



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2024**

**GCSE History 1HI0 B1**

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## Introduction

Section B of Paper 2 assesses the British Depth Study. Candidates are required to answer three questions targeted at Assessment Objective 1 (Knowledge and Understanding) and Assessment Objective 2 (Analysis of Second Order Concepts). For 2024, the B paper was sat alongside the P paper, for a total of 64 marks.

Question 1a follows an identical format to Q1 on Paper 1. Candidates should identify two features or characteristics of the topic named in the question and then add a further detail which will develop each feature or provide context for it. It is important that candidates understand that the details need to be connected to the features – four disparate facts are limited to a maximum of two marks.

Question 1b is scored out of 12 marks and the mark scheme is an identical format to Q4 on Paper 1 and Q2 on Paper 3. This question targets the second-order concept of causation. Two stimulus points are provided, and these are intended as prompts to remind candidates what they have studied. Candidates do not have to use the stimulus points and, indeed, should not use them if they do not recognise them. Candidates should aim to cover three aspects of content in their answer. The mark scheme has been updated for the 2024 series with the removal of the Level 2 cap at 5 marks for answers that don't go beyond the stimulus points and a reference to three or more aspects of content in Levels 3 and 4.

For Question 1c, candidates have a choice between (i) and (ii). The questions may target any second-order concept, such as consequence or similarity/difference. This question follows the same principles as Q5/6 on Paper 1. As with Q1b, two stimulus points are provided to prompt candidates. It should be noted that the stimulus points will usually relate to aspects of content rather than directly indicating a factor that should be included; their use is not compulsory. There is an expectation that there will be both depth and breadth of knowledge to access the higher levels. Again, the mark scheme has been updated for the 2024 series with the removal of the Level 2 cap at 7 marks and a reference to three or more aspects of content in Levels 3 and 4.

A good proportion of candidates were able to demonstrate broad subject knowledge that supported marks being awarded in Level 3. Those answers that moved into Level 4 showed a good grasp on the conceptual focus of the question and provided a supported judgement, based on criteria; this judgement was often sustained throughout the answer as well as forming the basis of the conclusion, showing careful planning and a coherent line of reasoning. The majority of answers at Level 4 presented a balanced argument but it should be noted that this is not a required structure, as long as the student's judgement is in relation to the full conceptual focus of the question.

At Level 2, candidates would usually provide a good range of relevant content but often struggle to apply this to the second-order concept dictated in the question, often describing the 'how' or 'what' of the topic rather than addressing the question fully. It is important that candidates consider the question carefully and shape their answers in relation to its focus, whether this be causation, consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference or significance.

Within section B, Q1a uses a points-based mark scheme, while Q1b and Q1c are marked using 'best fit' against a levels of response mark scheme. Progression in AO1 is shown by the student's increasing ability to select information precisely and show wide-ranging knowledge and understanding. Progression in AO2 is shown by a response moving from simple or generalised comments to analytical explanation, showing a line of reasoning which is coherent, logical and sustained. Centres are also reminded that the indicative content in the mark scheme does not imply what must be included in a response, nor does it give any expectation as to how candidates are expected to structure their responses. Any valid analysis and detail are rewarded, and examiners noted that some candidates demonstrated impressive knowledge and understanding.

#### GCSE History specification and assessment changes

This note is a reminder that minor changes are being made to the Pearson Edexcel GCSE History specification content and assessment model: assessment and language changes apply from the June 2025 exam series onwards, and content changes from the June 2026 exam series onwards.

We strongly recommend, if you haven't already, that you familiarise yourself with these changes in time for the start of the new academic year in September 2024. Some options are affected more than others, but all options are affected by the assessment changes.

Below is a link to the summary guidance document, which will help you to find all the specific information and guidance available to help you take on board these changes:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/History/2016/Teaching-and-learning-materials/gcse-history-changes-for-2025-and-2026-summary-guidance.pdf>

If you have any queries, please contact Mark Batty, our History subject advisor, at TeachingHistory@pearson.com

## Question 1 (a)

This question asks candidates to identify two key features and details about something named in the specification, in this case, the Anglo-Saxon government. Candidates should ensure that the supporting detail links to the feature identified, and an ideal way to do that is with two separate sentences. Hence, the supporting detail is clear to examiners. Candidates should also use the spaces provided on the exam paper to guide them on how much to write.

