

Examiners' Report
June 2014

GCSE History 5HA03 3A

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates in the last session of the current specifications. The paper requires candidates to answer five questions in 75 minutes and some candidates managed to write at considerable length in this time. However, it was noticeable that a number of candidates failed to complete (in some cases even start) question 5. This was due to mismanagement of timing often as a result of writing over long answers to previous questions. Centres should note that the amount of space provided in the booklet for answers, is more than we would expect any answer to take, not a recommendation of the amount candidates should write.

There were strong answers to all questions although, in some cases, there were formulaic responses which did not directly address the question. For example, some answers referred to the reliability of the sources in questions 3 and 5 without directly relating this to either the strength of support or challenge for the cross referencing or the hypothesis. A number of candidates go through the nature, origins and purpose of the sources without explicitly answering the question, whether it is utility or reliability.

There was also a noticeable increase in the number of candidates who wrongly labelled the source they were referring to especially in question 4 with source E being confused with source D.

Question 1

Candidates were asked to make inferences about the Somme offensive. The most obvious inferences were that the attack had no chance of success or that the British suffered heavy casualties.

The key to answering this question is to make the inference and use the wording of the source only as the support for the inference. An inference should not be made using the words of the source, as that is likely to produce paraphrasing.

So candidates who stated that 'everywhere there were dead bodies where previous attacks had taken place' were copying the source, not making valid inferences and were marked at Level 1. Those who wrote that 'The attack had no chance of success' and then added 'I know this because the source says 'they couldn't possibly take the position, not on a frontal attack'' were making a valid inference and supporting it from the source. Such answers were rewarded at Level 3.

Look carefully at the background information and Sources A to F in the Sources Booklet and then answer Questions 1 to 5 which follow.

1 Study Source A.

What can you learn from Source A about the Somme offensive?

(6)

~~Source A suggests~~ I can learn from Source A that the Somme offensive ~~was~~ resulted in many casualties and deaths as there was "heaps of dead men everywhere".

I can also learn from Source A that some British soldiers were doubtful that the Somme offensive would have ~~been~~ ever been ~~successful~~ ^{successful} as ~~they~~ ~~believed~~ the interview states "They couldn't possibly capture the enemy position".

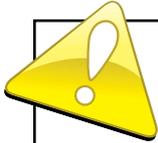
In addition I can learn that ~~some~~ ^{some} ~~many~~ soldiers were ~~not~~ ~~in~~ ~~fact~~ ~~did~~ not want to fight in ~~the~~ ~~battle~~ of the Somme the Somme offensive, and were ~~against~~ ~~that~~ ~~they~~ ~~were~~ ~~against~~ ~~it~~. I know this because it states that "There was no need for the attack". This also implies how they thought it was unnecessary and ~~just~~ ^{just} resulted in men being "killed for no reason".



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Examiner Comments

This is a Level 3 answer. The candidate makes at least two supported inferences, each of which is supported by quotes from the source. Notice how the answer signposts the examiner, 'as the interview states ...'. Remember that two supported inferences are enough for full marks.



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Examiner Tip

To gain higher marks you must make two inferences supported from the source. Why not say 'I know this because the source says...'? Do not write too much although, if you have time, do three supported inferences.

Question 2

This question asks candidates to explain the purpose of a newspaper article. The majority of candidates were able to identify the message and support it from the source, that the first day of the Somme was a success.

This is because the headlines use phrases such as 'British Advance', '16 miles of German Front trenches stormed' and 'the day goes well for heroic troops'.

However, to reach Level 3 candidates had to explain the purpose of the source - what it was intended to make people think or do.

The purpose of the newspaper headlines was to keep up morale in Britain by suggesting that the first day of the Somme was a success.

This is because the newspaper has deliberately selected positive headlines using phrases such as 'British Advance'. '16 miles of German Front trenches stormed' and 'the day goes well for heroic troops'. Newspapers were censored during the First World War and would not be allowed to mention the reality of the first day – a disaster for the British offensive with casualties of 58,000 in less than three hours and no breakthrough.

A minority of candidates confused the message of the source, (the point it is trying to put across), with its purpose, (what the message is trying to achieve). The best candidates made effective use of discourse markers such as 'suggests', 'persuade'.

2 Study Source B and use your own knowledge.

What was the purpose of this article? Use details of the article and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

The purpose of this article was to raise morale at home about the war. I know this because ~~the~~ of phrases like "16 miles of German trenches stormed," which suggests that the British are massively superior to the Germans, and are ~~the~~ beating them very effectively. This would make the British public more enthusiastic about the war. ⁽⁸⁾

I can also tell this is the purpose as it uses propaganda and white lies to hide the ~~loss~~ loss for ~~Britain's~~ British soldiers - "inflicting loss on the enemy." As the article says nothing about the 60,000 soldiers lost by Britain on the first day, this shows its intention was to ~~not~~ make the war seem easy to the British public, and so raise morale.

