

Examiners' Report

June 2025

GCE History 9HI0 33

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see that candidates were able to engage effectively across the ability range in this series of exams with A Level paper 9HI0/33. The structure of the paper has Section A focusing on source analysis and evaluation (AO2), Section B assessing depth of knowledge and understanding through essay responses (AO1), and Section C requiring candidates to demonstrate breadth of understanding across a longer chronological range (AO1).

Across the option, most candidates appeared to manage their time effectively, with the majority completing all three sections. However, a small number of candidates did not complete Section C, which may have impacted their overall performance. A recurring concern noted by examiners was the legibility of handwriting. In some cases, scripts were extremely difficult to decipher, which inevitably limited the credit that could be awarded. Candidates are reminded that examiners can only reward what they can read. Additionally, the use of informal abbreviations such as “gov” for government was noted and should be avoided in formal written responses.

In Section A, the strongest responses demonstrated a clear ability to draw out and develop reasoned inferences from the source for both enquiries. These candidates evaluated the source thoroughly, using both contextual knowledge and an understanding of the source’s nature, origin, and purpose. Candidates who recognised the political and judicial context of the Bamberg witch trials were able to interrogate the source’s reliability and purpose more effectively. However, a number of candidates either failed to address one of the enquiries or offered only a superficial analysis of provenance. Some responses relied heavily on narrative contextual knowledge with only tangential links to the source, while others failed to use contextual knowledge at all. A significant number of candidates treated the source as neutral or factual without sufficient evaluation. The best responses integrated provenance analysis into their discussion of the source content, rather than treating it as a separate exercise. Weaker responses often misunderstood the nature of the source or failed to distinguish between fact, opinion, and claim.

In Section B, candidates generally demonstrated a good understanding of the second-order concepts being assessed, such as causation, consequence, and significance. Stronger responses were analytical and evaluative, engaging directly with the wording of the question and offering balanced arguments. Candidates who considered the significance of Increase Mather’s role in ending the Salem witch trials in relation to other factors such as Governor Phips’ intervention produced more nuanced responses. However, some candidates only addressed one side of the argument or failed to engage with the conceptual focus of the question. There were also instances where candidates ignored the chronological parameters of the question or introduced irrelevant material. The best responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the period and used precise evidence to support their arguments. Weaker responses tended to be descriptive or overly reliant on pre-learned material, while stronger answers were characterised by precise contextual knowledge, thoughtful engagement with provenance, and clear evaluative structure.

Section C continues to be the most challenging for many candidates. This section requires a breadth response that covers a period of at least 100 years. To access the ‘fully met’ demand of the mark scheme, candidates must address at least 75% of the chronological range of the question. To access bullet point 2 at level 4 candidates need to meet most of the demands of the question. It was unlikely that most of the demands of the question would be met if the answer had a restricted range that covered less than 60% of its chronology.

However, many responses were limited in their chronological coverage, often focusing on the beginning and end of the period (“bookending”) without sufficient analysis of developments in between. Other candidates failed to cover the full range of sceptical thought or scientific developments. The best responses in this section demonstrated a clear understanding of change and continuity over time and used a wide range of evidence to support their analysis. Candidates are reminded to read the question carefully and to plan their responses to ensure they address the full scope of the question. The most successful responses were those that engaged directly with the conceptual focus of the question and used a thematic approach to structure their argument. Candidates who relied on a purely chronological narrative often struggled to demonstrate the analytical depth required for the higher levels.

Overall, the performance was encouraging, with many candidates demonstrating a strong grasp of historical knowledge and analytical skills. However, there remains room for improvement in the integration of provenance analysis in Section A, the precision of argument in Section B, and the breadth of coverage in Section C. Centres are encouraged to continue emphasising the importance of careful reading of the question, planning of responses, and the use of precise and relevant evidence. Candidates should be reminded that success depends not only on knowledge but also on the ability to apply that knowledge analytically and evaluatively in response to the specific demands of each question.

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

Question 1

Candidates generally demonstrated a sound understanding of the source and were able to engage with both enquiries, though responses were typically stronger on the spread of accusations than on the evaluation of provenance. Many candidates successfully identified how Junius was implicated by others and, under duress, implicated others himself, with stronger responses linking this to the broader mechanisms of fear and coercion in Bamberg. There was frequent reference to the use of torture, the Devil's mark, and sabbaths, with some candidates drawing on specific contextual details such as the Carolina Law Code or the confiscation of florins. However, evaluation of provenance remained a common weakness. While some candidates recognised the source as a court document with potential bias, fewer explored its purpose or questioned its reliability in depth. A number of responses accepted the source at face value or made only generic comments about its origin, limiting their evaluative depth. The best responses interrogated the timing and purpose of the source, noting that it may have been constructed to justify the judicial process or to serve as a warning to others. These candidates were also more likely to consider the broader political and religious pressures on the Prince-Bishopric of Bamberg, which shaped the nature of the trials.