The general overall standard of this question was good. There were very few blank responses. Strong answers could identify and add detail to two features of the Anglo-Saxon government and, most commonly, candidates referred to: the role of the King in terms of his divine right as lawmaker and the role of the Witan as an advisory group to the King and/or in appointing a new monarch.

Some candidates focused on the role of the Shire Reeves/Sheriffs through collecting tax for the government and some candidates discussed the role of religion in reference to advising the government or aiding the monarch with decisions, which if related to the Anglo-Saxon government could be accepted and credited. There was some confusion in the chronology of the Anglo-Saxon era, with some misunderstanding over who was ruling, and which monarchs were in power. Some candidates referred to William I which could not be credited as he was Norman not Anglo-Saxon.

A common misconception was writing about Anglo-Saxon society in general, medieval crime and punishment or the Feudal System/government under the Normans, none of which could be credited. There were some general comments about Anglo-Saxon money and taxation, but they could only be credited if directly linked to the Anglo-Saxon government.

1 (a) Describe **two** features of Anglo-Saxon government.

(4)

Feature 1

One feature of Anglo-Saxon government was it contained  
the witan

Feature 2

A nother feature of Anglo-Saxon government was William  
had the ~~most power~~ more power than anyone else



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response only identifies one valid feature: The Witan, with no development. The second feature references Norman King William I and therefore cannot be credited. 1 mark.

1 (a) Describe **two** features of Anglo-Saxon government.

(4)

Feature 1

One feature was the witan. These were high-ranking aristocracy that advised the king and were often Bishops, & Archbishops, and Earls.

Feature 2

A second feature was the king was the leader of the government. This is because they believed that kings were chosen and supported by God so therefore he was the most powerful.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response clearly identifies two valid features with developments: The Witan, aristocrats who advised the King and then the King who was chosen by God and was the most powerful. 4 marks



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Use your time wisely; don't write too much and use separate sentences to identify the feature and to provide additional detail.

## Question 1 (b)

This question asks candidates to explain causation and, in this case, the reasons why the Normans built so many castles in England during William I's reign. The overall standard of responses was mixed; it was pleasing to see that most candidates understood the conceptual focus of the question and numerous candidates achieved full marks. It was also pleasing to see very few blank answers. Most candidates wrote confidently about the Norman building of castles for defence against invasion, to have power over the local (often hostile) Anglo-Saxons and as a way to put down rebellion and even ensure future embryonic rebellions were quashed before they posed a real threat.

Many strong responses could consider in-depth the border with Wales and top scoring answers referenced the three Marcher Earldoms and the unique powers of William's most trusted Earls who controlled them, including the authority to build castles without the King's permission, which therefore led to more castles being built. Many candidates showed excellent knowledge of the role played by castles in the process of Normanisation, going beyond the points suggested in the indicative content by referencing the importance of castles as part of the architectural transformation of England. Stronger answers were able to link this to the specific features/design of a Motte and Bailey castle, whereas weaker answers tended to be more descriptive and did not explain the significance of these features and why they encouraged William I to build more castles. Many candidates mentioned the psychological impact and intimidation factor of the castles, whilst others focused on the role of castles in offering protection to the Normans who were outnumbered or their role as a reward to loyal followers after the Battle of Hastings 1066. Some also considered how castles were significant in reminding the Anglo-Saxons of Norman domination, especially during the years that William was absent in Normandy.

Some candidates wrote about how castles could be constructed quickly, using wood materials, and then rebuilt later. However, only some of these candidates argued explicitly that the speed of construction caused many to be built. Weaker responses tended to focus solely on the stimulus points, especially that of Rebellions, although this area was generally less well considered. Almost all candidates could identify that castles were used to reduce or subdue rebellions; however, a significant number of candidates made no reference to a specific uprising therefore limiting their progression through the mark scheme. Those candidates that considered a rebellion in-depth often referenced Edwin and Morcar's uprising 1068 and/or the Harrying of the North 1069-70. And some weaker responses mixed up the chronology of events and were unsure which rebellions happened when/where.

Some responses were unable to explain why castles were built, but rather focused on describing what castles were like, their key features and/or how castles were used and lived in. Motte and Bailey, but also Stone Keep castles were referenced.

(b) Explain why the Normans built so many castles in England during William I's reign.

(12)

You **may** use the following in your answer:

- England's border with Wales
- rebellions

You **must** also use information of your own.

