



# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Level in History (WHI02/1A)

Option 1A: India, 1857-1948: The Raj  
to Partition

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## **Introduction**

It was pleasing this January to see a number of well-informed and well-written responses from candidates on IAS Paper WHI02 1A which covers the option India, 1857-1948: The Raj to Partition. The paper is divided into two sections. Section A contains a compulsory two-part question for the option studied, each part based on one source. It assesses source analysis and evaluation skills (AO2). Section B comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting five second order concepts - cause, consequence, change/ continuity, similarity/difference and significance.

Although the January entry is much smaller than the summer entry, performance had much common with previous series. Candidates continue to find Section A more challenging than Section B. Some candidates are still not clear on what is meant by 'value' and 'weight' in the context of source analysis and evaluation. For some candidates, performance in Section A is limited by the absence of the detailed knowledge base required to add contextual material to support/challenge points derived from the sources. Most candidates did use their time effectively this January and, although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer questions both sections. The ability range was diverse, but the design of the paper allowed all abilities to be catered for. Furthermore, in Section B, most responses had an analytical focus and only a few responses were wholly descriptive essays that were devoid of analysis. For the most part, essay responses were soundly structured. The most common weakness in Section B essays was the lack of a sharp focus on the precise terms of the question and/or the second order concept that was targeted. This meant that some candidates wrote at length on topics that were only peripherally related to the question, or which did not cover the whole time period.

It remains important to note that Section A topics are drawn from highlighted topics on the specification whereas Section B questions may be set from any part of any Key Topic, and, as a result, full coverage of the specification is enormously important. There was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer questions from Sections A and B.

The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

### **Question 1 (a)**

Most candidates produced answers that achieved level 2, and approximately a quarter of the candidates achieved level 3. A limited number of responses fell into level 1. The

most common reason for falling into level 1 was the failure to address one of the bullet points in the mark scheme – the application of relevant own knowledge being the bullet point most often ignored. Most candidates understood the question and were able to comprehend the source and comment on what it revealed about significance of the Royal Proclamation of 1858 in the governing of India. To achieve level 3 candidates need to go beyond summarising the evidence in the source and to draw out valid inferences that are supported and developed from the source evidence. In this enquiry. Some candidates were able to draw out valid inferences from the source evidence such as the implications that the Proclamation will be beneficial for Indian people. The best answers developed the inferences with well-selected context to establish their validity. Candidates would do well to remember that contextual knowledge does need to be used to explain and develop the inferences drawn from the source and not just to provide free-standing knowledge. Lengthy passages about the 1857 Mutiny or the role of the East India Company were often not applied relevantly to the source material. In some cases, candidates confused the Proclamation with the Royal Titles Act of 1876 which meant that the context these candidates offered was not entirely accurate. Some candidates did not use any contextual knowledge, and this did depress their achievement within the levels. Some candidates were able to use the attributes of the source effectively to develop their ideas about the value of newspaper report on the Proclamation. Some well-focused responses considered the value of the reporter being stationed in Bombay as well as his ability to represent the views of educated Indians. Those candidates who discussed the limitations could not be rewarded for that part of their answer as it is not the focus of part a responses.

### **Doc ID: 0522000056285**

This is a secure level 3 response. It has a strong contextual understanding of the Royal Proclamation. It draws a number of clear inferences, for example, on p2. that the Proclamation was consequential for the Indian people and on the benevolent light cast upon the Queen on p.2. Inferences are developed with well selected knowledge – a key attribute for responses achieving level 3 in the use of contextual knowledge. Overall, this response does have a very secure focus on value.

### **Question 1 (b)**

Candidates understood the source material and were able to select from it to develop some inferences about the response of the Government of India to the 1899 famine in India. Most candidates achieved in level 2, but there were some better focused responses that accessed levels 3 and 4. The most effective answers that weighed up the strengths and limitations of the source and used this as a basis to reach a judgement

about the weight that should be attached to the source for the enquiry. In some cases, candidates still approach the consideration of weight by writing about adding and subtracting weight rather than considering the strengths and weaknesses of the source material and then reaching a judgement about the weight that the source would bear in an enquiry. Some candidates do not distinguish between the different demands of 1a) and 1b) and consider only value in response to this question. The source offered opportunities for candidates to consider value in terms of the authority that Curzon held as the Viceroy of India and the overview that he would have of the handling of the famine, as well as his own incentive to present the government's response in the best possible light. A few candidates were able to pick up on the defensive tone used in the source to support their claim that Curzon's claims needed to be assessed in the light of the action that was taken, and used their contextual knowledge to challenge the claims by drawing on the criticisms of the slow response and the significant number of deaths. Such responses show a real grasp of the need to interrogate the content of the source and then use that as a basis to distinguish between fact and opinion when reaching an overall judgement on weight. This is a very effective way of tackling the part b question.

