

Paper Reference(s)

9846/01

Edexcel

History

Advanced Extension Award

Thursday 18 June 2009 – Afternoon

Time: 3 hours

Materials required for examination

Answer Book (AB16)

Items included with question papers

Nil

Instructions to Candidates

In the boxes on the answer book, write your centre number, candidate number, your surname and initials, the paper reference and your signature. The paper reference is shown above. The box entitled Examining Body should be left blank.

Answer ALL parts of the question in Section A and ONE question in Section B.

Write your answers in the answer book provided.

Additional answer sheets may be used.

Information for Candidates

The total mark for this paper is **60**: **40** marks for Section A and **20** marks for Section B.

You will **not** be credited for using the same information in more than one answer.

Advice to Candidates

You are advised to spend two hours on Section A (Question 1) and one hour on Section B.

You are reminded of the importance of clear English and orderly presentation in your answers.

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SECTION A

Question 1

Study Sources 1 and 2 and then answer questions (a) to (c) which follow.

Write your answers in the answer book provided.

SOURCE 1

Taken from David Thomson, *The Aims of History*, a book published in 1969. David Thomson (1912–70) was a historian based at Cambridge University and was the author of a widely-used textbook, *Europe since Napoleon* (1957).

Line

- 1 The study of history has progressed fast only because historians have found it possible and convenient to establish certain reasonably well-defined categories of history, each evolving its own specialised techniques adapted to suit the main sources which its practitioners have to use. Hence arise the so-called ‘separate disciplines’ of historiography: constitutional and diplomatic
5 history; military and political history; economic and social history; and intellectual history, or the ‘history of ideas’.

- It is a common mistake to believe that these various kinds of ‘differentiated’ history have some sort of objective reality, and can sensibly be studied in isolation from one another. This notion has been encouraged by the artificialities of examination syllabuses and university lecture courses
10 – not to mention published works – until many have come to accept them as somehow inherent in the past itself. They are, of course, merely conventions created and found useful by practising historians faced with the need to specialise. History never happens this way, neatly packaged into separate and self-contained parcels labelled constitutional or economic, social or intellectual. History comes at you in a great turbulent and violent rush – a cascade of events, conflicts and
15 chances, utterly disregarding academic borderlines.

Just as ‘periods’ of history are entirely conventional, and one should expect them to be variable for different countries or continents, so the events of history can rarely be classified tidily into any single category. To differentiate history into separate ‘disciplines’ is to destroy that very urge to find and explain interconnections which is one of the main reasons why history matters.

- 20 There is a sense, then, in which the only proper culmination of historical study is general or ‘undifferentiated’ history: that is, an account of an age, a country or a theme which reintegrates fragmented knowledge, and which demonstrates the interplay and interconnections of all major changes within the confines of the topic under study.

- Does the demand – indeed the necessity – for undifferentiated history involve the existence of
25 a special kind of historical writer, the ‘general practitioner’ of the art, whose speciality is to be general, absorbing the findings of various specialists and weaving them into some unified version of his own making? The writers of school textbooks and of series of general histories already do just this – though the best of them not only concentrate on limited periods and themes, but also have yet narrower specialisms on which they can speak with expert authority. The qualities and
30 attitudes of mind required for good and successful work as a general practitioner are in some respects the same as those natural to the specialist, but they also include a willingness to think more broadly in terms of general trends, and an intellectual excitement in large maps rather than detailed contours.

Line

35 Most academic historians are craftsmen. They approach their work in the spirit of meticulous
and conscientious craftsmanship, exercising their training and historical skills – above all, their
critical faculty and their ability to assess evidence – on historical problems which have been
selected as likely to be susceptible to such treatment. Specialist historical journals are full of very
good examples of scholarly craftsmanship of this sort. It is fundamental to the whole function
of the writing of history, and must in no way be despised. But if history stopped there it would
40 exert relatively meagre educational influence, and have only limited social impact. The labours of
specialists would be appreciated and debated, no doubt with enjoyment, by fellow-scholars and
by professional academics and teachers. But they would mean little to intellectuals as a whole,
and nothing to the general public. Wider range comes only when the major findings of historical
research are incorporated into a more general account, are shown to carry consequences for our
45 more complete understanding of the past, and are made available in understandable form to non-
specialist readers of history.

