



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Level In History (WHI04/1B)

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879–1945

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Introduction

General Comments

With three consecutive series having been sat it is now possible to make some general comments on series-on-series developments. However, it is acknowledged that many candidates are still being prepared in challenging circumstances. (see below for more specific feedback):

Selection and deployment of knowledge – As previously noted, candidates, in general, produce interesting responses that it is a pleasure to read and reward. The candidates were usually very well prepared in relation to knowledge of the specification and centres are to be commended for this. Candidates have good, detailed knowledge of the specification content and this is a facet that often stands out. Many responses were well-informed and well-written. It was particularly noticeable in the WHI04 1B papers, that centres and candidates appear to have taken heed of the June 2022 Examiner Report with regard to the need for more discrimination in the selection and deployment of knowledge. In Section A, there was less use of ‘stand alone’ information and more contextual knowledge deployed to discuss the views in the Extracts. In Section B, there was clear indication of more focused and *‘precisely selected’*(L5-BP2) knowledge.

Also, there was clear progression in many of the responses with regard to the use of the Extracts. There is clear evidence in many WHI04 1B papers that the Extracts are now being dealt with as viewpoints to be discussed, with contextual knowledge used to further this discussion. For Q1, candidates often feel the need to develop a ‘third’ aspect of debate beyond the discussion being ‘set up’ by the Extracts. This is rarely necessary or relevant (although it may be pertinent) and often leads to responses that end up ignoring the Extracts or using them very thinly. The Extracts create the debate for discussion and own knowledge is best used validating the evidence in the Extracts and showing understanding of the basis on which the Interpretation has been founded by the author(s).

Conceptual understanding and application of skills – As stated in the June 2022 Examiner Report, despite good knowledge, candidates were not always able to access high Level 3 marks and above due to a limited understanding of the conceptual focus of questions and the application of analytical skills.

In Section A, some candidates are still not using the Extracts as the basis of their response in Section A and candidates are not reaching a judgement on the given view to access the higher Levels. However, there were a significant number of candidates who were able to discuss the Extracts with confidence and discuss the viewpoints of the authors with discrimination (AO3). This was very pleasing to see. In Section B, lower-Level responses often lack focus on the wording of the question and/or the second-order concept being targeted. Awareness of the second-order concept(s) being targeted (cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference, significance) allows candidates to use criteria

with discrimination and to come to judgements that are evaluated, e.g. the primacy of the given factor in relation to other factors, the extent to which there has been change.

There were some candidates who organised their responses, particularly for Section A, in the format of the indicative content in the mark scheme. The organisation of the indicative content is not intended to be a scaffold for the organisation of responses. The indicative content is organised into distinct sections to aid the examiner in identifying the points made and the relevant contextual knowledge that might be used. Selecting key points of view without explanation and contextual knowledge deployed in a 'stand alone' manner are indicative of the lower Level descriptors and it is unlikely that such responses would be rewarded beyond Level 3. The higher Level descriptors indicate a need for an integrated response.

As in previous reports, it is worth noting that the responses are marked using a 'best-fit' process. Each bullet point strand within the generic mark scheme is considered to create an overall sense of Level and a mark applied within the Level. If a response has qualities which exemplify a variety of Levels or a strand is missing then this will be reflected by applying a 'best-fit' Level and mark. For responses which do not address an aspect of a particular strand, for example reaching a judgement in bullet point 3 for Q1, this will be reflected in the mark rewarded.

As in June, despite the ongoing challenges faced by candidates, very few failed to attempt both Sections, and most were able to produce two balanced responses, so enabling them to show their ability across AO1 and AO3 skills.

General candidate performance on each Section and specific performance on individual questions for Paper 1B are considered below.

Please note: that it is recommended that centres look at a selection of Principal Examiner Reports from across the different options within WHI04 1A-1D and previous series to get an overall sense of examiner feedback, centre approaches and candidate achievement. It is also highly recommended that centres read the general Introduction and Section A and B introductions in the Principal Examiner Reports for June 2017. These generic introductions outline the assessment requirements for WHI04 and give an indication of the skills required.

Centres may wish to refer to the Getting Started guide that is to be found on the IAL History Pearson Edexcel website. It is also useful to take note of the indicative content in the mark schemes.

Further resources that may be of use are the Applying Criteria and Developing Student's Understanding of Historical Interpretations documents to be found on the Pearson Edexcel History GCE website along with the Principal Examiner Reports for Paper 1 of

the Pearson Edexcel History GCE. The Applying Criteria document gives guidance with regard to the application of criteria for the different AOs tested at A level. The GCE Paper 1 Reports will be particularly useful for exemplification of AO3 interpretations skills (but please be aware that there are slight differences within the general Level descriptors and that AO1 is assessed for IAL). Exemplification documents are also available on the Pearson Edexcel History IAL website.