- 1 Assess the value of the source for revealing how accusations of witchcraft spread in Bamberg and the process of securing a confession there.

Explain your answer, using the source, the information given about its origin and your own knowledge about the historical context.

(20)

The source is extremely valuable in revealing how accusations of witchcraft spread in Bamberg. The source indicates the first time Johannes Junius is accused is when "confronted" by the Bishop's Vice Chancellor, Doctor Haan, who accuses him of attending a "witch-gathering", then by someone else shortly after that he had been caught in a "witch dance". From this we can infer that accusations of witchcraft spread largely from word of mouth, and consisted of hearsay. We can also infer accusations not only spread incredibly quickly, judged by the rapid succession of accusations, but also that they had a snowball-effect; once implicated by an individual, others would join in with their own accusations, leading to accusations spreading extremely quickly and piling to form damning evidence.

against the accused. This inference is supported by the sheer number of executions that occurred during the Bamberg witch trials, with Prince Bishop Johann Gottfried Von Ansbachhausen executing 300 individuals during his service, and his successor, Prince Bishop Von Dornheim, executing 900 people between 1623-1632. This supports the above claim as it is impossible for trials to accumulate so quickly without rapid accusations of witchcraft, which was the primary evidence used against the accused. Furthermore, the source reveals to us that accusations formed from the implications of others during confessions. We can infer this from Junius' own confession, where he admits not only did he attend a sabbath, but so did the Chancellor, a mayor, and ~~the~~ Doctor Haan. This suggests that accusations are connected, creating a web of falsified stories and claims, and furthermore suggests how ~~the~~ accusations were spread at an exponential rate. ^{As such,} This source provides great, valuable insight into the nature of the spread of

witchcraft accusations.

Furthermore, the source, while not entirely reliable in its detailing of events, is extremely valuable for revealing the process by which confessions were secured. Firstly, we can infer that interrogations were ~~executed~~ excruciatingly long. This is indicated by the dates noted in the record, beginning on the 28th June and ending on the 5th of July. This suggests Junior was interrogated for 8 days (counting the first day), ~~6 of~~ ^{of which} during 6 of which he was subjected to ~~the~~ terrible torture, inflicted in the hopes of drawing a confession. We can infer this from the detail of what Junior endured. After 2 days^{of no confession}, Junior was ~~and inflicted with~~ subjected to "thumb-screws" and "leg-screws". He was also tortured psychologically, by means of humiliating him via stripping and examining him. We can also infer that prisoners were strongly ~~encourag~~ encouraged to confess to witchcraft, rather than state the truth. This is evident through the "urgent persuasions" used against

him. However, despite the value of the source its reliability can certainly be questioned. For the first two days, Junius is intensely questioned "without torture", though the definition of torture seems to be limited to physical violence. By the nature of the trials being secret and no lawyer being present (in violation of the Carolina Law Code of 1632), it's highly possible Junius was subject to more than documented. This is supported by the evidence of Junius' letter to his daughter, Maria, which was written shortly after his confession and before his execution. In this letter, Junius describes the torment he endured, and details how he was explicitly told to confess, even if it wasn't true. This supports our inferences that torture was used to break down the willpower of the accused, and how victims were made to those involved urged them relentlessly.

To conclude, the source is useful for answering both inquiries successfully. It provides lots of valuable information regarding

how allegations were piled against Junius, which is largely reflective of how accusations of witchcraft spread through Bamberg as a whole. The oral component to the accusations as well as the knowledge many accusations, especially amongst more educated members of the ~~legal~~ educated elite, arose out of confessions are both key to explaining both how accusations of witchcraft were able to spread so fast, ~~and~~ as well as how even individuals of high status, like Johannes Junius who had been Mayor of Bamberg, are able to be ~~over~~ accused. Furthermore, the source is enlightening in how it reveals the exact forms of torture used (though details are likely omitted), as well as the date range of interrogations. However, due to its nature as an objective record of the trial, its clinical tone fails to convey the impact of the torture on Junius, thus giving us less insight on how accused one broken down into confessing. This, combined with ~~its~~ the evidence of its unreliability and likely doctoring, evident through its detailing of highly unlikely

events (such as "no blood" exiting Junius' body) means it's important to still view this as an account by the witchfinders themselves, who have incentive to present the trial in a ~~an~~ certain manner (evidence of Junius' guilt). As such, it's likely Junius, and by proxy, all victims of the witch hunt, were subjected to more than what was described.

