



Examiners' Report

June 2024

GCSE History 1HI0 B2

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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 a 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 a 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 candidate'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 candidate's increasing ability to select information precisely and show wide-ranging knowledge and understanding. Progression in AO2 is shown by a response moving from basic 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 analyses and details 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 feudal system. The general overall standard of this question was good, there were very few blank responses with many candidates securing Level 2 standard. Most candidates who did achieve well ensured that the supporting detail linked to the feature identified, and an ideal way to do that is with two separate sentences so the supporting detail is clear to examiners. Candidates should also use the spaces on the exam paper to guide them on how much to write. Some candidates wrote too much for this question or overdeveloped their answers.

Strong answers often commented on the power of the King or the lack of power of the peasants. The basic idea of the feudal system being a relationship based on service and landholding was well understood. Some were able to discuss details of Knight's Service, homage and vassalage. There were pleasing responses that referenced week-work and boon-work, oaths of fealty and forfeiture. The issue of land ownership and land being granted in return for homage was also a common response. Other features included the role of Barons and Knights and the obligations they had to their respective superiors.

A common confusion was the active role of the Pope and the Catholic Church in the feudal system, and there was also some confusion over the roles of the different tiers of the system, the most common of which was mixing up of the roles of the Barons and the Knights.

1 (a) Describe two features of the feudal system.

(4)

Feature 1

one feature of the feudal system was crusades a holy war which soldiers ^{knights} would go on ~~off~~ as duty of service of the loyalty oath.
swearing on

Feature 2

The knights ¹⁵⁰ / soldiers ~~to~~ would protect the king for 40 days and 40 nights for land, protection and commitment to their king



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response identifies one valid feature in the Knights protecting the King. The first feature is not creditable. 2 marks.

1 (a) Describe **two** features of the feudal system.

(4)

Feature 1

The King^{monarch} is at the top of the feudal system meaning they have the most power over the lands

Feature 2

The peasants are at the bottom of the system as they have the least control - their main priority is looking after and farming the lands



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response clearly identifies two valid features: The King at the top of the feudal system and the peasants at the bottom with valid developments. 4 marks.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

For each of the two features try to write a sentence that separates the feature from its detail. That will make it easier for the examiner to spot the marks.

Question 1 (b)

This question asks candidates to explain causation and, in this case, why the Church had so much influence during the reigns of King Richard I and King John. The overall standard of responses was strong, and it was pleasing to see candidates achieving full marks. Most candidates wrote confidently about the Church's impact on daily life with many referencing the sacraments and belief system in which the Church was central. Many also highlighted the role of the church in people's ability to reach the afterlife and the central role the Church played in deciding how long one would stay in purgatory before their entrance into heaven or hell. This was often linked to the monetary aspect of Church influence with donations and taxes such as the tithe being mentioned. Some higher attaining candidates hinted at the monetary vice this put average people under in that not only were their spiritual lives linked to the Church but also their monetary livelihoods. The fact that the Church could have an influence beyond this life was something explored by many a top response.

Some lesser commented on, but equally valid areas, were how the Church impacted on decision making with the request to go on Crusade with Richard I and the fast-track access to heaven through indulgences being a lure for medieval people. Some candidates also considered the role of the interdict and King John's excommunication causing resentment from the Earls and people of England towards the King and how King John's feud with Pope Innocent III over the Archbishop of Canterbury proved the power of the Church and Pope, as ultimately the Church's decision prevailed. These tended to be areas explored by those candidates reaching the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Weaker responses tended to focus solely on the stimulus points, especially that of the Church's influence on everyday lives. The Church's role as landowner tended to be explored in less depth. Many candidates mentioned the fact that the Church owned land, but few had specific AO1 to support that and only a minority of candidates could fully explore that concept. That said, those who did understand the role and importance of the Church as a landowner did so well and could consider the ideas of trade, tax and influence on local people through the work of the monasteries and the Church in general.

Some responses were unable to explain why the Church was influential but focused on describing churches, sacraments and/or medieval life in general, with descriptions of crime or town life being somewhat common. Some candidates also went into detail about the feudal system and the role of farmers/peasants in the countryside, which were difficult to credit due to their lack of relevance to the question.

(b) Explain why the Church had so much influence during the reigns of King Richard I and King John.

