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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCSE History 5HB01 1C

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General

Examiners felt that the standard of answers in this, the first examination of this unit, was generally good. The full spectrum of answers was seen, suggesting that the examination differentiated appropriately between students of different ability. However, examiners commented favourably on the fact that the overall standard was not noticeably different from that achieved at the end of the traditional two year course. The level of detail and familiarity with the material was good in many cases and problems with timing did not appear to be an issue. In some cases candidates did not have the skill to adapt their knowledge to suit the question and were not always able to consider both sides of the issue in the 16 mark question, but there were also good examples of planning in the extended answer which were clearly focused on evaluation and usually produced high scoring answers; examiners noted that answers which reached Level 4 were usually excellent.

There was a very small entry for this option and examiners were conscious of the fact that very few resources are available to support the teachers and students. Nevertheless, centres are reminded that students should be prepared for questions on any part of the specification.

As a study in development, chronology is central to this unit. Students need to be confident in their terminology, for example 'the civil wars' or 'nineteenth century', and also their understanding of the sequence of events. Too many answers lost marks because they wrote about events that were outside the period in question or because they could not place something in an overall context.

Other key concepts likely to feature in questions on this paper are analysis of change - why something happened / why it happened then / what factors were involved; analysis of continuity - why something did not change; and evaluation - what factor was most important / how much did something change / was change or continuity more important?

Minor details that would help centres to prepare candidates for future examinations include:

- A reminder that the space provided for each answer is more than it is anticipated students would need; they do not need to fill each page and question 1, in particular, should be a short answer.
- In question 5 and 6, the spaces for parts a and b are clearly designated.
- Where stimulus material is provided in questions 3 and 4 and part b of questions 5 and 6, students are not obliged to use it and could be advised to ignore it if they cannot see its relevance to the question. An example of this is question 3 where some candidates were distracted from a focus on the effects of media reporting to a description of trench warfare in their attempt to use the bullet point about the Battle of the Somme. The stimulus material is intended to remind students of the context or that they should consider both sides of an issue but full marks are possible using alternative own knowledge. On the other hand, answers which simply repeat the stimulus material will score no marks. Candidates should be encouraged to see the stimulus simply as a starting point and to draw on additional own knowledge

to explain its significance, or to add further evidence for the point they are making in their answer.

- Centres are also reminded that while the stimulus material in 5(b) and 6(b) will always be in the form of 3 bullet points, in questions 3 and 4 it can take the form of text or a visual image.

Students should be aware of the relationship between the extension studies and the core - while material from the extension study will not be covered in questions 1 - 4, the extension study questions may require candidates to draw on their knowledge of the core, for example to place an event in context or to make comparisons. They should also be aware that parts (a) and (b) are not necessarily linked and the bullet points in b will not help them to answer part (a).

Question 1

Generally this question was well answered but a surprising number of candidates lost marks here because they did not respond appropriately to this question. There were three common problems:

- Candidates made inferences about changes in army equipment but did not explicitly show how that inference was based on the sources
- Candidates made inferences about something else, most commonly the nature of fighting or recruitment
- Candidates used their own knowledge to talk about changes in equipment, most commonly writing about uniform or different weapons.

Another problem was that candidates wrote too much; those who had used extra sheets of paper frequently did so on question 1 but in most cases this was wasted time and effort because they had either scored the full 4 marks within half a page or they were not answering the question and therefore did not score full marks despite writing at length.

This paper is a development study and question one focuses on change between two periods. This means that an answer should use the sources in combination to make an inference about change rather than writing about, or making inferences from the sources separately. An in-depth analysis of each source is not necessary, nor is an evaluation of the sources or the inclusion of additional information. In this case, both sources related to how the army equipped a soldier and valid inferences about change were that the army provided the uniform and weapons in 1797 but soldiers had to provide their own personal equipment whereas in 1991 the soldier was fully equipped; that in 1799 the uniform and equipment seemed to be standard issue of a single size whereas in 1991 it was personalised to fit the individual; that the uniform and equipment had changed in response to changes in fighting and therefore camouflage was more appropriate in 1991 than the bright red coat of 1797. Any of these, supported by explicit reference to each source, would have scored the full 4 marks.

Question 2

Most candidates were comfortable with the format of this question, (a question with an internal choice of focus), but some students did try to include both examples and a few made comparisons between them.

As was demonstrated in the Sample Assessment Material, this question focuses on key ideas and specific examples. In this case, the over-arching theme was the success of an individual commander and his tactics. Students who knew their material and recognised this focus easily reached level 3 but many answers remained at level 2 because they provided descriptive or narrative details about a battle or because they provided a rehearsed answer about why Charles lost at Naseby or Napoleon lost at Waterloo.

Answers seemed to be evenly split between the two choices and there were some knowledgeable and impressive answers. It was however, disappointing to see a number of blank answers. Both of these leaders are explicitly named in the specification and candidates should have been able to attempt an answer on one if not both of them.

