



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In History (4HI0) Paper 2

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General Comments

The small number of candidates sitting this first November paper meant that responses were concentrated on three of the options in Section A and three of the options in Section B. There was little evidence of candidates struggling to complete their responses on time, but several of the weaknesses in exam technique which candidates demonstrated in the summer paper were also demonstrated in this paper.

Centres may, therefore, find it helpful to consider the following points with their students in preparing them for the examination:

In Section A Question part (a), it is good technique to signpost responses by beginning paragraphs with 'one feature' 'a second feature' etc.

In Section A Question part (b), candidates must ensure that they consider both agreement and difference and try to assess the extent of that agreement/difference.

In Section A Question part (c) candidates should use information from both sources and from the extract but should also use their own contextual knowledge. To achieve the highest marks, candidates need also to reach an overall judgement on the validity of the interpretation.

In Section B Question (a) candidates need to make direct comparisons between the two dates/time periods set out in the question

In Section B Question (b) candidates are asked to consider the causes of change. Highest marks will go to responses which identify the reasons for change and also explain why those reasons brought about the change.

Question (c) asks candidates to consider the extent of change or the causes of that change. Candidates must use their knowledge and the bullet points to explain how or why change has occurred. They also need to take great care to ensure their answer is framed within the timespan given (not one in a previous question they were set in their centre!)

Individual Questions

Answers in Section A were generally confined to the First World War (A1), Russia (A2) or the USA (A3). In Section B almost all candidates chose to answer on Medicine (B2), China (B4) or the League and the UN (B5)

Section A

In **Question A1** part (a) most candidates chose to answer on the U-boat threat to Britain. Good knowledge was demonstrated, though some candidates (presumably studying Topic B6) provided information which was actually about submarines in the Second World War. The Bosnian Crisis was less well-known.

Part (b) presented few difficulties, with candidates explaining that both sources suggested the battle was a major confrontation, but disagreeing on whether the French had been able to stop the German advance.

In part (c), most candidates used the sources and extract to agree with the hypothesis and better responses explained from their contextual knowledge that the problem perhaps lay with the weakness of the Schlieffen Plan, or at least a weakness in executing it.

In **Question A2** part (a) the Lena Goldfield strike was very much the less popular choice, with some candidates demonstrating an impressive knowledge of Russia's losses in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

In part (b) some candidates could not resist the temptation to relate all they knew about Rasputin. Better reward went to those who showed that the sources provided evidence that Rasputin had considerable influence over the Tsarina but were not in agreement about the role of Germany in influencing affairs.

Part (c) saw some disappointing responses with a number of candidates addressing just one side of the argument by agreeing that the Tsarina (under the influence of Rasputin) had a very damaging impact on the Tsar's rule. In order to score well on this question, candidates also had to explain the importance of other factors, such as the impact of the war and the Tsar's poor leadership skills.

In **Question A3** part (a) candidates overwhelmingly chose to answer on mass production. Many gave good detail on the use of mass production in the car industry, though some candidates mistakenly stated that Ford had invented the assembly line. Responses on the Alphabet Agencies were varied in quality, with some candidates failing to provide details of what work was carried out by the agencies they identified.

There were strong responses to part (b) with regard to matching details of the negatives of alcohol consumption (increased law breaking, impact on the young etc), but only a minority of candidates explained that Source A was uniformly negative, suggesting that prohibition was a great mistake, while Source B was more balanced, setting out problems but at the same time suggesting that Prohibition had been partly successful.

Surprisingly, some candidates carried this approach through into part (c), readily agreeing that prohibition was a failure and ignoring the evidence provided that it had some benefits.

Section B

Question B2 part (a) called for a relatively straightforward comparison of the two major public health Acts of the nineteenth century. Some candidates had no knowledge of one or both of the Acts and so offered no comparison or talked in general terms about 'better water'. The best responses saw similarities in the need for people to be appointed to be responsible for improving public health and in ensuring the proper provision for the treatment of sewerage.

Part (b) was not well-answered, with some candidates concentrating on the continuing belief in the Four Humours and neglecting to explain the lack of funding for research and the lack of bodies for dissection.

In part (c), there were some excellent explanations of the impact of Elizabeth Garrett and the breakthroughs made by women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Best responses went on to explain that many of the changes were short-lived and due to particular circumstances, such as the First World War. Some candidates wrote at length about Florence Nightingale. Her work was largely outside the timeframe of this question, but where candidates talked about the impact of her work, reward was given. Very few candidates answered on the importance of radioactivity and where they did, knowledge was very patchy.

In **Question B4** part (a), the candidates were, in essence, asked to consider the impact of the Cultural Revolution on education. Those candidates who knew the topic, centred their answers around the decline in the importance of formal education and the significantly reduced percentage of China's population attending school or receiving university-level education. Other candidates compared education under Mao with that under Deng. This took them outside the timeframe of the question.

Part (b) proved very challenging for candidates, with many of them appearing to have no knowledge of this period.

In Part (c), most candidates chose to answer on the changing role of women. The problem of answering outside the timeframe was again apparent with some candidates writing at length about the westernisation of education under Deng and its impact on women. Regrettably the question did not require a discussion of events after 1976. Best answers discussed the greater role of women in China in politics and other areas, with the highest reward going to responses which considered how extensive the changes really were. In c(i) there were detailed responses on the importance of the Long March, though the impact of the Japanese invasion and the importance of the Battle of Huai Hai were less well explained.

In **Question B5** responses to part (a) were very much dependent upon whether candidates knew the role of the UN in the Greek-Bulgarian War. It appeared that most did not. Those candidates who did have the knowledge scored well by considering the degree of force used and the issue of compensation.

Part (b), however, was very well-answered with candidates explaining not only the need for a peace-keeping organisation but also the need to learn from the mistakes of the League. Best answers also discussed the Atlantic Charter of 1941, which set out the principles for achieving peace after the war had ended and led directly to the creation of the UN.

In Part (c), it was disappointing to see that so few candidates had knowledge of the topics on which questions were set. In c(i) some candidates had knowledge of Nansen passports and a smaller number understood why UNHCR was set up. There was, however, very little attempt to consider how far the treatment of refugees changed in the period. C (ii) also saw a lack of knowledge of events. Whilst there were some excellent, analytical answers, most candidates simply did not know what went on in one of the two countries (or, indeed both countries) and so could not construct a convincing response to the question.