(12)

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

- people's everyday lives
- the Church's role as landowner

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

The church had an influence during the reigns of King Richard 1st because Christianity was the main religion in 1212. The church had influence over the people because the role of the church to help people during the time Richard was king because he wasn't liked very much for how he treated people.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response has some limited AO1 on the topic and question at Level 1. It is a generalised answer which is limited in scope in terms of analysis for AO2. Overall, this response scored Level 1 – 2 marks.

(b) Explain why the Church had so much influence during the reigns of King Richard I and King John.

(12)

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

- people's everyday lives • heaven
- the Church's role as landowner

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

The church had a lot of influence during the reigns of King Richard and John because they had an effect on everyone's everyday lives. For example, people had to pay tax to the church. This meant that it had an impact on their daily lives because they had to work hard to earn money (especially peasants) in order to pay their taxes to the church. Therefore, the church had an impact on everyone's daily lives because they were expected to pay money to the church which showed the church's immense power over society.

Another reason the church had a massive influence on people ~~was~~ is because society was very religious, so they believed in sacraments which the

church ran. for example, the church set up baptisms, marriages and funerals for the deceased. This means ~~they had~~ the church had a lot of power because they helped people gain full indulgence to go to heaven through ~~these acts~~ performing these sacraments. Therefore, the church had a massive influence on society because they insured people's places in heaven which everybody in this time wanted.

Another reason why the church had a lot of influence was because it had a role as a landowner. for example, the king shared land with the church which meant that the church had almost as much ~~as~~ power as the king. This means that people looked up to the church because it owned much land which shows that they have lots of power as only ~~the~~ people who were higher in the feudal system ~~of~~ had ~~lots~~ ^{enormous} ~~of~~ land. Therefore, the church had

a lot of power as they had a role as a landowner and could give and take away land as much as they wanted which was similar to what the king ~~could do~~ did. This had a lot of influence on people because it proved that the church was also in control of the country.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response gives an explanation which focuses on the conceptual focus of the question with some analysis for AO2. It includes accurate and relevant AO1. It scores Level 3 – 9 marks.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Make sure your supporting detail is linked to your analysis throughout your answer.

Question 1 (c)(i)

Only a minority of candidates chose to answer this essay question. It focuses on the second-order concept of significance. It was generally successfully answered to a mid-level.

High-achieving responses could confidently discuss a range of key events of the Third Crusade including the siege of Acre, the battle of Arsuf and the march on Jerusalem. The best answers drew on aspects of logistics to argue that the siege of Acre and battle of Arsuf allowed the crusades to continue and ultimately secure the safe passage of pilgrims. Some responses also added the securing of money and grain supplies from Cyprus. Some Level 4 responses were able to explore the events of the crusade in detail and analyse the links between them, eg victories at Acre and Arsuf led to control of the coastline meaning it could be used as a 'launch pad' for an attempt on recapturing the Holy Land. Other areas that were commonly explored were the peace negotiations, and events such as Richard's massacre of Muslim prisoners of war and the counterattack on Jaffa. Richard's relationship with fellow crusaders was also considered occasionally, with his treatment of Duke Leopold and interactions with King Philip being a focus for analysis.

Although the knowledge of the Third Crusade was generally good, candidates sometimes produced a narrative of events with little explanation linking to Richard's achievements on crusade, which limited their progression through the mark scheme. There was some confusion over Jerusalem with a common misconception being that Richard captured the Holy city and a small number of candidates used aspects of content which were out of period, including Richard's capture and ransom, or generally Richard's achievements across his entire reign. There was also some confusion over Saladin's surrender and some candidates mentioned it in reference to the Treaty of Jaffa, whilst others focused on the surrender of Muslim forces in Acre. Some low scoring candidates compared King Richard I's reign to King John's reign rather than focusing on the question asked.

I agree ~~with~~ with the statement because Richard's victory at Acre meant he could easily try to capture Jerusalem, the Christian holy land. Having Acre meant Richard had a coast and allowed him to gain access to Jerusalem easier. If Richard had the surrounding cities then it would be a massive help in gaining Jerusalem. However, if Richard failed to win at Acre then the crusade would of felt like a massive waste and loss. This was because without this win, the treaty of Jaffa would not of been signed which allowed Christians to safely enter Jerusalem to go on pilgrimage and other things however Jerusalem still remained under Muslim control. However, I disagree that Richard's main ~~achievement~~ achievement was the victory of Acre because his main achievement would of been to regain / ~~to~~ capture Jerusalem from Muslim control, to gain respect,

rewards, revenge and for his religion.