~~Therefore, it~~ However, it doesn't largely detract from the value of the source, which is still strong evidence of the painful process by which confessions were extracted in Bamberg.



Top-level responses go beyond paraphrasing or quoting the source. They make developed inferences, assess the provenance and purpose with nuance, and evaluate the weight the source can bear. Candidates consider the author's position, audience, and context, and use this to judge the source's utility for both enquiries as shown in this Level 5 response.



Use contextual knowledge to support inferences and evaluation. Consider the provenance and purpose of the source within the analysis, not as a separate paragraph.

Question 2

In Section B this was the most popular question. Candidates were more confident discussing the broader political and religious context of the Scottish witch hunts than the specific role of the Earl of Bothwell. While many referenced James VI, torture and weak legal structures, confusion over Bothwell's identity and role was widespread, with some candidates misattributing actions or misdating events. The best responses weighed Bothwell's significance against other factors and linked his role to James VI's broader involvement. Stronger answers also explored the General Commission and the use of torture to support evaluative judgements. However, weaker responses often relied on vague contextual knowledge or introduced unrelated case studies, such as Pendle or Berwick, which detracted from the focus of the question. Some candidates also misunderstood the chronology, failing to distinguish between the 1590–91 and 1597 hunts, which weakened their analysis. The most successful responses placed Bothwell within the factional politics of the Scottish court and considered how his downfall may have been exploited to legitimise the trials and consolidate royal authority.

also. He was also later implicated by those accused by Sampson, such as Barbara Napier who was friends with Bothwell and Richard Graham who a royal counsellor charged with offering Bothwell a consensual spirit in a ring. His ~~accusations of being a~~ involvement in the trials certainly contributed to the spread of the witchhunts.

Crucially though, it was his political role that ^{to} elevated his significance to most. Bothwell was James' cousin meaning he was a valid candidate for the throne and therefore a political threat to the King. It has been theorised that ~~the~~ ~~1583~~ ~~1583~~ accusations surrounding him being a witch from his trial at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh in 1583, to his exile later in 1589 was designed to some extent ~~manipulation~~ manipulation of using the excuse of witchery to politically assist himself and eliminate his enemies rather than actually fearing Bothwell's power as a magician. To some extent, ~~both~~ Bothwell was certainly significant to the spread of the Scottish witchhunts as his influential position and connections ~~drew him in to it~~ caught him under the net of ~~some~~ accusations, and ~~the~~ ^{the} political threat he possessed made him an obvious target. However, a counter-argument debates that if

the country and government had been in a more settled position with ~~firmly~~ firmly cemented governmental control ^{with} ~~and~~ a secure stabilised King on the ~~thone~~ throne, then it's highly unlikely that Bothwell would've been accused and a witch in the first place because his political position would've been less of a threat to the social order of the 'Great Chain of Being' and therefore the lack of central control ~~is~~ is the underpinning factor of significance.

The lack of central control ^{in Scotland was} ~~is~~ arguably more significant than the Earl of Bothwell in the spread of the Scottish witch hunts. Scotland was more ^{poorer} fragmented and religiously divided than ⁱⁿ England. In comparison to the strength and respectability that the English legal system had accumulated over the past few decades, the Scottish legal system and central control in government was much less established nor implemented throughout society. It was incredibly difficult to centralize control of the Northern and geographically remote areas of Scotland ^{away} ~~away~~ from the central hub of Edinburgh and therefore James naturally felt the restless need to secure power and control. The Judicious and members of this

weakened legal system were given little to no instructions on how to properly hunt witches in the 1590-91 craze (before the guidance of demonology wasn't published until 1597). People used the decentralised state of Scotland to persecute 'witches' at will - leading to the vast spread of the witchhunts. ~~It~~ An example of the lack of control can be seen in October 1591 when five magistrates were given permission to hunt witches with no specific targets in mind. This reckless unhinged freedom was exploited and fervently used in the Scottish witchhunts, leading to their severity. ~~*It is~~ The lack of central control indubitably affected King James VI of Scotland who was relatively young (24 years old in 1590) and new on the throne and therefore eager to enforce his control and power and prove he could defend his nation against the threat of witches.

* It was also a lot easier to persecute witches, unlike England where a unanimous vote was needed to get a witch convicted and executed - in Scotland only a simple majority was needed ~~and the~~ - increasing the significance the lack of central control had on the vast spread of the witchhunts.