Finally I can tell that the purpose was to raise morale as it is an article from a British newspaper. These newspapers were controlled by the government to use propaganda to raise morale with this in mind.

This article can only be being used for this purpose, as it was what the government controlled. This propaganda would also raise the hopes and morale of the British public.



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Examiner Comments

This is Level 3 answer in which the candidate focuses in on the purpose of the poster and supports this with contextual evidence and evidence from the source especially the selection and treatment of the source.



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Examiner Tip

The key to Level 3. Why not go straight to the purpose of the source? Remember, however, that this must be explained fully by reference to the source itself and/or contextual knowledge. Try to do both to ensure top marks.

Question 3

The question is asking candidates to decide how far sources A and B support the evidence of source C about the Somme offensive. A number of candidates achieved higher Level 2 by identifying agreement and disagreement between the sources. The best candidates cross referenced source C to source B and source C to source A and made reference to the content of the source to establish the extent of agreement and disagreement. Again, well prepared candidates were able to make skilful use of discourse markers ('similarly', 'on the other hand', 'by contrast', 'to some extent') to get their point across. Candidates who were able to cross reference effectively and comment on the extent of agreement/ disagreement were able to access Level 3 and could achieve Level 3 (9 marks) or even full marks.

Some candidates, however, gave formulaic comments on reliability and did not use these to address cross referencing and the extent of support. Others compared each source to the view given in the question and showed little or no evidence of cross referencing between the sources. Such candidates were able to access Level 2 but not Level 3. This question specifically asks candidates to cross reference and make comparisons between the sources.

Again, a minority of candidates demonstrated a tendency to make comments on the provenance of the source without focus on the question. While candidates were not penalised for doing this it often resulted in time management problems later on in the paper. Comments on the provenance of the source must compare the attitude and motives of the writers of the sources to be credited.

Quite a common issue with this question was candidates getting side tracked into assessing how far A and B disagreed rather than cross-referencing C-A and C-B.

3 Study Sources A, B and C.

How far do Sources A and B support the evidence of Source C about the Somme offensive? Explain your answer, using the sources.

conclude

(10)

Source A partly ^{supports} agrees with Source C as Source A says that the soldiers faced 'heavy machine gun fire and shell fire.' Meanwhile Source C stated that 'enemy machine guns opened up on our men.' Another thing they both agree on is that they suffered great losses. This is shown as Source A says 'There were heaps of dead men everywhere' and Source C says 'We suffered heavy casualties.'

On the other hand Source A disagrees with Source C as the time of the attacks are slightly different, Source A being 'in broad daylight' and Source C being 'in the morning'. However this still could have happened as both sources could be talking about different days.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is part of a level 3 answer in which the candidate makes an explicit judgement on the extent of support between Sources A and C and supports this with evidence from each source.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

As well as comparing each source to the given view, ensure that you cross reference between the sources and give evidence of support and challenge. Remember to identify and explain agreement and disagreement between the sources. Make explicit judgements about the extent of support/challenge throughout your answer and especially in your conclusion based on the contents and reliability of the sources. Use judgement phrases such as 'strongly agree', 'partial agreement', 'totally disagree'. Ensure that reliability is used to judge the extent of support between the sources.

Question 4

For this question, candidates had to examine the reliability of source D, a sketch which was produced for a history book published in 1917, and source E, a personal memoir written by an MP in August of 1916. Most candidates achieved Level 2 by examining the contents/information given in each source or commenting on the nature, origins or purpose of the sources. Many candidates were able to interrogate the sources effectively commenting on both their content and provenance. Candidates who were able to do this effectively with both sources could score Level 3 (9/10) with full marks awarded to candidates who interrogated the sources most effectively. Candidates were generally confident with the provenance of both sources. However, a number of candidates used formulaic responses in which they went through the nature, origins and purpose of each source without making direct reference to how these affected reliability. Others simply described the contents of each source - what they could see or read.

In general candidates handled source E more confidently than source D and did not always make effective use of the provenance of source D 'A sketch which was produced for a history book published in 1917', in other words during the war itself.

On the other hand, there were a number of strong and balanced evaluations. Weaker candidates paraphrased the sources or made simplistic comments or learned responses about the sources, often referring to them as biased or as primary/secondary sources. Such responses were confined to Level 1. A number wrote at great length about the reliability of the contents of the sources and compared this to their contextual knowledge the Somme offensive but failed to evaluate the nature, origins or purpose of either of the sources with reference to reliability.

Finally, although utility and reliability questions require the application of similar skills -evaluating the contents and nature, origins or purpose of the sources, candidates must ensure that they focus on reliability. The question is not whether the two sources are useful but whether they are reliable.

