

# Examiners' Report

## January 2011

GCSE

### GCSE History 5HB01 1C

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Publications Code UG026487

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## General comments

Candidates seemed confident with the format of the examination but many are writing too much for the 4 marks in question 1. It was noticeable that in the majority of cases where extra paper had been used, this had been for question 1 yet in most cases this had no effect on the mark - candidates had already scored the full 4 marks on the half page within the answer booklet, or they wrote long descriptive answers or included material from their own knowledge, both of which failed to lift the answer out of Level 1.

The extension study question carries half of the total marks for this paper and candidates should ensure that they leave enough time to complete a thorough answer to part b. They should also realise that the questions on the extension studies can call on material from the core, and that part a and part b are not linked. It is highly unlikely that answers in part a will be able to make use of bullet points in other questions.

On the whole, the students seemed well prepared for the range of topics covered and there were few blank or very short answers but sometimes knowledgeable candidates failed to shape their material to the focus of the question. As in all examinations, there was a tendency to produce a prepared answer - where this coincided with the question which was asked, as in question 4 or 6b, candidates could score highly but where there was a different focus, as in question 3 or question 6a, some detailed and accurate answers received a low mark because they did not answer the specific question.

It should be noted that the stimulus material in questions 3 and 4 can take the form of prose, an illustration or bullet points, while the stimulus material in questions 5 and 6 will always consist of 3 bullet points. The intention of this material is to provide a starting point for candidates - a reminder to consider the full timescale, both sides of the issue, a range of causes or effects etc. Candidates are not obliged to use this material in their answer and the best answers will usually go beyond the bullet points and bring in some additional points; indeed, it is possible to produce a high level answer entirely from their own knowledge and without reference to any of the bullet points. However, most students will find this material a helpful reminder of relevant points but they must have sufficient own knowledge to be able to explain the significance of the bullet point in relation to the question and to support their comments with additional detail. It is a mistake for students to feel they must include the bullet points even if they do not understand them. A typical example here is the bullet point about mercenaries in question 3. While many students obviously did not understand this bullet point, they still felt obliged to repeat it in their own words - the markscheme does not allow any marks for such comments. The key to moving from Level 2 to Level 3, and therefore to the higher grades, is to move away from a narrative or descriptive answer and to produce a structured answer which is focused on the question. Many candidates feel pressured to produce long answers containing everything they know about a topic - these rarely progress beyond Level 2. Time spent analysing the question to identify the focus on importance, change, continuity etc is well spent and candidates are far more likely to reach Level 3 and Level 4 if the answer has been planned so that it is structured in paragraphs. Key phrases such as 'this meant that ...', 'this was important because..' and 'the effect of this was ..' show a level of analysis that is clearly related to the question.

By its very nature, a Study in Development will focus on change and continuity. Candidates need to be confident in their chronology and to be able to work across periods. Therefore it is essential they understand terms such as Middle Ages, sixteenth century, nineteenth century, modern etc. Far too many students lose marks because they think dates in the 1900s are the nineteenth century.

Candidates were often keen to comment on whether a battle was an example of limited or unlimited warfare, whether Henry V was unchivalrous and a 'war criminal', and whether a battle was an example of asymmetric warfare. While these comments might be relevant if they were developed and supporting detail provided, the comment alone will not gain any marks.

This paper contains several words which candidates find difficult to spell: soldier, cavalry, siege, parliament and a number of answers contained errors such as 'would of' but generally the expression of ideas was fairly clear.

### Question 1

Candidates should be reminded that question 1 does not require any own knowledge; it asks them to make an inference about change which is based on two sources from different periods. In this case the expected answers included a change from personal attack in the seventeenth century to a wider, impersonal attack in the twentieth century or a change from theft and assault to death and destruction. A number of candidates assumed Source B was from the Second World War and added comments from their own knowledge about the Blitz and the need for evacuation.

Candidates also had a tendency to describe both sources before commenting on change yet the best answers identified the change at the start and used only enough details from the sources to support that inference. It was noticeable that many concise answers scored full marks while longer ones often remained in Level 1 or even failed to score.

### Question 2

Very few candidates attempted to answer both parts of this question. Answers on newspaper reports from the Crimea tended to score more highly than the ones on television reporting in the Gulf War, possibly because most candidates could show that public support for the work of Nightingale provided evidence of changed attitudes. Interestingly, although candidates writing about newspaper reports recognised that they may have been censored or manipulated, few made similar comments about television reporting.

The majority of answers made the connection between reports about the poor conditions and the work of Florence Nightingale but sometimes these answers lost focus and ended as an answer on the importance of her work rather than of newspaper reporting. A number of answers could talk about the work of William Russell and recognised the significance of this new development and in some cases this was linked to rising literacy, the telegraph or the development of photographs which meant that his reports reached a wide audience. The role of newspaper reports in shaping public opinion was often rather vague apart from the reaction to Florence Nightingale but the key ideas were well understood.