~~that~~ If ~~the~~ Scotland had a well-respected and organised legal system and governmental control, then ~~the~~ the Earl of Moray would've been less of a threat to overthrowing the King and James ~~would~~ would've felt less of a need to personally ~~adho~~-cate and get involved in the ~~per~~ hunting of witches. It would also have less of a widespread effect on the legitimacy of the ~~monarch~~ and getting convictions to be passed through court would've been much more challenging. Therefore, it can be confidently argued that the lack of central control was ~~the~~ the most significant factor in the spread of the Scottish witch hunts.

However, the personal involvement and role of the King James VI certainly contributed to the intensity of the witch hunts.

James was very paranoid and believed the existence of witches was a very real threat to his position on the ~~the~~ throne. This was due to his belief on the 'Divine Rights of Kingship' that followed the ideology of the ~~the~~ ^{King} being directly appointed by God, and since God's chief enemy was the Devil this also meant that he was the King's enemy as well. James ~~used the~~ When Agnes Sampson prophesied that ~~the~~

also largely contributed to James' involvement. He had grown up grappling against Scottish clan rivalry and religious tensions. His father Lord Darnley had been murdered and his mother Mary, Queen of Scots had been executed for her religious beliefs in 1587. It was his unsettled claim to the throne and his insecurity about his position alongside his political ambitions of being considered as a serious candidate for Elizabeth's succession that made him restless to prove himself as a worthy defender of the nation and prove the criticisms of the Scottish public (and in particular ~~the~~ ~~the~~ Bothwell and The Kirk) wrong about his competence, without the lack of central control James wouldn't have felt a necessity to contribute as much to the hunt.

Overall, although the roles of the Earl of Bothwell and James VI were important in adding to the intensity of the spread of the witchhunts, it was the ~~wide~~ broad-scaled backdrop of the lack of central control that had ~~an~~ ~~of~~ the most significance on the spread of the Scottish witchhunts due to an environment of religious chaos that witchhunts could thrive in.



Level 5 essays such as this one do not just list factors—they compare them. Candidates weigh the relative importance of different causes, consequences, or turning points, and explain why one is more significant than another. This comparative approach is sustained throughout the essay, not just in the conclusion.



Plan essays to ensure a structured and analytical approach. Be chronologically precise—know key dates and events.

Question 3

Although this was the least popular question in Section B, it was generally well answered by those who attempted it. Stronger responses successfully analysed the contrasting roles of Increase Mather and Governor Phips, particularly in relation to changing attitudes toward the Salem witch trials as accusations escalated. These responses often addressed the expansion of accusations, the eventual general pardon, and shifts in legal procedures—especially the use and later rejection of spectral evidence—as key turning points. However, many responses focused too heavily on the broader causes of the Salem trials rather than fully engaging with the conceptual focus of the question. Notably, the coverage of Increase Mather was generally weaker and detracted from the overall quality of some responses. The best answers recognised the importance of Mather’s publication *Cases of Conscience*, which challenged the legitimacy of spectral evidence and helped shift elite opinion. They also considered the interplay between religious authority and civil governance, showing how Phips’ intervention was shaped by both political necessity and clerical influence.

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 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒

Following the Salem witch craze, occurred in an a deeply Puritan village tainted by the threat of the second Indian War, the fear of disruption of their Godly society had grown out of control in the eyes of Increase Mather, the a Puritan minister who was arguably the main reason for the decline of the hunt by 1693. Though a plethora of factors, including the role of Governor Phips, and the shifting standards of evidence, it can be convincingly argued that Increase Mather's religious and intellectual authority underpinned the foundations of an ending craze through his influence on the other factors. His shift in thinking, and sparking of fundamental change from previously authoritative ideology urge a considerable argument with the judgement that he was the main factor.

~~As the most pivotal~~ As arguably the most pivotal and influential figure in Salem, Mather possessed the authority to shift the trajectory of discourse in Salem, from an atmosphere of uncontrolled panic, to a more 'rational' approach to the prosecution of witches. One way Mather achieved this was the publication of his book/sermon 'Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits', which publicised his belief that that the Devilish possessions could not occur within a living person. Unravelling his intellectual authority as Puritan minister, Mather's

