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Examiners' Report January 2011

GCSE History B2 5HB02 2B

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Introduction

The entry of just over 4,000 candidates showed the full range of marks. There were some very impressive responses which showed clear recognition of the thrust of the set question and responded with precise and specific details. It is very noticeable that candidates who have underlined or highlighted the key words in the set question often score the higher levels.

This is now the third examination paper of this specification. It was noticeable that some students' responses gave a learnt response to a previously used examination question, rather than recognising the focus of the particular set question in this examination. These responses invariably remained in level 2.

As the June 2010 Principal Examiner's report commented, candidates should be reminded on the role of stimulus material for questions 3, 4,5b and 6b. In this examination paper, bullet points were used although centres are reminded that in some examination series the stimulus material may take the form of a visual stimulus, a graph or a short piece of continuous prose. There are examples of questions with stimulus other than bullet points in the second set of Specimen Assessment Materials which are on the main EdExcel website for GCSE History B. The stimulus material is offered as a prompt to students of some of the main issues and the chronological time span for the particular question being attempted. The stimulus also often prompts students in questions 5b and 6b towards debate and evaluation which will frequently result in levels 3 and 4 responses.

The stimulus material does not have to be used at all and this is often the case with the highest scoring responses. Conversely, students should not rely on the stimulus material alone or simply rewrite the provided material in their own words - both of which invariably result in a low scoring response.

There was a noticeable pattern on Question 5 in particular of some candidates and scoring very highly on part a) without perhaps realising what content area was then required for the following part b). Some centres might wish to spend some time reminding students of the need to look at both parts of Questions 5 and 6 before they make their final choice.

Question 1

Candidates should be reminded that higher marks cannot be awarded for own knowledge without reference to the source. Question 1 always assesses a supported inference from the source. The best responses often used phrases such as ‘it is clear from the source...’, ‘the source suggests that...’ or ‘we can infer from the source that...’ These statements often resulted in very clear focused responses and consequently achieved full marks. For this particular question most supported inferences tended to explain moving west as God’s will represented by the angel or that the light symbolised progress and civilisation being spread by the settlers into the darkness. Low scoring answers were a combination of candidates who were clearly very unfamiliar with the concept of Manifest Destiny or simple descriptions of what they could see in the picture. A few students confused the angel with the Mormons and wrote at length on the Mormons migrating West.

The first question will always assess the student’s ability to make a supported inference from the source.

1 What can you learn from Source A about the idea of Manifest Destiny? (4)

I can learn from the source that idea of manifest destiny was to conquer the whole of the west. I also know this because I can see farmers and homesteaders moving west following an angel like figure. The Indians are running away this would suggest that the immigrants thought the Indians were inferior. I can also see telegraph lines so this would suggest they were settling in the west and they weren't going to go again. The Angel is holding a bible this would suggest that they believed it was their god given right to go west.



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Examiner Comments

This response makes clear use of the source to make supported inference.



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Examiner Comments

Make sure that you don't just describe what you can see in the source.

Question 2

The majority of students selected the US government's role. Level 3 answers recognised the significance of the time frame of the set question. These responses had specific knowledge which included details of at least one of the US government policies towards the education of Plains' Indian children, the Dawes Act and the Oklahoma Land Race. Level 2 responses were mainly more generalised comments on reservations, the impact of railroads or the destruction of buffalo (a previously set examination question). Answers which had chosen to consider the role of the US army tended to score less highly. There were some Level 3 responses which focused on post 1876 and included details such as the use of forts, winter campaigns and weapons used. Most answers in this option remained in levels 1 and 2 with more general responses such as "they attacked the Indians," "took Indians to reservations," and "killed the buffalo."

Level 3 responses to this question will show an understanding of the importance of the group chosen in the destruction of the Plains Indians' traditional way of life after 1876.

2 The boxes below show two groups of people.

Choose **one** and explain their role in destroying the Plains Indians' traditional way of life after 1876.