Some answers remained very general - the commander had disciplined troops, he was experienced, he used a range of tactics; other answers were basically a narrative of the battle. However, at level 3 candidates were able to show how specific tactics contributed to overall success, for example Cromwell's emphasis on discipline and training that allowed his cavalry to play a key role, his use of harassing fire from Okey, Wellington's choice of position or his use of the defensive square.

Question 3

This was the less popular choice and candidates often focused on media rather than media reporting, which led many to write at length about the use of propaganda during the First World War both to encourage recruitment and to stir up hatred against the Germans.

Where answers did focus on media reporting they often described Russell's reports from the Crimea and linked this to the work of Florence Nightingale but did not always show how these reports affected attitudes. In the same way, the footage of the Battle of the Somme sometimes led to a description of trench warfare, with comments about attitudes remaining rather basic - people were horrified to see their family / friend being killed or proud that they fought so well.

However, at level 3, answers explained how the use of photographs and the almost contemporaneous reporting from the Crimea forced the public to recognise the reality of war in a distant land and showed that the public then put pressure on the government to provide adequate supplies and care. Some knowledgeable answers explained that much of the footage shown in cinemas during the First World War consisted of staged re-enactments and the range of responses covered the positive reinforcement of a sense of British superiority in war and also the negative effect of seeing the chaos of trench warfare. Few answers could develop the bullet point about daily television coverage during the war in 1991 but those that did discussed the effect of the war being brought into people's homes and whether it would make people more critical or supportive of this war.

Question 4

This was a popular choice and candidates felt confident writing about the use of tanks on the western front. Some answers were descriptive in approach, discussing the use of tanks at the battle of the Somme and at Cambrai in detail, but at level 3 students showed how the use of tanks initially had many problems but that tactics evolved to incorporate their strengths and to use them in combination with infantry.

Students seemed less able to develop the bullet points about the use of observer planes or gas. In most cases the bullet point was paraphrased and a brief comment added that observer planes allowed the pilot to spot enemy troops or that gas could be blown backwards. Few answers could develop this to show any effect on tactics or to give any specific examples. Some candidates could point out that observer planes and gas were neutralised by the use of camouflage and gas masks but these points were not related to the overall failure to break the stalemate on the western front. Where students achieved level 3 on this question it was usually in their comments about tanks rather than the other two bullet points and hardly any answers offered alternative examples of developments in technology.

A surprising number of students did not know the time frame of the First World War and some offered invalid examples from the Second World War such as radar and jet planes.

Question 5

In part a, students were usually confident in their discussion of Boudicca's tactics. Most answers explained her reliance on overwhelming numbers and on fear inspired by the Celts' noise, appearance and past treatment of enemies. Some answers also included an explanation of the role of chariots or her attacks on Roman settlements. This question appeared to pose few problems but some candidates seemed to be presenting a prepared answer on why the Romans defeated Boudicca and focused on Roman tactics rather than answering the question.

Candidates were less secure in their answers to part b. Some students could write in detail about the fyrd and drew on their knowledge of the Battle of Hastings to make valid comments about the experiences of the Anglo-Saxon soldier. Knowledgeable students also wrote about the houscarls and the organisation of the army. However, few candidates could make valid comparisons with the army of Henry V even though some answers expanded on the second bullet point to explain the feudal structure of some sections. There were also some candidates who were confused by the mention of different rates of pay among Henry's army and although some used this to discuss the different levels of training and use of weapons among the army, many assumed that this bullet point meant that, in contrast, the Anglo-Saxon fyrd was paid a uniform flat rate.

Valid points were made about Henry's army fighting abroad, feudal levies only being liable for a fixed period and the use of mercenaries but assumptions were made that Henry's army was totally composed of professionals or that the nobles within Henry's army were untrained. A sizeable number of answers also commented that Henry V was seen as a 'war criminal'. This was irrelevant to this question but also seems to be anachronistic.

Although there were some good answers to part b, correctly focusing on a comparison, they tended to be unbalanced, concentrating either on the Anglo-Saxon army or Henry V's army. Some students also tried to include the Romans in the comparison. A few answers weighed similarities against differences, pointing out the broadly similar experiences of foot soldiers, many of whom were untrained, but also the changes in battle tactics as a result of the use of cavalry and the longbow, the use of mercenaries and the increased logistical problems experienced by soldiers in Henry's army who were fighting an offensive war in a foreign country rather than a defensive war at home.

Question 6

This was not a popular choice, probably because few candidates seemed confident on part (a). There were a few answers to part b where a good amount of details were provided about the role of taxation in the English Civil Wars and the American War of Independence but again answers were usually unbalanced, analysing one or the other war but not both.

Summary

Examiners were pleased to see many answers of an impressively high standard. The main reason why some candidates received low marks despite having good knowledge, was the failure to analyse the question. Some candidates responded to the topic rather than the question while others produced a prepared answer with a different focus. Students should perhaps note that time spent in analysing the question and planning a focused answer is rarely wasted. Nevertheless, the overall standard on this first examination suggested that centres and candidates had prepared well for this paper.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	50	39	34	29	24	20	16	13	10	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	0

A* is only used in conversion from raw to uniform marks. It is not a published unit grade.

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