4 Study Sources D and E and use your own knowledge.

How reliable are Sources D and E as evidence of the Somme offensive? Explain your answer, using Sources D and E and your own knowledge.

(10)

Source D is not a very reliable source for as evidence of the Somme offensive and source E is partially reliable evidence.

From my own knowledge I know the battle of the Somme has been deemed a failure and a success but I know it was a very long stalemate and hundreds of thousands of British troops were killed.

Source D is not reliable evidence for what happened at the battle of the Somme. Source D is a sketch drawn to go in a history book published in 1917. This may seem reliable as the purpose of this source is to educate children in the country about the war but it can be seen as unreliable as the war was still ongoing in 1917 so the sketch could be seen as a propaganda tool used by the government to tell children we are winning the war. I know this is true because there was lots of propaganda at this time persuading the public that the war was being won. Also from own knowledge I can infer it is not reliable as I know the British did not advance much at all in the Somme and didn't take many trenches as they were killed. *



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Examiner Comments

This is part of a very good Level 3 answer. Notice how the candidate comments on the reliability of the contents and the provenance of Source D.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Remember to mine and interrogate each source. Make judgements on the information/contents as well as the origins, nature and/or purpose of each source.

Question 5

There were a number of well structured answers to this question which asks whether the sources support the hypothesis that the Somme offensive was a failure. Some candidates were able to achieve at least Level 3 by addressing the issues inherent in the question and the extent to which the sources addressed them. At Level 4, candidates were able to select, draw inferences and use extracts from the sources to address the question set. The best candidates were able to weigh the evidence from each source, based on contents and/or reliability, and use their conclusion to make a final judgement based on the weight of evidence given in the sources for or against the hypothesis.

Use of provenance/reliability varied in quality and often was overtly mechanical making it difficult to ascertain the direction of an answer. The most effective use of provenance/reliability was weaved into the wider argument of whether or not the source supported or challenged the hypothesis, with candidates making explicit judgements about whether the reliability of the source weakened or strengthened it as evidence.

In a minority of cases, time management issues undermined candidates' responses to this question. A small number of candidates failed to make sufficient use of the sources and used their own knowledge about the Somme offensive to discuss the hypothesis. Remember that this is a source enquiry question. Candidates are being asked to evaluate the strength of the evidence in the sources themselves - in their content and reliability. Candidates should not bring in additional own knowledge to support or challenge the hypothesis but should use their contextual knowledge to identify the issues involved and to evaluate the provenance of the sources.

*5 Study all the sources (A to F) and use your own knowledge.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in this question.

'The Somme offensive was a failure.'

How far do the sources in this paper support this statement? Use details from the sources and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

(16)

The statement above 'The Somme offensive was a failure' is supported by sources A and E to a large extent; sources C and F agree to a moderate extent and sources B and D disagree to a large extent.

Firstly, sources A and E both agree strongly with the statement as they make mention of the "hell of lead men" and the "heavy machine gun fire". However, source A is recollections from a memory over 50 years old and source E I feel is being too modest about the land war, as the view is not very typical with the other sources, so both sources have decreased reliability and typicality.



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Examiner Comments

This is the first part of a strong Level 4 answer. Notice however the candidate makes an explicit judgement on the strength of the evidence in Sources A and E based on their contents and reliability



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Examiner Tip

Ensure that you use the sources to make judgements on the hypothesis. Do not simply summarise each source or use own knowledge. Your overall judgement should be based on the weight of evidence given by the contents/ reliability of the sources not on your own knowledge. Leave enough time to write an answer to this question. Remember it is worth 16 marks.

Paper Summary

A general summary for improvement in the approach to question types (which are common across the three options) may prove of benefit to centres.

Question 1. Candidates often wrote too much for inference. It is sufficient to make the inferences and support them from the source, often with a direct quote. The reliability of the source is not a relevant issue.

Question 2. Ensure that candidates identify the underlying purpose of the source, not just the message. This could be what the source is trying to make people think or do. This should be supported with evidence from the source itself and/or contextual knowledge. It is better to begin with the purpose and then support this with the message of the source.

Question 3. Ensure that candidates focus on the style of a cross referencing question and actually cross reference the sources. They should identify support and differences and make judgements on the extent of support based on the content and reliability of the sources.

Question 4. Candidates should avoid simply describing the contents of the sources. They should evaluate both the information/contents in the context of utility or reliability as well as the nature, origins and purpose.

Question 5. A small number of candidates made little or no reference to the sources and instead wrote extensively about Battle of the Somme. Ensure that candidates focus only on using the sources to test the hypothesis. Highest marks require them to make judgements on the extent of support and challenge to the hypothesis based on the weight of evidence given in the sources and/or their reliability.

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