Power of chief
Reeducation

destruction of skills/lifestyle
Religion.

(9)

The US government

The US army

*Total War, Winter Campaigns
Average, armed by Gov.*

This essay will explain the role of the US Government in destroying the Plains Indians traditional way of life; ~~the~~ the traditional way of life was destroyed in 4 main areas; Taking away the power of the chief, the loss of skills and life style, the reeducation of Indian children and the Banning of religion, all brought about by the Government to make Plains Indians dependent on them - meaning total control.

The ^{loss of} power of the chief was due to Government as they introduced Indian Courts in 1881, before abolishing them and not allowing the Indians to govern themselves, this government action ruined the social structure of the tribe. Also the Dawes Act of 1887 was introduced which took away the chiefs ability to share land among his entire tribe. Land was given to families by the government further breaking traditional culture (land could not be sold or owned).

The loss of skills and lifestyle was a government tactic to make the Indians lose their resources (buffalo) and thus be dependent. The government contributed to the destruction of buffalo and in 1875 southern herds were

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Examiner Comments

This response is high level 3. It has a clear focus on the set question with specific supporting details.

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Examiner Comments

Make sure you notice if there is any time reference to the question. This response is clearly "after 1876" which is part of the question. Many candidates wasted time or failed to gain the highest marks because they wrote about before 1876.

Question 3

This optional question was chosen by far more candidates than question 4. There were some very high scoring answers which explained more than one reason as to why the Mormons were able to settle successfully at the Great Salt Lake such as the significance of Brigham Young's leadership and the implementation of his ideas, the ability to settle in a very infertile area, unity provided by the Mormon Church and the consequences of the Perpetual Emigration Fund. Many responses remained in Level 2 by not addressing the set question and by writing lengthy descriptions and narrative about the Mormons from Joseph Smith, their journey West and aspects of their faith. Level 1 answers often added simple comments to the bullet points. The occasional response confused the Mormons totally with homesteaders.

Level 3 answers will show an understanding of the focus of the question and support the reasons/factors identified with accurate and relevant details.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box.
If you change your mind, put a line through the box
and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen Question Number: Question 3 Question 4

The mormons had been persecuted badly in their last places of settlement. first in missouri, then nauvoo (illinois) and then finally into the great salt lake city. They were unable to settle successfully in any of the previous places because of their beliefs. because their beliefs went against the christians views and they had so many unorthodox ways. They were trying to settle and expand in places where people were already following a faith, in a country founded upon that faith. the country and faith that told of manifest destiny. This would mean many christians would disapprove of the mormons settling because they christians had rights to the land. The mormons ran into trouble wherever they went. They were persecuted and run out and the main reason for this was because they were trying to settle occupied land.

So when they prepared themselves to move to salt lake city they did it under brigham young (the new leader) and under the ideology that there here was a place unwanted by america they would move there. many thought him crazy but they eventually began moving - Young was extremely organised. He had all he would need prepared and his routes planned

and he did it in a series of wagon trains. Trains of 100 would go ahead and every now and then they would stop and build camps, with lodges for winter when the next wagon trains could use.

They made it to the Salt Lake and they began inhabiting it. They started from the center and began building the Mormon church. They spread themselves out. He ordered groups to dig irrigation ditches which would supply water to each plot of land. This was very organized and showed immediate success. He also worked out a way of dividing the land bigger plots for bigger families. He created a society away from everyone else a place founded upon his religion and beliefs. They were friendly to blacks and whites and so met no hostility. They were free and because of their quick and cleverly designed system they were able to expand fast. Their perpetual immigration (they gave money to outsiders (from other countries) to travel there and they would repay it eventually) they increased their numbers & so their development. Clever communication and travel systems were a huge help and they were orderly. ~~Their~~ Their society was able to grow successfully because they were open and organized and had a great leader, Brigham Young as the main reason for their success and also the fact

that they were outside the control of the USA
who don't want the land they were on anyway &
they were for the most part successful.

