

Examiners' Report January 2013

GCSE History 5HA02 2C

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Introduction

Examiners reported that candidates had few problems with this year's paper and, generally, answers were well-focused, with a good understanding of the topics tested. On Q1a and Q1b, however, there was some suggestion that a minority of the candidates might not have read the questions thoroughly, as discussed in the relevant sections below. However, a paper that included questions on gangsterism, entertainment in the 1920s and the causes of the economic boom in the 1920s (and the end of that boom) provided plenty of scope for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the period.

There are two areas that centres might like to consider from this year's paper:

It is pleasing to see centres working to improve their candidates' exam technique, but there is increasing evidence that, in places, such an approach may be counter-productive. In Q1c and Q1d, and in particular in Q3a and Q3b, candidates are using phrases designed to gain them access to the highest levels of the mark scheme, but which might actually prevent them from explaining their thinking more clearly. For example, on Q1c and Q1d there were numerous examples of candidates asserting 'this links with' without any attempt made to show a link or explain the connection between the two points. In Q3a and Q3b, some candidates attempted to prioritise certain factors by stating that 'The most important reason was... The second most important reason was...' without any justification for these assertions. Perhaps such candidates might be better directed to explaining their answer more deeply. Often assertions of linkage or relative importance restrict an answer to Level 2, when higher reward might have come with deeper explanation.

This year saw the introduction of marks for SPaG on Questions 2 and 3. Centres need to ensure that candidates are aware of the awarding of such marks and how important they can be in determining final grades. On this paper, some seven marks can be awarded and so rigorous attention to detail in terms of spelling, punctuation and grammar (including the clear communication of meaning) is very important. Candidates should also realise that if they fail to produce rewardable material on Q2 or Q3, their SPaG mark will be zero, along with their mark for History.

Question 1 (a)

Generally, candidates had few difficulties with this question, though their responses suggested that there is, perhaps, a need to ensure the question is read carefully. Candidates were asked to tell us what they could learn about the New Deal, but some of them made inferences about Roosevelt. Where those inferences were related to the New Deal, they were rewarded, but some were not.

Most candidates talked of the New Deal's popularity, or noted that it appeared to have been initially successful, but less so after 1936. Where supported, these answers were rewarded at Level 3.

We can learn from Source A that after 1936 America went back into an economic ~~depression~~ depression. 'misjudgements by Roosevelt and a return to economic depression' Roosevelt's New Deal started by having a great impact on America, however off which then gained him even more ~~populart~~ popularity, easing him to a victory in the 1936 election. However after the election Roosevelt made a few mistakes putting America on the same economic position ~~as~~ as they were when he first became president. This shows that the New Deal was only good short-term.



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The answer begins by making an apparent inference that the USA returned to depression after 1936, but this is actually a paraphrase of the source. The most convincing inference is the final statement that the 'New Deal was only good short-term', which has been supported by a paraphrasing of the source in the previous sentence. The answer, therefore, reaches Level 3.



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This is a question requiring one supported inference. The best answers make that inference straightaway and then quote the source to support the inference.

Question 1 (b)

This question also suggested that some candidates had not fully understood what they were being asked. The question called for the features of the opposition to the New Deal, but a minority of candidates chose to answer on the features of the New Deal itself. Consequently, some very detailed and knowledgeable answers received no reward as they were addressing the wrong content.

Those who wrote on Roosevelt's opposition to his policies were generally well-rewarded for providing information on how opposition came from the political parties and radicals, from business and from those who considered the measures unconstitutional.

As mentioned in previous reports, candidates show better technique when they make it clear to the examiners that they are moving from one feature to another.

President Roosevelt was heavily opposed by members of the Republican party. The Republicans believed that Roosevelt's economic reforms and instigation of a higher level of federal control over state affairs would lead to some form of communism and disliked the abolishment of the laissez faire style of governance.

Another group that opposed Roosevelt's 'New Deal' were the big business owners. These businessmen disliked Roosevelt's departure from laissez faire and the increasing removal of autonomy in business which led to higher levels of regulation within business, meaning these businessmen could no longer set their own wages, etc.



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The answer does not talk of 'one feature', 'another feature', etc. but it does go straight to answering the question and shows clearly that two features are being described. There is sufficient support for full marks to be awarded.



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To ensure a direct answer to the question and an efficient use of time, candidates are advised to begin their answer with the words of the question. For example 'one feature of opposition to Roosevelt...' is an ideal way to begin the answer to this question.