However, Richard failed to gain Jerusalem and settled for the Treaty of Jaffa instead. This can be seen as his best/~~main~~^{main} achievement as it allowed Christians to enter Jerusalem which was under Muslim control without violence as there was lots of conflict between Muslims and Christians at the time. ~~He~~ Also, Richard also got revenge on those who persecuted and killed innocent Christians which could be seen as the biggest achievement.

Richard also gained huge respect from not only the people of England but also the Muslims he fought against, which would be the biggest achievement to him personally. ~~Overall~~

Overall, I partially agree with the statement as his victory in Acre was a huge achievement however it can be argued that other things such as the Treaty of Jaffa were an even bigger achievement. I believe that his biggest achievement will be different due to the way you

look at it and which perspective.



This response shows some analysis which is mainly directed at the conceptual focus of the question. It is not always a sustained line of reasoning for AO2. Accurate and relevant information is included in AO1 and an overall judgement is implicitly made. This response meets the requirement for mid-Level 3, scoring Level 3 – 10 marks.

Richard I's victory at Acre was his main achievement during the Third Crusade. Richard had a large battle at Acre. The Third Crusade was to recapture Jerusalem. Richard didn't quite succeed in the recapture but Saladin did surrender.

Richard and Saladin came to an agreement that Saladin would control Jerusalem however Christians were allowed to visit the city.

Therefore I agree that Richard I's victory at Acre was his main achievement because it allowed Christians back into the Holy City. Christians could now visit Jerusalem.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response gives some basic explanation of Richard's victory in the Third Crusade 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 Level 2 response, scoring Level 2 - 6 marks.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Be very clear about the conceptual focus of the essay you are writing. Don't try and make past essays you've written fit the exam.

Question 1 (c)(ii)

Candidates overwhelmingly favoured this question. Most candidates found the question accessible and could approach it confidently. 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 John's arbitrary rule and his negative relations with the Papacy. Some also referenced King John's control of the justice system and how his own expensive tastes led to much resentment with his £700 Christmas robes being a favourite aspect to comment on.

The majority of candidates could demonstrate their knowledge of King John's finances and there was often great understanding of the scutage tax and how its increased usage by King John compared to his brother King Richard I had a great and detrimental impact on his relationship with the Barons. There was understanding of the obligation of the lords to support John's military expeditions and John's opulent lifestyle was also often commented on in terms of increasing the Baron's frustration with King John. High achieving candidates were able to consider in-depth how John's failures in Normandy impacted his relationship with the Barons with key bits of analysis focusing on the monetary significance of the loss of Chateau Gaillard and the Aquitanian lands, as well as understanding of the cost involved in the Battle of Bovines and the subsequent reputational loss associated with their fall. Although the latter was mentioned rarely, some high achieving candidates could thread factors together, acknowledging the fact that both scutage tax and the loss of Normandy could be linked back to financial strains on the Barons, extenuating the already fraught relationship between them and King John.

Many candidates favoured to mention King John's arbitrary rule and his maltreatment of William De Braose's family, as well as his mistreatment of women and his marriage to Isabella of Angouleme and how this impacted his relationship with the King of France and his Aquitanian lords. Some candidates also discussed King John's abuse of the justice system and his reliance on 'new men' to secure his power and fuel his ever-increasing dictatorial rule. There was also discussion of King John's feud with the Papacy over the new Archbishop of Canterbury, with a good understanding of how the subsequent interdict and excommunication impacted the spiritual life of King John's subjects and therefore soured the relationship with the Barons, encouraging them to oppose his rule.

Only a few candidates went into any detail out of period – the events of 1215, the Siege of Rochester Castle and the Magna Carta were only rarely mentioned and those that did mention them tended to do so as a third aspect of content and therefore they could still achieve. Most candidates were able to respond positively to this question.