One reason why the Normans built so many castles during William's reign was because they believed castle building had both physical, and psychological effect on people - therefore deterring any possible rebellions. The physical effect was ~~because~~ effective because many Anglo-Saxon villages were actually ~~destroyed~~ destroyed to make way for the building, moat, palisade fence etc. Similarly, they left a psychological effect because there was now a transfer of power (to the Normans) and a clear idea of who was now in charge. Therefore, castle building was a deterrent for unwelcoming behaviour in that sense.

Another reason why so many castles were built was to serve many different purposes. For instance, they were a look out for anybody who seemed to be invading e.g. on the border with Wales. Also, they were used as a government trading hub. Therefore, not only were the castles a visible symbol of new power ownership, but they were in fact quite useful, and not just for the king himself, but soldiers, as a hidey huttoo.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response has good understanding and reasoning with excellent use of analytical language for AO2. It includes some relevant own knowledge, but it is not always in-depth for AO1. Two aspects of content are covered, best fit Level 3 8 marks.

(b) Explain why the Normans built so many castles in England during William I's reign.

(12)

You **may** use the following in your answer:

- England's border with Wales
- rebellions

You **must** also use information of your own.

The Normans built so many castles during William's reign as it was William's way of sustaining power. It was a way William could control landownership and his wealth. ~~It~~

Motte and bailey castles were introduced to show ~~other~~ people that were not ~~Normans~~ Normans, William's way of claiming England as his own. ~~the~~

William introduced castles to prevent invasion. Again this was a way William kept control over rebellions breaking out and people fighting against him.



This response has an explanation given but with implicit links to the conceptual focus of the question and an unsustained line of reasoning for AO2. It includes some limited own knowledge for AO1. This response scored Level 2 5 marks.



Be clear on how each point relates to the question.

## Question 1 (c)(i)

Candidates overwhelmingly favoured this question. Most candidates found the question accessible and could approach it confidently, there were very few blank scripts. Many high-achieving candidates could provide in-depth knowledge and details in a coherent and logical structure with sustained arguments. Many strong responses referenced not only details of the stimulus points but also details of the other contenders for the throne coming to a well reasoning judgment based on criteria of what made a good king in 1066. Many candidates considered ideas such as strength for invasion and/or support of the Anglo-Saxon people, as well as age/prior experience to judge the contenders for the throne. Answers would often discuss the role of the Witan and what they deemed a strong King to be, showing how Edgar did not fully meet this criterion despite his connection to Anglo-Saxon society and his royal bloodline.

Strong answers were able to articulate clearly the strengths/weaknesses for several of the contenders for the throne in 1066 and use good and accurate detail to support their argument. Many candidates focused on Anglo-Saxon society not wanting a foreign king, using this to demonstrate the strengths of Edgar the Aethling and Harold Godwinson, whilst simultaneously weakening the claim of Harald Hardrada and William Duke of Normandy. Precise knowledge was conveyed to support arguments, often-including Harold Godwinson's embassy to Normandy in 1064 and specific knowledge on the Godwin family eg the death of Godwin in 1053 and with it the rise of Harold of Wessex, and Harold Godwinson's role as sub-regulus for Edward the Confessor. These were often used to discuss the strength of Harold Godwinson's and/or William of Normandy's claims to throne, whilst diminishing that of Edgar the Aethling.

Some candidates discussed Harald Hardrada's claim with accuracy, although many of these paragraphs focused on Harald Hardrada as a ferocious Viking King rather than the agreement between Harathacnut and King Magnus. Often there was reference to this as an 'old agreement between Viking Kings', showcasing accurate knowledge.

Some weaker responses confused Harold Godwinson and Edgar Aethling, and there were misconceptions around the family connection between Edward the Confessor, Edgar the Aethling and the House of Godwin. Sometimes there was misconception about Edgar the Aethling as a member of the House of Godwin, although this was limited and there was some confusion over Edgar the Aethling's family connection with Edward the Confessor with some believing he was Edward's son or cousin. There was also some confusion over Harold Godwinson's wife Edith and her connection to Edward the Confessor. Some answers did not have knowledge of Edgar the Aethling and so focused on the other rival claimants instead. Others only wrote about Edgar the Aethling and did not contrast his claim with other rivals. Occasionally there was confusion between Harold Godwinson and Harald Hardrada and some candidates claimed William of Normandy was a Viking from Norway. The House of Godwin was at times referred to as a place where the Witan met, although that was witnessed rarely.

1 I agree ~~with~~ that Edgar ~~is~~ had the strongest claim to the throne to an extent. This is because Edgar was Edwards great nephew meaning he was a blood relative of the late king. This strengthened his claim to the throne. Also his father was promised the crown before he died meaning that he would have been the natural heir anyway.