decision to publicise his beliefs and make them accessible, arguably ~~underpins~~ laid the foundation for an ~~not~~ ideologically transforming society. Reinforced by the rational tone within his work, ^{his} ~~the~~ suggestions, that using religious in explanations, are granted credence by an overwhelmingly Puritan society, susceptible to letting their faith. Furthermore, the publication of Marner's stance against spectral evidence, in which he denounced as a valid standard of evidence, was pivotal to sparking a shift in thinking. As arguably the catalyst of accusations, Abigail Williams and Betty Parris' supposed 'affliction' with a Venus Glass, which famed the shape of a coffin, set off the paranoia surrounding the 'conjuring of spirits'. By discrediting this aspect, Marner's work to invalidate the entire essence of causation using his intellectual authority, effectively ~~are~~ supposed a transformation in the standards of proof. Finally, and arguably most significantly, Marner's challenging of his ~~own~~ ~~son's~~ own son (Cotton Marner's) authority, provided an alternative to shift in thinking. Though the ^{sermon/publication} ~~publication~~ of 'Walden of the Inevitable Wald', Cotton Marner promoted a widespread discourse of heresy within Salem, underpinning an atmosphere of religious instability. As one of the only members of Salem society to do so, ~~therefore~~ Marner's utilisation of his intellectual authority to ~~under~~ ~~into~~ the credence of the ~~underpin~~ underlying atmosphere of insidious fear created a new foundation, a new equilibrium for alternative thinking to thrive. In summary, it is evident that ~~because~~ Marner's role as an intellectual and religious ~~to~~ authority within Salem, gave him the power to remove factors of control and replace them

with a shift in thinking, the main reason for the ending of the Salem hunt.

Though not as influential as Increase Sather, the role of Governor Phips is vital to assess, as his challenge to hunt-fuelled authority, as well as transfiguration of prior thinking is notable. A key aspect of Phips' role, following his return to Salem in May of 1692, at the height of the craze, was his decision to close the court of Oyer and Terminer. By closing the court which validated the hysteria caused by the crazing, meeting 5 times between June and September of 1692, Phips removes the ever heightened sense of urgent danger. Though Phips did initially create the court as an attempt to regulate trials, his appointment of Chief Stoughton as head judge, a figure steadily callous in his attitude towards condemnation, his disillusionment with the implication of 'reputable and innocent' members of society certainly discredited as the court did. Whilst this exemplifies a pivotal transfiguration of thinking, Phips' creation of the court initially was a catalyst of ~~not~~ the craze, limiting his influence. Furthermore, his formation of the Superior Court of Judicature in 1693, a formalised court in which valued to slow down the rate of trials, portrays a transfiguration of prior thinking, challenging Stoughton's previous authority to verdict guilt inaccurately. As a tertiary aspect of Phips' influence, his decision to free five of the accused in May of 1693, portrays a fundamental change from the prior role of accusation. However, ~~it is not~~ the influence of Increase Sather on Phips' reformed

radicalism is notable. Echoing the notions of authority he was under, it is no coincidence that his alignment with Increase Mather's dissatisfaction was part of a political agenda, therefore making Increase a more vital figure in transforming thinking in Salem.

Finally, the decline of the Salem witch can be further attributed to a shift in attitudes towards the standard of evidence in Salem, which had been previously lenient. As a significant removal of an extenuating factor, the banning of spectral evidence within the Superior Court of Judicature in October of 1692, transformed the way trials had been carried out. By promoting the standards of tangible and indisputable evidence, the implication of accused witches, such as Ann Putnam's supposed pit caused by Rebecca Nurse on March 11th 1692, was no longer permissible in court. This is fundamental change from previous judicial ruling certainly contributing to a decline in accusations to a great extent. As well as this, the 1695 act in Salem, in which repealed high speed condemnations, meant that a copulation of authority, demonstrated by Stoughton, was no longer tolerated in Salem. Intertwined with the context of Indian War, where paranoia was driven to a height, the regulation of personal prejudices within court aided a descent in cases, though arguably at a result of Increase Mather's role in shifting the trajectory within Salem, and preventing paranoia from being irreversible. Finally, the General Pardon, issued in

1693, he saw the string of 8 of the accused under Stoughton, including the Parris family slave, Tituba, a West Indian indentured servant accused of creating a 'witchcake' which caused unexplainable fits. Though Mather's influence on Governor Phips, the freeing of the accused underpins a dichotomous transformation from mass hysteria to a more rational society. In summary, the shift in standards of evidence certainly played a considerable role in the decline of the hunt, by shifting attitudes towards mass accusations from vital to the maintenance of faith, to unnecessary, however it is vital to note that the Puritan authority of Mather, who had the power to set the discourse, certainly influenced legal shifts.

In conclusion, it is evident that Increase Mather was the main reason for the ending of the Salem witch hunt by 1693, based on the criteria of creating a new foundation using his religious and intellectual authority of rationalism. Though Governor Phips certainly urged a shift in thinking though his U-turn on his previous stance, it is evident that the influence of Minister Mather created an atmosphere where more rational attitudes towards witch-hunting were respected amongst societal authority, underpinning change.



Level 5 responses such as this one consistently maintain a clear analytical line of argument throughout the essay or source analysis. Candidates demonstrate a deep understanding of the question and avoid drifting into narrative or descriptive writing. Their arguments are well-structured, with each paragraph contributing to the overall judgement.



