did not develop this further to explore how cost, or other factors, served to be a challenge to state welfare provision in the years 1964-79. The strongest responses managed to understand the demands of the question; specific examples were highlighted and the cost implications were convincingly developed.

Question 3

This was the less popular of the two options in Section B, and produced a broad range of responses. The majority of candidates were able to access levels three and four, showing an understanding of the demands of the question and providing focused, coherent responses. Where responses were less successful, they tended to lack a clear understanding of the key issue in the question, class structure. Some responses tended to provide a narrative – at times detailed – of the different classes but lacked a clear focus on change within and across these. Some responses also offered only partial coverage of the time period in question, in such cases typically focusing on either the period immediately after the First World War, or the years 1939-1945. Such responses often evidenced that candidates had some knowledge and understanding of class distinctions and differences, but lacked a clear focus on the precise demands of the question.

Stronger responses tended to be more successful in combining understanding and analytical focus, with detailed contextual and relevant knowledge. In such responses, the effects of both wars, the extension of the franchise, the impact of the Great Depression on class structure were addressed and explored, and the variation in their impact on individual classes, and class overall, were considered. The highest attaining responses were focused, evaluated the significance and impact of a range of relevant issues and reached supported judgements. These responses also covered the whole timeframe of the question and had a distinct focus on class structure.

Question 4

This was the more popular question within Section B and produced a broad range of responses. These were usually well-informed, and in the main offered some degree of analysis and were able to reach the higher two levels. However, one issue limiting the performance was that a number of candidates did not sufficiently focus on the demands of the question's timeframe, instead focusing most of their response on the post-war period. For the strongest responses, of which there were a significant number, candidates produced informed, analytical answers which were able to identify a range of key issues and evaluate their significance, across the whole period. Responses attaining the highest levels were able to consider not only the impact of car ownership on travel and leisure but also assess this impact on other forms of leisure and travel, referencing holidays, the growth of technology and television as well as constants such as music and radio broadcasts. Many responses also offered information about specific measures such as the Holidays with Pay Act. Where responses were less successful, they tended to cover the key issues more illustratively, providing detailed accounts of leisure and travel across the period, with less focus on significance, or lacked precise detail, e.g. some were unclear or lacked substance over issues such as when mass motoring or air travel developed. Less successful responses tended to pay less attention to the period 1918-1945. Candidates in general paid more attention to leisure, tending to describe in detail post-war pastimes and entertainment, in particular the development of television.

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 the extracts, e.g. how in Extract 1 Eric Evans emphasises the growth of inequality and the limited success in achieving aims which were stated priorities, such as over inflation, economic growth and reductions in taxation, whereas McSmith in Extract 2 highlights the positives of privatisation, home ownership and increases in consumer wealth.

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, rather than attempt to discuss and assess the arguments they offered. A minority of candidates were somewhat one-sided, although there seemed to be fewer than in previous series whose preconceived viewpoints limited their consideration of the arguments in the extracts. A small number seemed keen to stress that the passage of time since Thatcher was in office was insufficient to evaluate her governments, which added little to their responses.

Candidates' knowledge and understanding of issues was varied, with knowledge of specific measures and issues such as the rejection of the Keynesian consensus, privatisation, industrial relations, the growth of financial services, attempts to reform welfare and the public sector, along with specific figures on GDP, unemployment and inflation. A discriminating factor in success, beyond the depth and precision of such knowledge, was often the deployment and development of the knowledge offered, i.e. the difference between referencing an issue with contextual knowledge linked to the extract, and, at the higher levels, using this to explore the arguments and issues arising from the extracts in order to assess the validity of their arguments. 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.

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 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 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