Question 1 (c)

Gangsterism and prohibition are particularly popular topics in this syllabus and this was reflected in the confident way in which candidates were able to write about the features of them in the 1920s. Unfortunately, many responses were restricted to Level 2 by providing descriptive answers that did not give due consideration to the effects of gangsterism. Examiners read many accounts setting out the details of Capone's exploits and the St. Valentine's Massacre. Answers that saw the wider impact of gangsterism (usually in terms of how it undermined law and order and reduced respect for the authorities) were able to reach Level 3.

Gangsterism brought ~~to~~ violence and threat to the USA. No one could stop the gangs from what they were doing. They ignored ~~prohibition~~ prohibition and carried on bringing illegal substances into the USA. This made the USA look bad and it made the USA look like they didn't have their own country under control.



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This answer had previously described the impact of gangsterism in terms of its links with prohibition and inter-gang rivalry before making the comment that the gangs 'made the USA look like they didn't have their own country under control'. While this comment needs further explanation, built on top of the detail of gangsterism, it is sufficient to score the lowest mark in Level 3 for seeing the wider picture.



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This question is about 'effects' and candidates should avoid just writing about the topic identified. Marks will be scored by telling the story of gangsterism, but to score highly, candidates must consider what difference gangsterism made.

Question 1 (d)

This question was answered disappointingly, with a number of candidates confused between the causes of the end of the economic boom and the impact of the Wall St. Crash. Such answers talked of how the boom ended because of high levels of employment and homelessness caused by events in the American stock market. However, while there was an impact in 1929, the major effects of the Wall St. Crash were not seen until 1930. A similar chronological weakness was seen in answers that explained that the economic boom was caused by the USA supplying goods for the war and that, once the war came to an end, so did prosperity.

Candidates who explained how, by 1929, over-production was leading to a slowdown in the economy and the beginnings of a decline in confidence were able to score well, particularly if they were able to show how these trends brought an end to the economic boom, rather than just asserting that they did.

The economic boom of 1920s America was well-known and extremely beneficial to the US, unfortunately the boom ended and the Depression began. One reason for the economic downturn was the ~~rise~~ rise in unemployment in the US. Over the 1920s many new industries had arisen and began to employ more people which funded the 'boom cycle' with these employees buying goods and increasing demand. The rise in unemployment means that now less people could afford to buy goods, they could no longer afford them, this saw businesses lose money because no one was buying from them and the goods made were now no longer in-demand which left companies with unwanted surplus. Overall business in general suffered similarly to the farming industry post-WWI.



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This is the first paragraph of a response that explained several reasons. Although the candidate is not entirely clear on how or why unemployment had begun to grow by 1929, there is a clear attempt to explain that the rise in unemployment led to reduced spending and reduced profit. The complete answer was marked at Level 3.



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On causation questions such as this, examiners too often feel that they should write 'which means?' after parts of candidates' answers. This is because too often candidates will write 'The boom came to an end because demand for goods fell (like this...)'. What is needed for Level 3 is an explanation of why that reduced demand brought the economic boom to an end.

Question 2 (a)

This question asked candidates to explain how entertainment changed in the 1920s. The responses showed that the material was well-known and there were many detailed answers explaining how the film industry developed, popular music, particularly jazz, grew, and how mass production allowed radios to be purchased cheaply. More detailed responses also pointed out that the boom in car purchase brought about greater social mobility and explained how that affected entertainment.

Where candidates were able to explain trends or changes, rather than just describing the new forms of entertainment, Level 3 was reached. There was a great fascination with the flapper movement on this question, and some candidates used this aspect of entertainment to explain how life for women changed. It was a little disappointing, however, to see that so few candidates realised that the flappers were very much a minority in American society.



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In a question on 'change', candidates need to explain how the position they are describing is different to what had happened before.

Question 2 (b)

This was very much the less popular of the two options in Q2. Some who chose it saw it as a question about farming, whereas others had a wider understanding of the decline of industries such as shipbuilding, coalmining and the railroads. The answers on farming made valid points about the impact of reduced demand after the First World War, whereas those who took a more general approach explained how the growth of synthetic materials and the development of the motor industry inevitably had an impact on older industries, particularly where they could not introduce new production methods.

During WWI American Ship building industry was at it highest, demand for war ships was very high. However after WWI there was little or no demand for new ships. Also they couldn't take advantage of new systems and technology such as mass production.