However Edgar was only 15 and lacked experience and support making him ~~an~~ look less promising compared to the 3 other claimants. Harold Godwinson had previously been Edwards chancellor and reigned while Edward was on a religious break. These all strengthened his main claim that Edward left the crown to Harold on his deathbed, which was backed by Anglo-Saxon chronicles.

Also another claimant to the throne was

Harald Godwinson. Harald was a very strong viking warrior whose claim was based on a previous claim made to his father - like Edgar, but instead the crown was given to Edward the Confessor. So when the English crown came up for grabs again Harald felt he should reinstate what ~~his~~ was stolen from his father. This suggests that maybe Harald should have had the throne due to his father being denied the crown.

Lastly the the strongest claimant in my opinion was William the Conqueror. He was previously Duke of Normandy and claimed that Edward ~~prayed~~ swore on religious grounds that William would be crowned king. William had a lot of support behind his claim including the Pope. This implied that God was on his side. As religion was huge during the Anglo-Saxon period having a religious figure on <sup>William's</sup> ~~your~~ side was an important part ~~that~~ of why his claim was so strong.



This response shows some analysis which is mainly directed at the conceptual focus of the question. It shows a generally sustained line of reasoning for AO2. Accurate and relevant information is included for AO1 and an overall judgement is asserted but not fully justified. This response meets the requirement for Level 3, scoring Level 3 – 11 marks.

I partly agree ~~to this~~ with this statement because Edgar was in fact related to Edward the Confessor meaning he should have the strongest claim to the throne. But Edgar isn't of an age to be ruling a country, therefore because Edward had no his children of his own he promised the throne to Harold Godwinson.

I do agree with this statement because Edgar is the only claim to the throne that is related to Edward the Confessor. Harold Godwinson took over as king when he had no real relation with Edward the Confessor or a proper connection to him. The Godwinson family were extremely wealthy and were Earls, so Harold was already high on the hierarchy and had a lot of land. It was known that the Godwinsons in fact had more land than the king.

I disagree with this statement because although Edgar was blood related there were many reasons why he wasn't the strongest claim to the throne.

Firstly he was too young and wouldn't have been able to properly control a country and if Edward the Confessor had already promised the throne to Harold Godwinson then it should be seen as he had the strongest claim to the throne.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response shows that an explanation has been given which is limited in scope with some development for AO2. There is some accurate and relevant information included, although there are some inaccuracies in AO1 and an overall judgement is insecure and only asserted. This response meets the requirement for Level 2, scoring Level 2 – 7 marks.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Plan your answer before you start writing; this will help you to develop a consistent line of argument.

## Question 1 (c)(ii)

This significance question was by far the less popular of the two essay questions, with significantly fewer candidates answering it. There were some high-quality responses. However, the majority of answers tended to achieve the lower levels. That said, high-achieving responses could confidently discuss the William I and Robert's poor relationship considering long term factors for their strained relationship during his childhood to more acute events such as the rebellion in Normandy and William I's humiliation falling off his horse. Many candidates could discuss the concept of primogeniture and its link to Robert's ambitions in Normandy which led to rebellion and conflict with his father.

Most candidates commented on childhood events and that Robert and William I had a poor relationship from the beginning, and this was often linked to William I preferring his middle child, William Rufus. Most candidates could identify Robert 'Curthose' and the prank which ended badly and could explain that this was predominantly the reason why William I had a poor relationship with Robert. Some could unpick Robert's childhood nicknames and consider how they haunted him. The best responses used the incident of the chamber pot flinging to explain that this was a key trigger for Robert's revolt against his father, worsening their relationship. But relatively few candidates were able to deploy accurate knowledge of Robert's revolt against his father between 1077-80, or the roles played by the King of France or Matilda. Although some were aware of Matilda's financial backing of Robert, which only exasperated the deepening feud between father and son, as well as Robert's capture of Gerberoi castle, although the latter was only rarely witnessed in candidate responses.

Common confusions were the mixing up of details of Robert's rebellion in 1077-80 with the revolt of 1088, for example suggesting that Bishop Odo played a key role in Robert's rebellion against his father. Some candidates also wrote about William Rufus seizing the English throne in 1087 as a trigger for the poor relationship between Robert and his father, despite the fact William I had passed away at this point.

