



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In History (8HI0/1H)

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1H: Britain transformed, 1918–97

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PE report 8HI0 1H

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

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 issues peripheral to the question (e.g. straying beyond the given time frame on Question 1), or descriptions of the extracts and the 1980s in general (for 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 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

This was the more popular of the two choices in Section A. Overall, this question was well answered, well and marks were mostly spread across the higher two levels. Most candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of the conceptual focus of the question, and at least some range of accurate knowledge in relation to issues examined.

Commonly applied arguments to demonstrate how – and how far – comprehensive education contributed to the widening of opportunities included how comprehensivisation provided increased equality, remedied issues with the 11-plus, and the extent to which they fulfilled the claim that they would serve as “grammar schools for all”. The strongest responses were focused and analytical in exploring the impact comprehensive had on widening opportunities, and in comparing to other education reforms, most commonly the Butler Act. In addition, higher education reforms including the Robbins’ Report, university expansion and the Open University were often considered. Gender equality was also explored successfully in some responses.

Some responses attempted to include a range of relevant factors to show understanding, though with less focus on the widening of opportunities. Relevant contextual knowledge was sometimes also evidenced more as a narrative to show the changes to education throughout the period, but not necessarily applied to the extent of widening opportunities.

A minority of responses were less successful as they showed limited understanding of comprehensive education as a concept, e.g. identifying comprehensives as being within the tripartite system, or focusing almost exclusively on the Butler Act, or producing narrative accounts of the tripartite system and other aspects of education.

Question 2

Question 2 was the less popular of the two within Section A, although the majority of candidates were able to responding to the demands of the question sufficiently to reach levels three and four. The key issue which limited some responses tended to be a lack of focus on, or in some cases limited understanding of, the concept of affluence – a word included in the specification. Such responses tended to produce narrative accounts of leisure activities such as car ownership, attending sporting events, increasing holidays and technological advances such as the TV; whilst relevant and accurate contextual knowledge was clearly evident, in these cases there was little analysis of change over the stated period or reference to the importance of affluence.

Stronger attempted to focus on the given factor of affluence, and attempted to consider material in relation to this, and other factors bringing about changes in leisure, typically changes within the leisure and tourism industry, technological developments such as television, and changing social attitudes. Such responses typically offered a broader range of detailed and relevant contextual knowledge. The strongest responses offered clearly focused responses, with specific examples of increasing affluence, typically allied to an exploration of issues which considered the relationship between different factors and their relative importance, using this to assess the reasons for change over the stated period.

Question 3

Question 3 was the less popular of the two within Section B, and produced a wide range of responses. The majority of candidates were able to show at least some understanding of how attitudes to race and immigration changed over the period, and most candidates could evidence specific events, important individuals, and developments. Responses were varied in their focus on the given issue of government policies, and the quality of material and analysis of this was a significant factor in determining the success of responses.

Less successful responses often had some knowledge and understanding of race and immigration, but tended to lack clarity and focus on government policy and its impact. There tended to be more knowledge and understanding of immigration policies than the Race Relations Acts. In addition, some responses were not sufficiently focused on the chronological demands of the question, with either a limited range beyond the immediate post-war era, or significant sections that pre-dated the Second World War.

Stronger responses again reflected good understanding, with detailed contextual and relevant knowledge including Immigration Acts, Race Relations Acts and key events and individuals discussed. Some responses offered a range of relevant knowledge, but were in the main descriptive and lacking analysis of the significance of government policies, or indeed other influences.

Where candidates were more securely focused on addressing the second-order concept of significance, they tended to be more successful. The highest attaining responses were more convincing in their analysis of the key issues; these 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 the impact of government policies, not only on immigration, but race too.

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 main discriminating factors in the success of responses was the range and depth of knowledge, particularly with regards to addressing the question's timeframe, and the degree to which responses were focused on the conceptual demands of the question. Those candidates marshalled the material they had to offer towards an analysis of change and continuity were most successful.

Less successful responses, often did not give sufficient attention to the question's chronological demands, with a significant number neglecting the post-war period. There tended to be a detailed emphasis on the impact of the First World War, and aspects of the inter-war period, showing understanding, but not developing this to allow for a genuine consideration of change and continuity across the broader period.

Stronger responses were more likely to address more of the time period, and a good number considered a broad range of relevant issues across the period. Some responses did tend to cover the key issues but in a more illustrative manner, with a small number providing detailed accounts economic challenges across the period, with less focus on continuity or change.

For the strongest responses, of which there were a significant number, candidates produced informed, analytical responses. Responses attaining the highest levels were able to discuss not only the economic challenges Britain faced throughout the period, but also assess the extent of continuity and change. Key issues such as the effects of war, the global depression, industrial relations and poor economic growth were addressed in detail, with candidates providing specific, accurate and detailed contextual knowledge. These responses were also evaluative in reaching substantiated judgements.

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 essentially argues that the policies of the Thatcher government brought about a transformation via an array of measures which restructured the economy for the better, such as deregulation, privatisation and a shift towards service sectors, whereas Extract 2 emphasises the Thatcher government's failure to achieve what it set out to in terms of taxation, government spending and welfare reform.

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 generally sound and varied. The vast majority were able to identify the conflicting arguments of Ricketts and Lynch, and a good number built their success on establishing the essential differences at the outset of the response, giving a sense of early structure and coherence to their responses. A good number also made use of select phrases in and quotations from the extracts that could be developed by candidates. The vast majority avoided neglecting the extracts at the expense of own knowledge, e.g. producing a response where contextual knowledge leads and where a phrase from the extract is then added on by way of support. Rather, the majority were extract led, identifying and attempting discussion of these views.

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 end, 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.

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 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