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Examiner Comments

This is a clear level 3 answer which clearly explains why the Mormons were able to settle successfully at Salt Lake City.

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Examiner Comments

Make sure that you don't write down a learnt response which is on the same content area but from a previous examination paper. Look very carefully at the question you are actually answering.

Question 4

As this question was chosen by far fewer students it is worth reminding examination centres that law and order is now part of the specification content whereas in the previous 1336 legacy examination it was not in the specification although it was a coursework choice for some schools. Some centres might therefore find it useful to update their Schemes of Work to take this into account. There is a consistent trend since the January 2010 operation of this particular examination that law and order questions have been much less popular and often done less well.

Level 3 answers to this question clearly explained the problems of law and order which arose in the cow towns at the end of the Long Drive (gambling, drinking, prostitution), and the lack of structures for law enforcement (isolation, difficulties of getting sheriffs and deputies to the cow towns, issues with vigilantes and the corruption of some officials). Many included specific details on Wyatt Earp.

Lower scoring candidates wrote more generally on issues of law and order and often made no distinction between cow towns and mining towns.

Question 5

This question was chosen by far more students than the parallel question 6.

Part a) A significant proportion of candidates achieved level 3 for describing and reasoning in detail the Plains Indians' beliefs about warfare (scalping, use of coup stick, importance of survival, spiritual background to these beliefs, decorating feathers, respect from women and chiefs). Some level 2 responses tended to drift away from the set question and describe in length all the Plains Indians' beliefs they knew or compared Plains Indians' beliefs with those of the whites.

Part b) There were some very impressive answers in Level 4 which showed both depth of knowledge and clear reasoning to weigh up the relative importance of railroads against other factors such as technology or the government in solving the problems faced by homesteaders in the years 1870-1890

and how the railroads could never solve specific problems such as the weather and plagues of grasshoppers. At level 3 there was more detailed discussion of the problems that homesteaders faced and these were discussed along with the railroads (such as Turkey red wheat, steel plough, water irrigation) and how the railroads contributed to the speeding up communications and trade. Level 2 responses tended to be lengthy descriptions of the problems facing homesteaders and often drifted away from or failed to notice the time frame of the set question. Level 1 comments were normally simple statements about the railroads, such as "it was faster" and "it was safer."

The part b) section of questions 5 and 6 will also assess Level 4. To access this level students need to be able to analyse and assess the role played by the factor given in the set question. There must also be sufficient supporting detail.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box.
If you change your mind, put a line through the box
and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen Question Number: Question 5 Question 6

(a) The Plains Indian's beliefs about warfare were based on their religion and the belief and faith they put in spirits, this is how they chose where to fight, when to fight and also how to fight.

Although the Plains Indians followed no single religion they all shared a belief in the spirit world that only the medicine men had the power to communicate with. Along with many other factors that their religion decided upon warfare was a key aspect decided by religion. The Indians believed in scalping which involved the mutilation of an enemies head but it was seen as a significant object which they used to hang around tipi's.

The Indians beliefs about war were not solely based on religion however much of a major role it played in warfare. The Indians believed in using strategies in warfare which didn't involve them suffering heavy losses because it would mean that they would have even fewer warriors than they already did because of how much they were outnumbered by the US Army, this is why polygamy was freely accepted and practiced in Indian society because it boosted the numbers in the tribes.

((a) continued) The Indians were never prepared for the huge battles that the US Army were equipped for and they understood that to become an effective fighting force they would have to use guerilla tactics and effectively run raids on the US forts which proved to be successful on more than one occasion.

Although the Indians won a huge victory in 1876 at the battle of Little Big Horn it changed how people perceived them and more action was taken to get rid of the Indians. In 1890 their beliefs about warfare and their beliefs in general led to an Indian massacre at the Battle of Wounded Knee where before hand Wovoka had a vision that all Indians would be resurrected and the white settlers would be flooded away by performing a Ghost Dance, this belief and faith was the most notable Indian last stand which shows what belief the Indians had about warfare and how they couldn't be influenced by white settlers.