Establish and use criteria for judgement to drive evaluation. Avoid pre-planned arguments that don't fit the question.

Question 4

In Section C this was the most popular question. Candidates often demonstrated secure knowledge but struggled to analyse the distinctiveness of Webster's work, with some treating it as a reiteration of earlier scepticism. Stronger responses compared Webster's evidence-based approach with other publications and judicial scepticism, though breadth was sometimes lacking. A number of candidates attempted to impose pre-learned knowledge from other parts of the course, often slipping into narrative rather than focusing on significance. The best answers effectively compared and linked publications, frauds, and other relevant developments, though some failed to cover the full chronological range required by the question. Some candidates also overlooked the scientific and philosophical context in which Webster was writing, missing opportunities to link his work to broader intellectual shifts. The most analytical responses considered how Webster's arguments reflected a growing emphasis on empirical reasoning and how this contributed to the decline in witchcraft prosecutions, especially when reinforced by judicial caution and public scepticism.

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

Chosen question number: Question 4 ☒ Question 5 ☒

It is correct that John Webster's 'The Display of Supposed Witchcraft' (1677) was significant to changing attitudes in Britain ~~at the~~ by challenging the Demon Drummer of Tedworth case (1662). However, other sceptical works, including Harsnett, Aylmer, and Bekkar, and the advancements in science were more significant. Thus, ~~Webster's~~ ~~work~~ I agree to a limited extent that Webster's work had the most significant impact on changing attitudes to witchcraft in Britain in the years 1580-1710.

Firstly, other sceptical publications were more significant than John Webster's 'The Display of Supposed Witchcraft' (1677). For instance, Barthasar Bekkar's 'The Enchanted World' (1691) ~~was~~ ~~also~~ elicited great publicity, as ~~there~~ there were over 41000 copies and translations into different languages only two months after its publication. His work argued that, as the Devil is forever in hell, he cannot display any power on earth. This

work was significant, as ~~the~~ thousands of people were reading his sceptical account, which due to its widespread publicity resulted in changing attitudes on witchcraft. Furthermore, Samuel Harsnett's ~~own~~ 'The Fraudulent Practices of John Darrell' (1599) achieved ~~the~~ massive attention, as it directly attacked the practices of Darrell, starting a pamphlet war. In contrast, Webster's work did not achieve the same scale of publicity, suggesting that it only had a limited effect on changing attitudes to witchcraft, compared to other works. Additionally, Aylmer's 'A Candle in the Dark' (1656) ~~also~~ was more significant as it used the Bible as its only source to evidence the critical claims on witchcraft, increasing its reliability. Thus, these sceptical publications were far more significant due to their widespread publicity, and their poignant criticisms of witchcraft, resulting in changing attitudes in ~~Britain~~ Britain towards witchcraft.

However, it could be argued that in actuality, ~~with~~ Webster's 'The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft' was the most significant, as it directly critiqued a popular and well-known

sceptical case, Webster critiqued ~~the~~ The Demon Drummer of Tedworth Case in 1662, that happened only ~~the~~ 15 years ~~before~~ earlier.

This work was significant, as it pointed out the lack of empirical evidence of the Royal Society represented by Glauvill. ~~the~~

This directly referred to the lack of evidence in witchcraft investigations, even by the Royal Society, which is scientifically immersed and well-educated. Therefore, Webster's critique was significant, ~~as it pointed out the~~

however, it was not the most significant.

This is due to the fact that witches were still executed after his publication. For instance, Jane Wenham was executed in 1712, showing that Webster's work was not ~~as~~ significant enough to entirely change beliefs in witchcraft.

Furthermore, witchcraft beliefs continued long after 1677, evidenced by the fact that only in 1736, the Witchcraft Act of 1604 was repealed, officially ending witch prosecutions. This

shows that Webster's work was not the most significant in changing attitudes towards witchcraft in Britain as witch hunts and popular beliefs continued long after that.

Finally, it is important to mention that not only other sceptical publications but also scientific advancements were a more significant contribution to changing attitudes to witchcraft in Britain. For instance, Francis Bacon promoted the empirical scientific method, which had a massive impact of human understanding and knowledge. This is because this method promoted the idea of learning ~~and~~ through experience and through understanding. ~~His/their~~ Consequently, Bacon's scientific advancements resulted in the situation in which spectral evidence was increasingly rejected during witch trials, and other substantial evidence was required by both JPs and judges. ~~Thus~~ Furthermore, other advancements such as Galileo Galilei's findings about the sun being the centre of the universe made a significant contribution to changing attitudes to witchcraft. Although, Webster's publication was of ~~great~~ ^{some} significance, such scientific developments were crucial and more significant in changing attitudes to witchcraft. It is correct that, such education and knowledge was firstly only available to the elite, the Royal Society; education spread quickly and changed attitudes to

witchcraft for everyone; both poor and rich, and both religious and non-religious, as ~~religion~~ scientists were often deeply religious, combining science with religion. Thus, ~~even~~ scientific advancements as such, compared to John Webster's publication, was of greater significance to changing attitudes to witchcraft in Britain.

