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Examiners' Report January 2011

GCSE History 5HB03 3A

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Introduction

This was the second opportunity for candidates to sit this Schools History Project Source Enquiry paper. The focus this series was on the impact of the First World War on the problems faced by surgeons and the development of surgical techniques

Candidates generally made an attempt to answer all questions. There were very few questions which were left entirely blank. There were a few blank responses to question 4 and more to question 5. However, there were far fewer of these in comparison to the June 2010 series. This suggests that although there were significant improvements since the last series, some candidates still faced problems managing their time effectively in the examination. Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that they attempt all five questions. Care should also be taken to ensure they allocate time proportionately to the number of marks available for each question. Few candidates attained only Level 1 in any of the questions, but equally few managed to achieve Level 4 in the final question. Candidates would be well advised to use the provenance given above each source, especially in tackling questions 2, 3 and 4. Another area worth focusing on is ensuring that candidates have knowledge of their own that reflects the syllabus coverage outlined in the specification.

Question 1

This question was fairly well answered with many candidates achieving Level 3 marks.

Many inferred that the large number of incoming soldiers meant that there might not be enough nurses/surgeons able to cope. A significant number also linked mud/dirt/long travel to an increased risk of infection. The problem of the great variety of injuries was addressed by some candidates, as was the issue of mental symptoms, presenting difficulties for nurses and surgeons in the treatment of the wounded.

Several candidates attempted to include their own knowledge and analysis of the nature of the source which was not relevant to this question. Another problem applied to a number of candidates who included vast amounts of unrewardable additional recalled knowledge about Lister, Pasteur, Simpson and Koch. Many of these assumed that the First World War happened before or during the advent of the Germ Theory or Antiseptics. Some candidates even mentioned Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale as doing their work during the First World War. It would help if candidates were able to relate developments in surgery to a timeline covering the period c1845-c1918.

An example of a Level 3 answer in question 1:

Source A tells us that the soldiers travelled by boat from France to Britain which tells us that they had to travel quite far until they got medical treatment. This meant that they could have been suffering from blood loss which will result in death. Source A also says that ninety to a hundred people will arrive which suggests that the places would have been very cramped and crowded which would not have helped surgeons. Also it says that the walking wounded were upstairs which suggests that patients were very crowded which would not have helped. Also it says that the soldiers were muddy and dirty which suggests that infections were a big problem as mud would have been in the wounds and caused deaths related to infections. Also, the patients were angry which suggests that the treatment they got was very bad.

Question 2

Many of the candidates were able to achieve at least Level 2 on this question. Many however remained in Level 2 because they focused on the impression they had from studying the source, rather than the impression the artist was trying to create. Nevertheless, there were some excellent answers, the best of which not only referred to how the artist had used the content of the source to create an impression but also commented intelligently on the artist's use of colour and composition. Candidates found the negative aspects of the painting such as dirt and dead bodies, the risk of infection and the problems of treating the wounded. Better responses generally achieving Level 3 were able to focus on positives as well as negatives. These candidates had clearly looked beyond their own expectation of a trench scene and found evidence of teamwork, organisation, medical professionals and immediate first aid. There were a variety of interpretations of the message but providing they were backed up with relevant evidence this was not an issue.

One excellent Level 3 response was the following which was able to identify and comment upon both negative and positive aspects of the impression:

The artist of this image has used this graphic visual medium to supply the viewer with a gruesome image into what life would have been like on the war front. From the image we can see that there are injured or dying men lying frequently around the trenches with only a few medical aids around to help. As this was painted by the Royal Army Medical Corps the viewer is able to see the difficulties faced by these medical teams on the battlefield.

The trench in which this scene is set seems very muddy as the artist has used mainly brown tones to paint in. This gives the viewer the impression of how dreary and dark the trenches were. It gives the impression of hopelessness especially as so many men have fallen dead or injured. The trench also appears to be collapsing slightly suggesting that a grenade may have hit the trench which explains why the soldiers are injured and there a number of unoccupied helmets in the mud.

Also the viewer can see the sense of team spirit and determination that may have been as the men carrying an injured soldier on a stretcher appear to be injured themselves but are continuing to aid him nonetheless.



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Examiner Comments

The provenance above the source could be used in your answer to explain the impression.



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Examiner Tip

Avoid using too much knowledge of your own knowledge that is not linked to the impression given in the source.

Question 3

This question was generally answered well up to Level 2. Most candidates were able to consider all three sources and look at support and challenge. Most candidates offered a judgement in in this question and extracted valid content details from the sources to support it. The focus of many candidate responses was content, but some attempted to combine nature and content of the sources. However, a fairly large proportion of candidates failed to attempt cross-referencing, i.e. they were not able to enter Level 3 with an otherwise well-developed answer. Of the candidates who entered Level 3 only a minority included comments on the nature of the source. The failure to combine the elements of the extent and nature of the support in an overall judgement prevented some candidates accessing the maximum mark of 10.