(b) I agree with the statement about how railroads were the key factor in solving the problems faced by homesteaders because of many separate reasons that make the railroads a key and significant factor.

The completion of the railroads in 1869 at Promontory Point marked not only a massive achievement but also the joining and uniting of America - East and West.

Railroads were ~~in~~ the most important factor in solving problems faced by the homesteaders because the railroads allowed farming machinery and wind pumps which were largely manufactured in the East to be transported West at a cheap effective and more importantly quick way. A major problem with farming on the Plains was the thick dense grass known as Sod grass, railroads enabled John Deere's patented "Sodbuster" plough to be shipped westwards, therefore allowing sustainable dry farming to take place. Without the farming machinery on the Plains people - Homesteaders would have never ~~been~~ been able to farm the Plains and probably ~~wouldn't~~ wouldn't have settled for good.

The Railroads also enabled quick and cheap travel to the West which led to many immigrants heading West onto the Plains. A problem on the Plains was that

((b) continued) it was a very hard land to farm because there were very little crops that could be grown there. The introduction of immigrants on the Plains brought forward a new crop called Turkey Red Wheat which thrived and grew on the Plains; this crop came from Russia and without railroads to transport the immigrants and the crop farming would have been nearly impossible on the Plains.

The railroads more importantly offered people who hadn't already settled after the introduction of the Homestead Act in 1862 a cheap ticket to a new start on the Plains.

The invention of barbed wire in 1874 meant that the Homesteaders could now fence off their land away from Indians and others who claimed land, this wouldn't of been possible to transport on to the Plains quickly without the railroads and barbed wire solved many problems that homesteaders faced.

In Conclusion the railroads were the most important factor in solving problems faced by homesteaders because the railroads offered the cheap and reliable transportation needed to bring the new technologies such as pesticides, farm machinery and wind pumps to the struggling

((b) continued) homesteaders, very very quickly. The railroads also offered people wishing to fulfill Manifest Destiny a way onto the plains, a new start for many people including ex-slaves after the end of the civil war in 1865. That is why the railroads were so important.

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Examiner Comments

Part a) is clearly a high level 3 response and part b) is level 4. The answer clearly attempts to assess the role played by railroads in solving the problems faced by homesteaders in the period 1870-1890.

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Examiner Comments

Always look at both the a) and b) parts of both questions 5 and 6 before you decide which one to answer.

Question 6

Part a) The highest scoring candidates considered the “big picture” and explained the effects of the Californian Gold Rush in the wider context on the reasons for the westward movement of the frontier. They often gave specific details of the 49ers and explained the implications of the discovery of gold in 1848 on the growth of settlement in the American West (migration patterns, attraction of unskilled and often single men, “shanty” towns to more permanent settlements). Some also explored the development of California after 1849. Level 2 responses tended to describe the Gold Rush and/or conditions in the mining towns. Lower scoring responses often confused the California Gold Rush with the Gold Rush in the Black Hills and/or confused cattle towns with mining towns and miners with homesteaders.

Part b) Level 4 responses judged the relative importance of McCoy against a combination of other factors (Iliff and the Open Range and/or Goodnight Loving and Long Drives and the railroads) to explain the rise of the cattle industry. The significance of Abilene and how it was the prototype of the first cow town and consequently copied elsewhere for as a trading model was explained. Level 3 responses were able to demonstrate how and why McCoy or others were important to the development of the cattle industry. Level 2 answers were more descriptive and narrative accounts of the cattle industry but there was often confusion about the chronological sequence of events or the role of various individuals.

5HB02 2B

Centres might wish to spend some time with candidates:

- a) reminding them of the precise rubric of the examination
- b) the role of the stimulus material
- c) ensuring that candidates can identify the focus of the set question

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