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This is a level 4 response. It is very focused on interrogating the evidence and reaches judgements based on valid criteria.

### **Question 2**

This question was the most popular in this series. Some of the candidates who did answer the question showed awareness of the second order concept – change– and were able to draw on evidence of a range of developments in relationship between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League in order to consider whether the relationship was continuously negative or whether it developed in more positive ways during some of the specified time period. There were good responses where candidates accessed level 4. These candidates considered negative trends, especially driven by religious differences over the consequences of the partition of Bengal and fears about the lack of Muslim political representation, and positive trend such as the Lucknow Pact and the response to the Rowlatt Acts. Some candidates did not pay sufficient attention to the time period set in the question and wrote extensively about the relationship in the 1940s. This could not be credited. It is important in planning and writing answers that candidates are clearly aware of the parameters of the question.

### **Question 3**

This question prompted several good answers with most candidates scoring in level 3 and level 4. These candidates displayed secure knowledge of the Irwin Declaration and were able to discuss its significance by contrasting it with alternative factors such as the Indian Councils Act 1909, the Government of India Acts 1919 and 1935, the Montagu Declaration 1917 and the role played by the nationalist movement and key figures like Gandhi and Nehru. Some candidates had limited knowledge of the Irwin Declaration and this did make it difficult to discuss significance with confidence. It is important to develop criteria for significance and to use this criteria to assess the relative significance of the given factor and the alternatives. This enables candidates to develop secure and supported judgements.

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This response achieved a very secure level 4. It has very secure knowledge and an explicit focus on the discussion of significance. It explores an excellent range of factors which are developed in considerable detail with well-selected and precise knowledge. Its conclusion would be strengthened by a more explicit reference to the Irwin Declaration.

### **Question 4**

This was the least popular essay question on the paper. The best responses had a secure focus on causation and were able to discuss whether the failure of the Cabinet Mission was indeed the main cause of the decision to partition India or whether there were more important causes. Candidates considered the separate electorates set up in the 1935 Government of India Act, the Lahore Resolution and issues of communal violence in the years 1946-47, as well as the long-term underlying issue of religious differences. Some candidates had little to offer beyond religious differences with little acknowledgement of the time period specified and were thus limited in achievement. The best candidates were able to develop secure criteria for judgement and apply them to the given reason and the alternatives they discussed.

## **Paper Summary**

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

### **Section A**

#### Value of Source Question (1(a))

- Candidates must be more prepared to make valid inferences rather than to paraphrase the source
- Be prepared to back up inferences by adding additional contextual knowledge from beyond the source
- Move beyond stereotypical approaches to the nature/purpose and authorship of the source e.g. look at the specific stance and/or purpose of the writer
- Avoid writing about the deficiencies of the source when assessing its value to the enquiry.

#### Weight of Source Question (1(b)/2(b))

- Candidates should be prepared to assess the weight of the source for an enquiry by being aware that the author is writing for a specific audience. Be aware of the values and concerns of that audience.
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to use contextual knowledge to support/challenge statements and claims made in the source
- Try to distinguish between fact and opinion by using your contextual knowledge of the period
- Knowledge should be integrated with the source evidence, to discuss the inferences drawn and their validity in the light of the contextual understanding of the period.
- In coming to a judgement about the nature/purpose of the source, take account of the weight you may be able to give to the author's evidence in the light of his or her stance and/or purpose
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to assess reliability by considering what has been perhaps deliberately omitted from the source. However, simply stating that a source is limited because it does not cover certain events or developments does not establish weight since no source can be comprehensive.

## **Section B**

### Essay questions

- Candidates must provide more factual details as evidence. Weaker responses lacked depth and sometimes range
- Take a few minutes to plan your answer before you begin to write your response
- Pick out three or four key themes and then provide an analysis of (for e.g.) the target significance mentioned in the question, setting its importance against other themes rather than providing a description of each
- Pay more careful attention to key phrases in the question when analysing and use them throughout the essay to prevent deviation from the central issues and concepts
- Pay careful attention to the date range in the question. Plan the answer with a focus on this range and avoid lengthy exploration of events outside of the time period set
- Try to explore links between issues to make the structure flow more logically and the arguments more integrated.