Several candidates analysed the contents of the sources well, even including some remarks regarding their nature, but failed to link their answers to the question focus.

Too many candidates worked through each source individually and then had a very basic concluding paragraph in which they included weak cross-referencing. A more effective technique would be to cross-reference throughout the answer.

**ResultsPlus****Examiner Tip**

Candidates should substantiate all their claims with examples from the sources. They should then make some judgement, not only in the conclusion, but also within discussion of the various sources.

How far do Sources A, B and C suggest that the treatment of casualties was successful? Explain your answer, using Sources A, B and C.

(10)

Sources A, B and C all describe the surgical process undertaken during the First World War. All of them depict a great problem in treating the patients properly for a number of reasons.

For example, one reason is through the problem that the dirty, disease ridden trenches or the overcrowded ~~hospital~~ hospitals present.

For example, Source A says that the men were dirty and covered in blood presenting a serious infection and disease problem, especially since the hospitals could be taking up to a 100 patients at a time. Source B agrees with this statement. All the clutter to medical means are dirty, there are dead bodies everywhere harbouring diseases that would present even more problems. So these 2 sources seem to suggest that the treatment of casualties in World War One was unsuccessful ~~any~~ and plagued with difficulties ~~related~~ related to infections, causing the system to break down.

Source B and C seem to agree that equipment was limited. The scattered nature of equipment in the trench seems to support this, as does source C's statement, wherein it states that "... the only tools the medical officer had on the battlefield were knives, bandages and morphine..." This is almost certainly ~~not~~ not sufficient equipment to treat the horrific injuries many suffered in the war. Also, one can assume from the dirtiness of the trenches in source B that



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should use key words or phrases to help them cross-reference such as: 'whereas', 'however', 'on the other hand', 'a different view', 'agrees with' etc.

The medical equipment would not be thoroughly sterilised and therefore could possibly harbour disease and infection that would be pushed into the wound, creating more problems for the medics. However Source C does state some positive about the way casualties were treated. It states that the Royal Army Medical Corps did an "efficient job" and that most patients could be suitably treated just behind the front line. This suggests that the treatment was often sufficient enough to do the required job and that many didn't have to return home at all, pulling forward a slightly different view to the terrible scenes shown and described in sources A and B. Also, despite being a ~~source~~ secondary source, source C is probably the most reliable, as it was by a historian who was able to research the topic in great depth and approach the matter from different viewpoints. Source A, a primary source may be reliable but also the nurse may have exaggerated his or her part in the effort just to make her memoirs more exciting. So, in conclusion one can gather that the treatment of casualties during the First World War, although very difficult, with the dust and disease of the trenches, one-sided hospitals. However, there were some hopes as the medical corps was efficient and many times ~~very~~ necessary operations could be performed just behind the front line successfully.

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Examiner Comments

This response combined effective cross-referencing of all three sources with evaluation of extent and nature to make an overall judgement.

Question 4

There was a tendency here, as well as elsewhere, to focus on the usefulness of a source in terms of its content, rather than its nature, origin and purpose. However, most candidates were able to offer a judgement on a source's value, though these were not necessarily related to the historian mentioned in the question.

There seems to have been great confusion regarding the reliability of the sources: a large proportion of candidates presumed that a primary source is reliable because it is a first-hand account and a secondary source can therefore never be reliable. This also ties in with the inclusion of generalised comment on bias in some responses, which owe more to memorised comment rather than evaluation of the sources contained in the paper.

Many candidates got very hung up on infection in this question, with a surprising number suggesting that the First World War took place before Pasteur's Germ Theory and Lister's work with Carbolic Acid. A significant number of candidates wrote at length about Lister and many answers suggested that infection was only a problem because surgeons couldn't be bothered to use antiseptics or aseptic conditions.

There were however, a significant number of Level 3 answers for this question, perhaps suggesting that this style of question is one that students are more comfortable with. This was also another question on which, if just one were picked, the content of the source was much more popular than its nature, origin and purpose.

Which of Sources D or E is more useful to the historian enquiring into the problems experienced by surgeons when dealing with battlefield casualties during the First World War? Explain your answer, using Sources D and E.

(10)

Source D is a secondary source as it wasn't taken at the time of the First World War. However, this doesn't necessarily make ~~it~~ a source less useful but in this case it does as it wouldn't be ^{that} useful to a historian enquiring the problems experienced by surgeons when dealing with battlefield casualties as it mostly talks about the ~~for~~ kind of injuries the surgeon had to deal with. ^{Similarly} Source E is also a secondary source as it wasn't written at the time but the author was still there. This again doesn't affect the usefulness of the source as it talks about the problems experienced by surgeons when dealing with casualties which would be useful to the historian.