Section A

See above for general comments but it was very pleasing to see some excellent Interpretation responses.

Q1. Question 1 required candidates to analyse and evaluate the two Extracts provided while deploying knowledge related to the issues raised in the Extracts to determine how far they agreed with the view that the impact of the Balkan crises (1908-13) on Austria was responsible for the outbreak of a general European war in 1914. The author of Extract 1, G P Gooch, put forward the view that the experiences of Austria in the Balkan crises (1908-13) had put Austria into such a position that, when the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand occurred in Sarajevo, they had no choice but to act. The author of Extract 2, L C F Turner, suggested it was the existence of the German Schlieffen Plan that influenced the fast-moving nature of events of the July crisis and the outbreak of a general European war.

It was clear that most candidates had been well prepared for the Key Topic controversy and there was some excellent knowledge of the Balkans crises, although some responses were mainly description rather than analysis in relation to the Extracts.

For Extract 1, most candidates were able to discuss the nature of Austria's response to the murder in Sarajevo in relation to Serbia, Austrian concern over Serbia's relations with Russia and the impact of the Balkan Wars. For Extract 2, there was clear evaluation of the alternative view that the implications of the German Schlieffen Plan meant that the major powers of Europe were drawn into a war as a result of their alliances and mobilisation strategies. A few candidates did not engage with Extract 2 and provided their own alternative view, which meant that they were only able to be rewarded in the lower Levels for bullet point 1. Some candidates were able to select material from both Extract 1 and 2 that highlighted the influence of Germany with regard to decisions taken, often with mention of the Triple Alliance and the 'blank-cheque'.

Section B

Question 1 was more popular than Question 2.

Q2. Candidates were required to determine whether the treaties of the Versailles Settlement (1919-23) were very harsh and benefitted only the victorious powers. There was some excellent knowledge of the terms and conditions of the main treaties involved and their short and long-term consequences and implications. There were no date boundaries for this question and there was no expectation that candidates would go beyond the short-term but many produced interesting answers that extended well into the 1920s, with some going up to 1939. All relevant content was rewarded. Some responses did just describe all of the different Treaty terms but these were very much in the minority.

The best responses in Level 4 and Level 5 explored the extent to which the treaties were harsh and evaluated the benefits to the victorious powers. Some suggested that, while the intent of the Treaties was to punish, in reality some aspects were mitigated later and most questioned whether only the victors benefited and whether some benefited at all, e.g. Italy. Some responses evaluated harshness towards Germany in relation to the German treatment of Russia and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. There were a significant number of responses at Level 3, and some at Level 2, which displayed good knowledge of events but tended just to explain what happened or describe events.

Q3. Candidates were required to determine the accuracy of the statement that the most significant reason for Japan's aggressive foreign policy, in the years 1933-41, was the desire for national security. Candidates had strong knowledge of events in the 1930s relating to Japanese foreign policy and were able to take this up to the events of Pearl Harbour. Most responses showed secure chronology.

The best responses at Level 4 and Level 5 explored the extent to which the desire for national security was responsible for Japan's aggressive foreign policy in relation to other factors such as militarism, nationalism, resentment of Versailles and the League of Nations, and economic factors. Some mentioned Japan's relations with Germany. At Level 3 candidates tended to explain the reasons rather than explore the relationship between them. Low Level 3 and Level 2 responses tended to describe Japanese actions in Asia and the events leading up to Pearl Harbour.

Paper Summary

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

Section A (AO3/AO1)

- Candidates should use the time available to read both extracts carefully all the way through before planning their answer; the information in the extracts should be the foundation upon which the answer is constructed
- Candidates should aim to interpret both extracts by analysing the issues raised and showing an understanding of the arguments presented by both authors
- Candidates should use their own knowledge of the specification content to validate and discuss the interpretations being presented.

- Candidates should come to an overall judgement with regard to the view stated in the question; it is not sufficient just to summarise the views presented in the extracts.

Section B (AO1)

- Candidates should provide more precise contextual knowledge as supporting evidence. Use knowledge to provide evidence to support a sustained evaluation in relation to the conceptual focus of the question. Secure chronological knowledge enables candidates to produce a logical and coherent answer.
- Read the wording of the questions carefully, particularly if the time period of the question is stated; responses that refer to the wrong time period deploy irrelevant and inaccurate knowledge that does not directly address or only implicitly addresses the question.
- Introductions do not need to reflect a large amount of contextual detail; use introductions to establish the foundations of the argument you are about to present and to show that you understand the focus of the question.
- Use conclusions to state the judgement reached clearly and to show the relative significance of or the inter-relationship between key issues discussed in the main body of the essay; leave the examiner in no doubt as to what your judgement is and why.

