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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2024

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

Paper 2: Breadth Study with Source Evaluation

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

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January 2024

Publications Code WHI02\_1A\_2401\_ER

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## **Examiner Report: WHI02 1A India, 1857-1948: The Raj to Partition**

### **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. Candidates do need to be aware that in addressing question 1a) 'value' means that they need to focus on the strengths of the source, in the light of their contextual knowledge, which give it value and that there are no marks available in the mark scheme for consideration of limitations, whereas in addressing question 1b they need to consider both the strengths and limitations of the source, in the light of their contextual knowledge, and then use this as the basis to attribute weight to the source. For some candidates, performance in Section A is limited by the absence of the relevant 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, many responses had an analytical focus and fewer 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 1a)**

Most candidates produced answers that achieved level 3 and the remainder achieved level 2 with no candidates achieving level 1 in this series. Most candidates understood the question and were able to comprehend the source and comment on what it revealed about the reasons why Gandhi began his 'Quit India' campaign. Many candidates achieving in level 3 went beyond summarising the evidence in the source and drew 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 Indian people had run out of patience with the delays in granting home rule and the growing belief that British rule was anti-democratic. Some candidates were able to achieve secure marks in level 3 by developing the inferences with well-selected context to establish their validity although, more often than not, contextual knowledge was used to expand on the content of the source, thus displaying level 2 qualities. 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 previous campaigns led by Gandhi were often not applied relevantly to the source material. Some candidates did not use any contextual knowledge, and this did depress their achievement within the levels. Many candidates edged into level 3 by considering the authorship, nature and purpose of the source and used the attributes of the source effectively to develop their ideas about the value of the Resolution written in unequivocal language and passed by the Congress. Those candidates who discussed the limitations could not be rewarded for that part of their answer as it is not the focus of 1a responses.

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

Candidates understood the source material and were able to select from it to develop some inferences about the reaction in India to the Royal Titles Act of 1876. Most candidates achieved in level 3 and some well-focused responses accessed level 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. In level 3 and lower level 3, candidates did not distinguish between the different demands of 1a) and 1b) and considered only value in response to this question. The source offered opportunities for candidates to consider value in terms of the position of the reporter, stationed in India and able to observe reactions on the ground, and possible limitations in the publication in a British newspaper. Some candidates struggled with applying relevant contextual knowledge to this source with a

number confusing the Royal Titles Act with the Royal Proclamation and Government of India Act of 1858 and this did limit what could be achieved in bullet point 2 of the mark scheme. In level 4, candidates demonstrated their ability to use contextual knowledge interrogate the evidence and use it to confirm and/or challenge the claims made by the reporter. 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.

### **Question 2**

This question was the least popular essay in this series. Most candidates achieved in level 2 and low- to mid-level 3. Some of the candidates who did answer the question showed awareness of the second order concept – significance– and were able to draw on evidence of a range of knowledge of the way in which the army in India was used by the Raj. A significant number of candidates did not pay careful attention to the dates set in the question and wrote at length about the Amritsar Massacre and its aftermath, which was out of period and could not be credited. Many candidates lacked precise knowledge on the role of the army beyond the events of the Mutiny of 1857 and therefore struggled to engage in developing arguments around internal vs external defence in the years 1857-1918.

### **Question 3**

This question prompted many good answers with most candidates scoring in level 4. These candidates displayed secure knowledge of the development of irrigation schemes and were able to weigh up their comparable benefits and come to a judgement as to which was more beneficial for the Indian people. Many considered the importance of irrigation in food production, in avoiding drought and dealing with famine and contrasted this with the importance of railways in expanding the economy, in providing employment and facilitating trade as well as enabling the spread of political ideas. The best responses developed secure criteria for judgement and applied them to the question to reach a secure, supported judgement.

#### **Question 4**

This was the most popular essay question on the paper with nearly half of the candidates selecting it and most candidates achieving in level 4. The best responses had a secure focus on consequence and were able to compare political negotiations with civil disobedience campaigns to discuss which was more successful in making progress towards independence. The most common reason for achieving below level 4 was where candidates did not pay attention to the date range and wrote extensively about events before 1919 or after 1935. In level 4, many candidates considered the successes of political negotiations, such as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1935, as well as limitations such as the failure of the Round Table Conferences and contrasted with the successes of civil disobedience campaigns such as the salt *satyagraha* and the publicity it generated for independence with the ultimate failure of the 1920 campaign that ended in violence, and used this as the basis to reach a judgment as to which was most successful. The best candidates were able to develop secure criteria to develop and support their judgement.

#### **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.