Another industry effected by new technology was ~~cotton~~ cotton farms. New Synthetic materials like nylon ~~and were~~ ^{were} much better materials for making clothes. Cotton does not have nearly other markets so after they loss clothing most of the cotton the farms produced was worthless.

Another industry that had its market taken away by new technologies technology was the train transportation industry. Previously trains had been the main ~~way~~ ^{way} and only way to transport goods and people but after Henry Ford mass produced the model T Ford ~~was~~ ^{was} lots of people now had their own cheaper method of ~~transport~~ ^{transportation}. People did not need to use trains as much so the industry declined.



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This answer lacks depth, but it does address three affected industries (shipbuilding, textiles and transportation). An attempt is made to show how developments caused decline and so the answer reaches a low Level 3.

Question 3 (a)

As mentioned in the general comments, both this question and Q3b sometimes saw a mastery of technique over substance. What examiners wanted to see was an explanation of how the identified factors (or any others the candidates wished to use) helped bring about the economic boom. Once this had been achieved, top level marks could be reached by prioritising those factors, or showing how they linked together to bring about the boom.

Candidates seemed to know the material very well and had little difficulty in describing each factor. Such answers took them to Level 2. Where they were able to explain how at least two factors actually brought about the economic boom, answers reached Level 3. As explained in the comments on Q1d, it is vitally important that candidates explain how the factor brought about the outcome, or all they are doing is describing, not explaining. Only once Level 3 has been achieved is reward given for prioritisation, so sometimes candidates attempted to prioritise without having explained the real contribution.

There were, however, some excellent answers that were able to establish the clear links between advertising, hire purchase and mass production. Such answers were rewarded at Level 4.

Overall, I think that the most important reason behind the economic boom was the introduction of hire purchase as it made every luxury affordable to the people. However Mass production also played a big part in making these goods accessible to people and Advertising told people about the new must have items for luxury living. During the 1920s the government didn't really interfere with the business world so that is the least important reason



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What is written in the final paragraph is a summary of the contribution of each of the four factors without explaining why hire purchase was more important than other factors or establishing the link between the factors.

The candidate has previously reached Level 3 by explaining the contribution the factors made and will receive a little extra credit for this attempt at prioritisation, but it remains within Level 3.



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In explaining why one factor is more important than others candidates must compare the importance of each factor, not just assert that 'this was the most important reason because it led to ...'.

Question 3 (b)

This was not a popular option, but those candidates who attempted it seemed to have a good understanding of the content and many made the link between homelessness and unemployment. As in Q3a the links were sometimes asserted, rather than explained and so most answers were rewarded at Levels 2 and 3.

I think the most important ~~reason~~ ^{problem} was the loss in confidence in banks because people who still had money didn't put it back into banks or spent it, so the US economy became stuck in the spiral of the depression. This meant that more and more banks ~~or~~ businesses shut down and more and more people ~~became~~ ^{became} unemployed. Without confidence money would never be put back into the economy.

This links to unemployment ^{because} as people lost their jobs working in businesses because no-one put money back into banks or started to spend money. This meant less and less had any money even to spend which worsened the economy. They couldn't pay back loans and some even lost their houses as their ~~mortgage~~ ^{house bills} couldn't be paid. ~~I~~ think this

Overall I think the loss of confidence was the most ~~an~~ important ~~rea~~ problem because it worsened the spiral of depression and caused unemployment and homelessness to happen because no money was being circulated in the US economy anymore. If people's faith in banks was restored quicker it would ~~as~~ ^{definitely} improved the whole situation, resulting in less unemployed and homeless which is why they are not the most important.



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This is the conclusion to an answer that has already explained the contribution made by homelessness, unemployment and loss of confidence in banks. This conclusion is not sophisticated, but there is a genuine attempt to show links between confidence and unemployment, as well as to compare the relative impact of the factors.

Consequently, a low Level 4 mark was awarded.



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When considering the importance of factors, candidates need to ensure that they are explaining fully. It is not enough to talk of 'a really important problem'. Why was it really important? What did it cause to happen – or not happen?

Summary

- Candidates must make sure that they read each question fully to understand the exact requirements of what they are being asked.
- In causation questions, candidates must ensure that they explain how the factors they are addressing brought about the stated outcome.
- Centres must take care that candidates do not use 'key phrases' in a superficial manner that prevents them from fully explaining their answer.
- Candidates must remember the importance of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in their answers.

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