To conclude, it is correct that John Webster's work added onto the changing attitudes towards witchcraft. However, other important factors, including a number of sceptical publications, and scientific advancements were more significant. It was the combination of such factors that resulted in the end of the witch craze in Britain. Thus, I agree to a limited extent that Webster's 'The Displaying of supposed witchcraft' (1677) had the most significant impact on changing attitudes to witchcraft in Britain in 1580-1710.



To reach Level 5 in breadth questions, candidates must cover at least 75% of the time period specified. Strong responses avoid 'bookending' the period and instead provide a well-distributed analysis across the full range. They also avoid clustering evidence in one era and demonstrate understanding of long-term developments. Candidates should avoid pre-learned answers and instead tailor their response to the specific demands of the question.



- A nuanced conclusion that reflects the comparative analysis across the period is a hallmark of a top-level response.
- Be chronologically precise—know key dates and events.

Question 5

Fewer candidates attempted this question compared to Question 4, and the responses were mixed in quality. Some candidates failed to analyse the limitations of Bacon, focusing only on his impact before moving on to other factors. The stronger responses considered both his significance and limitations, offering a more balanced and analytical approach. Many candidates compared Bacon with Galileo, though some missed the key point that Bacon's experimental method was relatively new for his time. While the Royal Society was occasionally mentioned, candidates often overlooked its adoption and use of Bacon's empirical method. In some cases, knowledge of Bacon and the empirical scientific method was detailed and well-supported with evidence spanning the period. However, in others, Bacon was treated briefly before moving on to a range of other developments, often without a clear analytical framework. The best responses explored how Bacon's ideas laid the groundwork for a rationalist worldview that gradually displaced supernatural explanations, even if the impact was uneven and slow to take hold in popular belief.

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

Chosen question number: Question 4 ☒ Question 5 ☒

It is accurate to say that Francis Bacon had a limited impact on the changing approach to human understanding and knowledge because the implementation of the empirical scientific method still allowed for the belief in witchcraft and supernatural. However, his work laid the foundation of understanding and reasoning used by the Royal Society in 1660 which in turn had huge impacts on changing human understanding. Although, scientists such as the role of Kepler and Newton present more convincing arguments in assessing if they changed the understanding of knowledge.

Francis Bacon's work on the empirical scientific method ~~led to~~ set a precedent on how inductive reasoning should ~~given~~ govern human understanding. He stressed the importance of backing up theory with evidence ~~as~~ such as observation. This led to ~~the~~ a new found ~~&~~ approach to discoveries in man leading to the Royal Society ~~as~~ ~~&~~ using his method as a way of proving theory. However, there ~~was~~ ~~was~~ ~~was~~ was lack in clarity of his work which led to ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ it is not proving witchcraft to be possible ~~as~~ on the ~~for~~ basis of spectral evidence. This is significant as it displays that despite his progress there were

still limitations to his method which supported a decline in understanding. This makes him a less significant selector in changing human understanding and knowledge.

A more significant selector would be the role of Kepler and his impact ~~it~~ on planetary motion and space. Kepler created three laws of planetary motion which underpin human understanding of science. Furthermore, his role in publishing the work of Brahe led to the first steps in challenging the influence of the church as Brahe's observation of a super Nova gave weight to the view that the universe isn't ~~per~~ perfect and everlasting. However, Kepler's influence is limited as his work was only in effort to become closer to God which meant that the influence of religion in science remained strong in the 1500s.

Despite this the work of Galileo directly challenged the church by presenting a further observation that disproved the universe was 'finite' as he discovered more stars and the moons of Jupiter. Unlike ~~Unlike~~ Copernicus, Galileo published his centrical book which led to his arrest and subsequent banning of the publication. This is significant as it displays Galileo to be a more significant selector than Kepler and Brahe as he openly challenged current human understanding despite belief at the time. ~~However~~ However, Galileo can also be argued as a

limiting factor in the growth of human understanding because he published his work in Latin limiting accessibility. Furthermore, the fact that library rates were around 30% in 1600s meant his work lacked the impact of being the most significant scholar.