Some people would agree with this statement because John is remembered for his harsh taxes and financial demands. Coming into his reign, England was in a poor financial position because of Richard's ransom and this set John up badly because he wanted to raise money for battles in ~~France~~ his continental lands. As a result of this, John raised the scutage tax 11 times during his reign. This made him seem very cruel and greedy especially as Richard only raised his 3 times during his reign. This memory and comparison to Richard's reign led to the barons resenting John's harsh taxes as it fell on them very ~~bad~~ strongly. John was also resented for his arbitrary use of power when it came to taxes as during his reign he implemented a new tax called the thirteenth which made him unpopular with all the people because it was unnecessary and no other king had put this in place before. In addition to this, it was known that John spent £700 on an outfit for a Christmas party while the country was

in this difficult financial state. This led to the barons questioning his use of money and also getting angry as it was their money he was using on himself and they were not seeing the benefit. Overall, John's heavy taxes were despised by the barons as it seemed John was wasting their money and not listening to them or helping them.

On the other hand, it could be argued that it was the loss of Normandy that was the main reason for John's difficult relationship with his barons. This is because as soon as John inherited the throne, Phillip II of France attacked his continental lands and tried to take Normandy. John held it for a while but he lost support of barons in France after killing Arthur and Normandy fell to Phillip in 1204 only 5 years after John came to the throne. The ease with which Phillip took Normandy - it only took him 3 months - made John seem ~~very~~ a very weak king ^{and turned barons against him.} He had failed to do what he had sworn to do at his coronation - protect his country's land - and thus earned him the nicknames 'Lackland'.

and 'softsword'. This angered the barons as they needed a king who would protect them and many were also upset because they lost land ^{and castles} in Normandy when Philip took it. It wasn't just the original loss of Normandy that made the barons angry, it was also John's failure to recapture it. John raised around £130,000 through taxes in order to launch an attack on Normandy however this failed when he lost the Battle of Bouvines in 1214. This ended all hope of recapturing Normandy and therefore all of that money was wasted which made the barons extremely angry and distrusting of John. The loss of Normandy also meant that John lost the respect of the barons ^{and some started to rebel} which ^{highly} highlights how large the disagreement was.

Some others may argue that it was actually John's disagreement with the Pope that was the main reason for the disagreement. John refusing to accept Stephen Langton as the Archbishop of Canterbury meant that the whole of England was put under Interdict which riled the barons along with the rest of the population as England was highly religious. John's stubbornness and

(1209)

Reluctance to comply also led to his excommunication. This put the barons in a very difficult position as they now had to ^{choose} ~~choose~~ either to side with John or side with the Pope. They were angry at John for putting them in this position as they were supposed to be loyal to both the King and the Pope. The excommunication led to many barons actually leaving England and this demonstrates the large impact disagreeing with the Pope had on his relations with the barons.

In conclusion, I would argue that it was John's loss of Normandy which was the main reason for his difficult relationships. Not only did ^{John} ~~he~~ highlight ^{his} ~~the~~ lack of military power, ^(losing Chateau Gaillard) he also demonstrated his lack of communication and ^(due to cruel taxes) cruel nature. The barons put everything they had into the fund for Normandy and yet John made the Norman barons feel abandoned when he left for England in 1203 instead of providing them ^{with} aid. This demonstrated how John didn't think about others and took their money for his own purposes and then failed to deliver - ^{breaking his promises and making him look weak} meaning the barons' anger was justified. Although other factors contributed to the difficult relationship, it ^(Total for Question 1 = 32 marks) was Normandy that caused the most problems.

and was the epitome of John's failures which eventually led to rebellion and John having

TOTAL FOR BOOKLET B = 32 MARKS



This response goes beyond merely describing events or examples; it is an analytical explanation which is directed consistently at the conceptual focus of the question with a coherent, sustained and logical structure. It shows wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of the period, and it has a judgement based on well selected and justified criteria. This response scored full marks. Level 4 – 16 marks.

King John's financial demands, were the main reason for his difficult relationship with the barons in the years 1199-1214, due to the scutage tax that was put onto the barons. It is believed that there were 11 scutages, in the last years that were placed upon the barons, resulting in barons remaining unhappy. Moreover, ~~the~~ the barons required over 100,000 marks, to pay John, in order for him to continue his crusade to Jerusalem.

Some may argue, that John's continuous failure to capturing Normandy, is a main reason for his difficult relationship with the barons. This is because John had ~~required~~ continuously proved, that his scutages applied to the barons only showed that barons should not trust him as a leader. It created a poor environment as all money had been used, in the crusade, furthermore leaving

England bankrupt.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response gives some explanation and limited analysis for AO2. There is accurate and relevant information provided for AO1 and there is an inferred judgement. The response meets the requirement of a Level 2 response, scoring Level 2 – 8 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>

