

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

GCSE History
5HB01 1C The Changing Nature of
Warfare

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Report Jan 2012 Warfare

A total of 259 candidates were entered for this examination and it was clear to see that many had benefited from practising previous papers and from their teachers' use of previous examination reports. However, unsurprisingly, some points which have been noted before, continued to appear in these papers, for example candidates' grasp of chronology, and topics where the focus was on continuity. These issues will be covered at the appropriate point in this report.

As a general point, it should be noted that questions will not normally overlap and stimulus material provided in one question is not usually relevant to another; therefore candidates will not usually be able to gain credit for covering the same material in 2 answers. A number of candidates who attempted to make use of the stimulus material to answer another question did themselves a disservice since they did not notice that the timescale or aspect of warfare was different and produced an answer that was not relevant to the question.

This unit focuses on development over time and it is therefore important that answers address the full time frame of the question. Candidates should also feel comfortable discussing change and continuity yet where it was recognised that the question covered a long period of time, candidates found it easier to discuss change than to show continuity.

This might also be an appropriate point to remind schools that the extension questions may also draw on 'core' material. It should also be noted that the range of formats of the stimulus material for questions 3 and 4 was demonstrated in the two sets of specimen assessment material and has been mentioned in subsequent Principal Examiner's Reports.

There were relatively few blank answers on questions 5 and 6, suggesting that either candidates are making better use of their time or that they are addressing the more heavily weighted questions first and working 'backwards' through the paper.

Question 1

The vast majority of candidates have clearly been well prepared for this question and were able to make an inference about change and support it with clear references to both sources. As before, where candidates took extra paper on this question it rarely had any effect on the final mark – in most cases candidates simply wasted time by describing the sources, offering additional information from their own knowledge or by explaining their opinions.

The most common inference was that guns became easier to reload and fire or that there had been a change in the speed of firing since Source A showed the process involved in firing a single bullet while B said that a belt of ammunition was discharged in less than a minute and firing was more or less continuous.

Candidates should be reminded to check the question carefully and to study the provenance of each source. Where candidates failed to reach Level 2 it was usually because they focused on the individual sources, describing them or writing about changes in weapon technology generally, instead of making an inference about change in the use of firearms.

The best answers began by stating the inference about change which was being made and then showing how the sources were used in combination to make that inference. Such answers used the sources precisely and yet were very concise, sometimes as short as 4 or 5 lines. Other answers were longer, often describing the sources in turn before finally stating the inference but a few commented on the sources individually and did not make an inference about change - these answers remained at Level 1.

Where centres encourage candidates to use a framework for their answers, instead of beginning their answers with 'From Source A I can see..' it would be more helpful to begin with 'A change that I can identify is ..'

Question 2

The majority of answers here were disappointingly weak, lacking any specific detail which showed a sense of context to their answer. Many answers remained at Level 1, making comments that could apply to either option and which could have applied to practically any period in history, for example stating the importance of getting supplies to the front so that soldiers were not hungry.

Few recognised the particular importance of such transport in fighting an overseas campaign such as the Napoleonic and the Crimean wars in the nineteenth century or the Western Front or Gulf War in the twentieth century. There was also little discussion of the need to organise such transport, for example by travelling in convoy, or the need to co-ordinate it with troop movement and the importance of having a safe harbour or landing space, or the need to sometimes lay track in order to bring supplies to the right area.

The few strong answers on the use of trains and ships were able to offer comments based on the Crimean War, explaining the difficulties in getting men and supplies overseas, the importance of transport from the docks to the trenches and front line, and the benefits of speed, being able to transport large quantities and the fact that men arrived fresh and ready for battle. However, answers based on the use of ships as transport for the campaigns in the Spanish peninsula or the Waterloo campaign also recognised the importance of ships when fighting an overseas campaign. Some answers also commented on the transport home of wounded soldiers and how this improved the care being offered or the importance of this transport when large and unwieldy weapons were involved.

Many answers on the use of aircraft were also weak and generalised, for example that aircraft could carry huge amount of supplies and thousands of men. Others focused on the use of aircraft in war, for example as

reconnaissance or to bomb the enemy. However, there were some good answers which explained the benefits of aircraft, and helicopters in particular, as being able to access difficult areas, either to deliver men and supplies or to rescue wounded men.