This brings me to say that the role of Newton was immensely significant in the development of human understanding as he combined philosophical theories with mathematics when publishing his laws of motion. Not only did he prove gravity was a force but he proved Kepler's laws of motion to be true - building on all of the work of others he plays a crucial role of joining scientific reasoning. This makes him a more significant scholar than Bacon as his discoveries left no room for misunderstanding and gave people an opportunity to explain their ignorance on science rather than with church. However, it could be argued that Newton lacked influence as he still believed in supernatural. However, his publications laid the foundation for further discoveries that could dispense his belief. The effect of his impact can be seen in the formation of the Royal Society in 1660 whereby it allowed an environment for scientific revolution to blossom. Supported by Charles II it gave elites in society the opportunity to work together and develop understanding. This is a significant factor as it led to open speculation of

witchcraft with the disapproval of Joseph Glanville attempts to suggest witchcraft should be studied as a science. This is significant because it was a public display of change in science with the attraction of John Webster's Displays of Supposed Witchcraft in 1677.

However, it could be argued that Newton and the Royal Society had little impact on human understanding because there were still witch hunts happening across the world for example the Salem witch hunts in 1692. Furthermore, it took until 1736 for witchcraft to be repealed which suggests they had limited impact on human understanding if not the same impact as Bacon and Galileo as they both allowed for speculation to continue. However, it is vital to highlight that the role of Newton had a significant impact on the legal system which this claim can be supported by the role of John Holt who openly refused to hear witchcraft cases in the late 1600s-early 1700s as he worked ~~later~~ as a head judge. He set ~~last~~ imprisoned witches free and opposed the use of spectral evidence in court. His principles were based on the developments in science and understanding which this is significant as it highlights the impact Newton made on science and understanding which later by he was able to make impact in how witchcraft cases

and prosecutions took place. Furthermore the open explosion of John Gaule who pleaded for common sense and reasoning in the East Angles which hurts displays the new reasoning in Peter Newton had an society and change. This is significant as it makes him the most significant speaker in changing approach to human the understanding and knowledge as Newton changed the perspective not the legal system took in cases and sparked a scientific revolution as this work is more significant than the work of Galileo as the Royal Society ensured that publications would be in English and therefore accessible. Furthermore, this challenges the wave of Kepler's influence as Newton proved the wave of Kepler through mathematics which allowed for changes in scientific approach in using mathematics to underpin their theories. But most significantly Newton's played a more significant role than the wave of Bacon's empirical method as it ruled out the possibility of existence of supernatural and gave people a different method of understanding knowledge - not only through observation but also through mathematical proof.

In conclusion it is clear to see that Bacon's empirical method had a huge impact on changing approach to human understanding and knowledge as it stimulated continued speculation, ~~and this is the~~ whereas the role of

Newton played a more vital role in changing understanding which is evident in the Kepler it ~~case~~ caused to the revolution and legal system which eventually stopped the prosecution of witches and realised the importance of scientific approach and mathematical reasoning.



Conclusions in Level 5 responses are not just summaries—they are evaluative. As in this essay, level 5 candidates establish clear criteria for evaluating significance, causation, or change. These criteria are not just stated in the introduction but are applied consistently throughout the essay, allowing for a comparative and evaluative approach. Candidates then revisit their criteria, weigh up the evidence, and offer a nuanced judgement that reflects the complexity of the issue. These conclusions are clearly linked to the analysis that precedes them.



Strong responses cover at least 75% of the chronological range specified in the question. Candidates demonstrate a clear understanding of long-term developments and avoid clustering evidence in one time period.

Paper Summary

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

Section A

- Read the question carefully to ensure both enquiries are addressed.
- Go beyond comprehension and summary by developing reasoned inferences that are fully discussed.
- Read the caption and make full use of it when evaluating the source.
- Use relevant contextual knowledge to support inferences and evaluation. It is not the quantity of contextual knowledge that is key, but the use to which it is put.
- Integrate analysis of provenance into the discussion of the source content, rather than treating it as a separate paragraph.
- Avoid generic comments about reliability and instead consider the specific nature, origin, and purpose of the source in context.
- Distinguish clearly between fact, opinion, and claim when evaluating the source.

Sections B and C

- Plan essays to develop an analytical approach.
- Read the question carefully to ensure the response addresses both the focus and the chronological parameters.
- Avoid a narrative or descriptive approach—this often undermines the analysis required for the higher levels.
- Ensure that Section C responses range across at least 75% of the chronology to access the higher levels.
- Engage directly with the wording of the question and ensure that arguments are evaluative and balanced.
- Use precise and relevant evidence to support arguments and avoid introducing irrelevant material.
- Consider using a thematic structure in Section C to demonstrate change and continuity more effectively.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

