



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Level in History (WHI02)

Paper 2: Breadth Study with Source  
Evaluation

Option 1D: South Africa, 1948- 2014

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## **Examiner Report: WHIO2 1D South Africa, 1948-2014**

### **Introduction**

It was pleasing this January to see a number of well-informed and well-written responses from candidates on IAS Paper WHIO2 1D which covers South Africa, 1948-2014. 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.

While the January entry is smaller than the summer entry, performance had much common with previous series. Candidates continue to find Section A more challenging than Section B. It has been raised in every Exam Report, but 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. Too many candidates insist on looking at the 'extent of value' rather than 'reasons for value' as asked in the question. It is in question 1b) that candidates need to address extent. Here 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 some 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 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. The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

### **Question 1a)**

Most candidates understood the question and were able to comprehend the source and comment on what it revealed about the role of Helen Suzman in opposing apartheid in the late 1950s. Most

candidates achieved in levels 2 and 3. Many candidates achieved level 3 by commenting on the provenance and relating this to value but at the lower levels some candidates did not refer to the provenance at all, whilst others merely copied what was printed in the caption and did not use the information to draw out judgements about value. Most candidates were able to select evidence from the source and explain how this related to the role of Helen Suzman. Fewer candidates drew and developed inferences from the source. Use of contextual knowledge was patchy with many responses containing none at all. As the role of Suzman is a highlighted topic in the specification, it would be expected that candidates would be able to draw on some knowledge of her career to apply to the source. At the higher marks, knowledge of Suzman's role in opposing apartheid as the sole member of the Progressive Party and her work in visiting the opponents of apartheid in prison and in raising issues on the treatment of prisoners and conditions in prisons in her parliamentary speeches were used effectively to develop the value of the source. 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 1b)**

Most candidates understood the source material and were able to select from it to demonstrate what it revealed about the reasons why Nelson Mandela was praised by the international community in the years after 1994. Many responses achieved in level 2, demonstrating an ability to comprehend, select and comment on the source material and add some relevant knowledge to expand on the evidence in the source. More responses achieved good level 3 by drawing out inferences related to Mandela's selflessness and willingness to compromise and the admiration for his work in tackling the AIDS/HIV crisis in Africa. Some candidates achieved level 4 by using their knowledge to interrogate the sources, particularly with reference to how much credit Mandela could be given for his work with AIDS/HIV during his term as President. Some candidates made good use of the provenance to the source to attribute weight, considering the value of having a source by Clinton, who clearly knew Mandela well, with the limitations of a statement written to accompany a book of Mandela's speeches, which would inevitably be positive.

### **Question 2**

About a third of candidates selected this question, and it prompted a range of responses from level 2 to level 4. The best responses displayed a good knowledge of the reasons why South Africa's relations with Britain declined, and were able to compare the importance of the given factor 'the decision to leave the Commonwealth' with alternative reasons, such as Wilson's decision to impose the UN arms embargo on South Africa, the effectiveness of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in the UK, the issues of apartheid in sport and the rise of the USA as South Africa's main trading partner to reach a conclusion as to whether leaving the Commonwealth was the main reason. In some cases, candidates were unsure of the details of South Africa's decision to leave the Commonwealth and wrote rather generally about the apartheid system. A lack of knowledge applied to the question did depress achievement in addressing this question for some candidates.

### **Question 3**

There were no responses to this question.

### **Question 4**

This was the most popular essay question on the paper with two thirds of the candidature selecting it. Most candidates understood the focus of the question and were able say something about the similar approaches of Botha and de Klerk in governing South Africa. Most achieved in high level 4 and in level 4. In level 3, candidates displayed relevant knowledge and were able to refer to some similarities and difference. Candidates referred to the similarities in that both men acknowledged that the system of government in South Africa needed reforming by reducing the restrictions on black South Africans and Coloured South Africans and drew out key differences such as Botha's use of the 'Total Strategy' to maintain the apartheid system while de Klerk's 'New Course' sought to reform apartheid by compromise. At level 4, candidates were able use secure knowledge and maintain a tight focus on the question, considering the differences and contrasting them with similarities in order to reach a supported 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.