General history, of the kind encountered by the student and the wider public, consists primarily of
the utilisation of specialised work to modify or reappraise accepted versions of the past. The job
of the general practitioner in the writing of history is to produce coherence and cohesion from the
50 work of others. The general practitioner in history is no mere ‘vulgarizer’ of other people’s work
and wisdom, and certainly no parasite on the true professional. Nor is he a sort of middleman,
a retail distributor of popular varieties of better-class goods. He is – at his best, and if he is
fulfilling his essential functions – a craftsman of synthesis rather than of analysis, a weaver of
other people’s threads (and some of his own) into patterns which they had not foreseen or even
55 suspected. He is no less indispensable for the profession of historians than is the conductor of an
orchestra or the producer of a play to the profession of the theatre.

SOURCE 2

Taken from G. R. Elton, *The Practice of History*, a book published in 1967. G. R. Elton (1921–94) was a Professor of History at Cambridge University from 1967 to 1988.

Line

- 1 Chronicle is the narrative expression of fact-collecting, a setting down of events one after the other, without considered discrimination or any discernible purpose except merely to record. At its purest, the chronicle is really no more than a list, under each year, of supposedly major events.
- 5 The chronicle – the largely mindless narrative – is not dead; its modern descendant is the textbook, provided it is sufficiently ‘textbooky’ and uninspired. What makes a book of history into a historical textbook is, I suppose, in the first instance, the reason for which it was written: it means to offer an aid to teaching rather than deal with a complex of historical questions. There results a book which is carefully stuffed with often undifferentiated facts, neatly plotted out in easily
- 10 assimilated and usually sub-headed sections of very modest length, and offering its credentials in book-lists that are as a rule well out of date. Books of this kind come about because they are written for a particular audience rather than for any reason connected with intellectual enquiry. In addition, they are troubled by a convention of comprehensive coverage which forces them into a steady jog-trot through paddocks marked political, economic, art and literature, and so on. Even
- 15 good textbooks suffer from this diffusion of focus which, in the worst examples, amounts to the absence of any intellectual centre of gravity.

These inferior forms of historical writing [the chronicle and the textbook] are far from rare and can, by the inexperienced, be confused with the higher forms of which they are pale and unintelligent reflections. Real narrative history differs from them by being composed because

20 the historian wishes to say about history something that is to him important (rather than provide a balanced teaching aid) and because he has in his mind a pattern, a scheme of his bit of the past, which is articulated around a central problem.

1. (a) Study Source 1.

The author of Source 1 comments on the skills needed by practitioners of ‘differentiated’ (Source 1, line 7) and of ‘undifferentiated’ (Source 1, line 21) history. To what extent, in his view, do these skills differ?

(6)

(b) Use your own knowledge.

The author of Source 1 implies that the course of events in history is sometimes influenced by unforeseen or unpredictable occurrences (Source 1, lines 14–15). Identify any **one** historical event, episode or development of this kind that you have studied, and in relation to it explain the significance of the role of the unexpected.

(14)

(c) Study Sources 1 and 2, and use your own knowledge.

To what extent do you agree with the suggestion that history textbooks and general histories are inferior forms of historical writing? You should, in your answer, make specific reference to Sources 1 and 2 and to your own historical study and reading.

(20)

(Total 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A: 40 MARKS

SECTION B

Answer ONE question from this section.

You will not be credited in this section for repeating information that you have used in Section A.

2. ‘The study of history is a study of causes.’ To what extent do you agree with this suggestion that the most important task of the historian is to explain why things happened? Develop your answer by specific reference to any historical period or periods you have studied.

(Total 20 marks)

3. ‘Literary works such as novels, plays and poetry are invariably among the most valuable sources of evidence available to the social historian, but they must always be treated with extreme caution.’ To what extent do you agree with these claims? Develop your answer by specific reference to any historical period or periods you have studied.

(Total 20 marks)

4. ‘No generalisations can be made about the reasons for the rise and fall of powerful states: each case is unique.’ To what extent do you agree with this view? Develop your answer by specific reference to at least **two** examples from any historical period or periods you have studied.

(Total 20 marks)

5. ‘Because historical interpretation is a subjective matter, no one interpretation can be considered to be more valid than any other.’ To what extent do you agree with this claim? Develop your answer by specific reference to your own historical study and reading.

(Total 20 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B: 20 MARKS

TOTAL FOR PAPER: 60 MARKS

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