Question 3

This question was less popular than question 4 with approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of candidates choosing to answer this question on changes in recruitment. Nevertheless, candidates often reached Level 2 and low Level 3 quite easily. Even if they were unsure what use to make of Cardwell's army reforms, most could correctly identify the shift from a volunteer army, encouraged by propaganda during the First World War, to the use of conscription and then the introduction of National Service before moving back to a volunteer army.

Candidates clearly had good knowledge here, especially on recruitment at the time of the First World War, and provided accurate details but not all of them analysed the question and appreciated the specific focus on how much change occurred. For high marks candidates needed to discuss the scale or nature of the changes.

Question 4

This question was more popular than question 3 with approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of candidates choosing to write about the care of the sick. Most candidates could offer some detail about the work of Florence Nightingale, although they often assumed that she transformed the care of the sick overnight. There was also some discussion of the work of Paré. However, candidates tended to present their answers as a story of continuous improvement – it was assumed that care of the wounded during the First World War was well organised and effective with little knowledge of the problems presented by the nature of fighting on the Western Front, the new types of casualties or the difficulties in getting wounded men to the various medical stations offering care. Some students did mention the problems of infection and of blood loss but again it was assumed that X-Rays, antiseptic surgery and blood transfusions quickly solved these problems whereas blood banks were not set up until 1917.

Question 5a

Answers here mainly focused on preparation for battle, with descriptions of weapons, training and tactics. Some answers went beyond that and described the food, tents, and pay but relatively few covered additional activities such as building roads, forts, aqueducts etc and keeping the peace.

Question 5b

Candidates tended to focus on the use of the longbow and the use of the musket and cannon. There were some good accounts of their use in battle, usually describing Hastings, Agincourt, or Naseby. However, comments

were usually limited to assertions that the use of technology had a big effect on battles; there was little analysis of strategy and tactics and therefore little analysis of change. There were a small number of answers where the longbow was used to explain the move away from close combat and 'chivalrous' methods of warfare, while the introduction of muskets was used to explain why pikemen became important to protect the musketeers while reloading, and cannon were shown to have a decisive influence in the ordering of troops on the battlefield. However, few of these answers then weighed the importance of new technology, for example considering the fact that the longbow required many hours of practice, or making a comparison with another factor that affected strategy and tactics, such as leadership.

Question 6a

Britain's rivalry with Germany was usually well known. Examples were given covering the Anglo-German naval race, Germany's desire for a larger empire, Germany's growing industrial power etc. In many cases the candidate was able to show how this rivalry increased the tension between the two countries. A discussion of one aspect of rivalry, supported by accurate details, would reach Level 2 and a discussion of several aspects would reach Level 3.

Unfortunately, in some cases the candidate lost sight of the question and the answer became a description of the outbreak of the First World War, describing the formation of the alliances and then the assassination and invasion of Belgium. Candidates should be reminded of the need to answer the question that is set and not to produce a prepared answer on the topic.

Question 6b

There was a good level of knowledge about the British decision to impose taxes, the American resentment of these taxes, especially when coupled with lack of representation, and the British attitude that saw America mainly in terms of providing raw materials and markets. Details about individual incidents, and especially the Boston Tea Party, varied from extremely accurate to vaguely correct but generally students were reasonably clear on the role of economic issues and also of the changed context that followed the end of the Seven Years War and the removal of the French threat.

Candidates also seemed clear about the political issues but were less able to support these comments with specific details beyond saying colonists did not like King George and repeating the cry of 'No taxation without representation'. They were also less confident in their comments about the significance of Britain banning expansion beyond the Allegheny mountains and sometimes the chronology of events or details of the Intolerable Acts was confused. A small number of candidates also discussed the role of individuals such as Thomas Jefferson.

General Comments

Candidates should be reminded of the need to express themselves clearly, in accurate and grammatical English. Textspeak, colloquialisms and errors such as 'he done it' or 'this would of mean't' can mean that the answer is unclear but can also affect marks in the final question where Quality of Written Communication is assessed.

There were also a number of cases where handwriting was very unclear. Although examiners make every effort to read all answers, marks cannot be awarded if the answer cannot be understood. Students need practice in writing at speed for a sustained amount of time.

Yet candidates should be reminded that it is the quality of the answer, not its length, which determines the level and mark. Part b carries the most marks and is the only question where the markscheme uses 4 levels. In order to reach Level 3 it is important to analyse the question so that the answer stays firmly focused, while Level 4 answers have a sense of evaluation and argument. Consequently, 5, or even 10 minutes spent analysing the question and planning a structured answer, can move a Level 2 answer full of description, to Level 3 or Level 4 focused analysis and argument.

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