Answers on television reporting in the Gulf War often struggled to go beyond generalities about people at home seeing the bad conditions and the effects of war. Many assumed that television coverage meant live reporting and talked about families in Britain seeing their relatives being killed. Other answers tried to link television reports to changes in recruitment levels. Few answers discussed the role of television in explaining strategy. The best answers commented on the immediacy of the daily updates, the explanation of strategy and tactics, the focus from the media on reporting events rather than propaganda and the difficulties in enforcing censorship.

### Question 3

Although this question attracted quite a few answers, it was rarely well answered. Students should be reminded that the bullet points are there to remind candidates to

cover both sides of the issue, the full range of causes or the entire period but candidates must have secure knowledge in order to make use of the stimulus material.

Answers to this question often became sidetracked into a discussion on Oliver Cromwell and the New Model Army rather than recruitment. The bullet point about mercenaries was also not well used and a surprising number of answers did not discuss the shift from voluntary recruitment to conscription during the First World War. There were few answers where there was any sense of change or continuity in recruitment; most answers described recruitment and remained in Level 2.

Candidates also need to check the dates in the question. While comments about recruitment at the time of Agincourt could be relevant in order to show that change occurred under Cromwell, they were not relevant in themselves and did not merit detailed coverage; comments about recruitment to the Saxon or Norman armies in 1066 were not relevant and outside the core specification.

There are several important teaching points here. The specification is divided into 3 periods, which should receive equal coverage in teaching - most candidates discussed the Civil Wars period and then jumped straight to the twentieth century and there were many examples of confused chronology. However, this question also highlighted problems in examination skills. This question focused on change and such questions will often cover more than one period; it is not enough to describe the situation at one point - the nature or extent of change needs to be considered. Students also need to understand that there is no point in trying to use a bullet point if they do not understand it or cannot add some extra detail.

#### Question 4

In contrast to question 3, question 4 was extremely well answered. Candidates were well prepared to write about Agincourt and easily identified several factors which allowed Henry V to defeat the French, although the comments were sometimes triumphalist, presenting this as an easy victory against the incompetent French. The best answers recognised Henry's disadvantages and wrote about the way his tactics overcame those problems: Henry's choice of battleground and the French being funnelled into a narrow area which destroyed their advantage in numbers; the way archers stationed in woods on either side of the attacking force could achieve a devastating kill rate through their numbers, skill and the way the French were trapped in position; the way the French were disadvantaged by the heavy clay which slowed down their knights and Henry's role in maintaining morale. Some answers appeared to confuse this battle with 1066 and mentioned a feigned retreat or the French having to fight uphill while others were diverted into a discussion on whether this mode of warfare was unchivalrous but generally the answers here were focused on causation and well supported by details.

#### Question 5

Part a was usually well answered. Candidates were comfortable explaining the use of scaling ladders, siege towers, battering rams, mining, sieges etc. Sometimes they focused on the siege of Acre which was not really relevant here but generally this was well done.

Students found the time span in part b more challenging. Many could describe the use of cavalry in 1066 and most could provide details about Cromwell's New Model Army (although again this sometimes developed into a discussion on Cromwell as leader) but did not focus on change and/or continuity. There were some misconceptions about the pike among weaker students who thought that it was a weapon used by the cavalry but many could explain the impact of the pike or of gunpowder on cavalry charges but only focused on one example of change.

### Question 6

In part a the build up to the First World War was generally well known but not all answers focused on the threat to Britain which was posed by Germany. Where this was well done, the tension caused by the Germany's growing industrial strength, the quest for an empire, the Anglo-German naval race, and the alliance system were clearly explained in relation to Britain but sometimes the answer simply explained the outbreak of war. This was often well done but an explanation of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand does not explain why Britain felt threatened by Germany.

In part b candidates were well prepared to discuss the causes of the English Civil War and a pleasing number of answers did attempt to evaluate their relative importance. Generally religion was well understood - most answers could explain that Charles' marriage to a Catholic and the changes to decoration within churches were seen as moves towards Catholicism. Economic issues were also cited, with many students able to explain that ship money should not have been extended to inland towns although the conflict over money was usually presented as a result of Charles' personal extravagance and took no account of parliament's actions in withholding normal revenue. Many students thought it was normal for parliament to use control of finance as a method of controlling policy and thought Charles was trying to undermine the existing system. Most candidates also identified political causes but the understanding here was less secure. Although GCSE students are not expected to know the full details of the power struggle between Charles and parliament, many assumed that parliament and 'the people' had a right to be involved in running the country and that Charles was exceeding his authority by ruling without them. The theory of Divine Right was usually understood but presented as an extreme belief, held by Charles and not shared by anyone else and there was the assumption that the population was generally Protestant, with Puritan leanings, so that Charles was seen as imposing his religious views on an unwilling people. Charles was frequently blamed for his arrogance and there was little understanding that some people shared Charles' religious views or that parliament was trying to assert a new role for themselves in government.

There were a number of examples of very casual language in responses to this question. Charles was reported to have 'made parliament mad', his actions made parliament feel 'ticked off' (in the sense of being angry, not rebuked) and he was 'totally out of order'. These comments are not suitable for a balanced examination of the issue.

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Order Code UG026487 January 2011

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