Source E could be biased as the author although didn't write the source at the time was actually there. This could affect how useful it would be to the historian as it may mean it is comprehensive to the author's opinion on plastic surgery and how the surgeons dealt with it. On the contrary, source D may be biased as it is quite negative about the issues ^{in general} instead of talking about the problems the surgeon faced when trying to deal with it. For instance, 'Many injured resulted in deadly infections.' This doesn't tell us about the problems ^{in dealing with it} that they faced, but instead refers to the extent of the

injury.

Source E is effective in telling us about problems experienced by surgeons during the World War as which therefore could make it useful to the historian. For example 'These masks were painted as best as possible to blend with natural colouring.' This tells us that a problem that surgeons faced was making the masks and in doing so is ~~helpful~~ ^{useful} to the historian wanting to know about the problems surgeons faced. Whereas source D tells us only about the injuries instead of the problems surgeons faced in dealing with them.

Overall, I think that source E is more useful to the historian enquiring the problems experienced by surgeons as it talks more about the techniques such unlike source D which focuses on the injuries.



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Examiner Comments

This response effectively combines content and provenance to arrive at a supported judgement on utility. As a consequence, the response achieved Level 3.



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Examiner Tip

Try to comment on how the sources contents and their nature, origin and purpose affects their usefulness to the historian studying the topic.

Question 5

As in the last series a number of candidates wrote very little for this question or stopped mid-sentence. Lack of time was an issue for some who left insufficient time to tackle this question effectively, if at all. On the other hand, it was clear that candidates found this a challenging question, and those without own knowledge found it difficult to come up with a balanced judgement using only Sources E, F and G.

Some candidates tried to use their own knowledge, but mixed up the First World War with earlier conflicts, and so talked about the advances made by Pare or Florence Nightingale. Others claimed that discoveries made by Pasteur, Lister, Koch and Semmelweiss were the direct result of the First World War. Some candidates also strayed into the inter-war period and the Second World War, and seemed to really struggle with stopping at 1918. A few candidates produced answers that were not focused on surgery and strayed into the development of psychiatry. That said, there were many candidates who were able to demonstrate and use relevant own knowledge, and most of those were able to use it to demonstrate understanding of how the war led to major improvements and so were able to achieve Level 3.

There were some excellent Level 3 answers which used the sources and then went on to display detailed knowledge of the significance of Gillies' work, the development of mobile X-ray units and the improvements brought about by the use of X rays, and the developments in dealing with blood loss. Some candidates also mentioned developments in dealing with infection by washing the wounds with saline solution. It was a pity that those who mentioned this saw it as the solution to the problem of infection and didn't recognise the limitations. Pain was also covered by the use of morphine for the seriously wounded. Some answers fell into the trap of stating that as two of the sources are pictures they are reliable because pictures are always truthful. There were also some candidates who seemed to fall into the 'war is bad' type of response, instead of answering the question set. In fact few candidates presented arguments for and against the statement in order to achieve Level 4.

***5 Study Sources E, F and G and use your own knowledge.**

'The First World War led to major improvements in surgical methods and techniques.'

How far do you agree with this statement? Use your own knowledge, Sources E, F and G and any other sources you find helpful to explain your answer.

(16)

I agree with the statement above as due to the deaths of soldiers it made more people courage to find a way to reduce the deaths. For example during the First World War developments such as 'skin grafting' were developed which massively improved peoples facial figure. For example in source E it says it was used for 'severe case' which does hint that if it was not done you would most likely die from infection. However, some may disagree as 'Henry Pickerill' says that it was hated by the men and surgeons. Additionally source C, shows that x-rays were used to track shrapnel. This meant that people could survive ~~at~~ bullet and internal injuries. However it may not have had much impact because the picture shows some people posing at the surgeon to make it look like it was a ~~big~~ major improvement in technology. Also x-rays were developed before the first World War therefore ~~source G~~ x-rays^{for shrapnel} wasn't a great big development. However, War was a massive factor for the development of plastic surgery.

as due to many injuries during war, it encouraged
Harold Gillies to set up his own unit to improve
people's facial ~~figure~~ ~~figure~~ figure if they were
injured.

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Examiner Comments

This response focuses on the sources contained in the paper. Because it does attempt to address the question as to whether the advances made during the First World War were major and also shows a limited amount of own knowledge, it just achieved Level 3.

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Examiner Tip

To access higher level marks in question 5, it is necessary to use the sources, own knowledge and focus on the question set.

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