Most candidates' answers read like a narrative account rather than an evaluative response to the question and relatively few candidates were able to weigh up the role of Robert's ambition as a cause of the poor relationship with his father. Most responses offered a conclusion, although many did not offer a clear judgement linked to ambition, they focused more on summarising the reasons Robert and William I did not get on. Some candidates focused on the consequences of Robert's poor mental health linking that to not having a significant relationship with his father, childhood trauma, leading to lifelong resentment and the fact that Robert was a neglected child due to William sharing his time between Normandy and England, therefore spending very little time with his children. Some candidates also seemed insecure on whether Robert wished to inherit Normandy, England or both from William I.

I significantly agree with this statement because William had a tough time deciding when and where will he be attacked and then Robert began to terrorize Normandy. This spurs William's aggression towards Robert as he's always behaved like this even during childhood. However on the other hand some may argue William's wife was a significant reason for the bad relationship between him and Robert. Because (without William knowing) she kept sending Robert money to support himself. This shows how Robert's relationship with William isn't the best since he doesn't even support his own son.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response gives some basic explanation of Robert and William's difficult relationship for AO2. There is some relevant knowledge provided but with limited breadth for AO1 and there is an asserted judgement. The response meets the requirement of a low-Level 2 response: scoring Level 2 – 5 marks.

It is clear that Robert and his father King William I had a difficult relationship this could be for ~~many~~ a few reasons.

One reason was Robert's Revolt in Normandy in 1077 to 1080. Robert was a ~~a~~ good soldier and was respected by Normans. ~~So~~ when in 1077 Robert got a group of soldiers together and went on a revolt. This led to William losing trust and lots of respect for his ~~a~~ eldest son Robert, as he did not expect him to go on a revolt, as that's his own son and he did not believe he would try and take his control from him. This led to a difficult relationship between the pair.

When Robert was a child he was bullied by William I and his younger brother William Rufus. They used to call him Robert "Curtnose" meaning "Stubby / short legs" this would anger him. But ~~one day~~ William Rufus poured a full pot of excrement onto Robert's head and that was his last straw. He wanted to gain revenge, so he ran away on his revolt in Normandy. When Robert grew up he was only 27 when his father, William I had died, but it was clear that there was ~~stt~~ still difficulty in their relationship. This is because when William was deciding what to gift his 3 sons, in his will, he ~~he~~ knew he had to give England to one son, and Normandy to another. However he really did not feel Robert deserved a ~~give~~ gift ~~thsa~~ this big and was reluctant to give his ~~son~~ power to anything. However in the end Robert received the

throne to Normandy.

Lastly, ~~Robert~~ Robert was exiled from England by his father, William I. This was because of Robert's actions towards him and ~~his~~ ~~that~~ fact he was untrustworthy, due to the Revolt in Normandy in 1077-80. William I found out that his wife, Matilda, had been secretly giving Robert money behind his back. This ~~let~~ led to an even more difficult relationship for the two as William I did not see him as his son anymore and he was not happy to find out his wife had been helping him out all this ~~the~~ time while he was trying to punish him for what he did.

In conclusion, it is clear that ~~Robert and~~ William I and his eldest son Robert had a difficult relationship. However, I do not agree with the statement as I

fully believe that Robert's childhood ~~as~~ and the way he was treated by William I and his brother William Rufus led to the difficult relationship between the two as it was clear that William I ~~per~~ preferred William Rufus to Robert.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response shows some analysis which is mainly directed at the conceptual focus of the question. It shows a generally sustained line of reasoning for AO2. Accurate and relevant information is included for AO1 and an overall judgement is made with some justification. This response meets the requirement for Level 3, scoring Level 3 – 12 marks.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Be sure to weigh up factors and consider their significance in a 'how far' question.

## Paper Summary

Based on the performance seen on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Ensure that you revise content from all the sections on the specification.
- Take care to learn the topic-specific vocabulary and practise using it.
- A secure understanding of chronology is fundamentally important: carefully check the date ranges used in questions.
- Use your time wisely – don't write too much for Q1a.
- Aim to write something for every question, even if it is just general knowledge about the topic: every mark counts.
- Demonstrate depth of knowledge by including specific evidence where possible; this could include names, dates, statistics or events.
- Remember that the 16-mark question asks you to evaluate the statement in the question. Plan your answer so that you develop a consistent line of argument.
- Structuring your answer into paragraphs will make your line of reasoning clearer.
- If you run out of space, continue your answer on an additional sheet of paper and indicate this clearly in your booklet.
- If typing using a word processor, or using additional paper, you should answer the B and P papers in separate documents.

## **Grade boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

