



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
November 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In History (4WHI2/01) Unit 2

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General Comments

Paper 2 Section A comprises three questions. Question part (a) focuses on Assessment Objective 1, testing knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of the period studied. Question parts (b) and (c) address Assessment Objectives 3 and 4 with candidates asked to consider two historical sources and a modern extract before answering questions based on cross-reference and evaluation of a historical interpretation.

In **Question part (a)** most candidates signpost their answer by beginning their paragraphs with 'one feature' 'a second feature' etc. This is good exam practice and saves the examiner having to determine whether there are two features being addressed. Whilst detailed answers are encouraged, some candidates wrote more than is necessary. Focused, concise responses can reach Level 3 in much less than one side and save valuable time for the higher tariff questions.

In **Question part (b)** the majority of candidates demonstrated an understanding that they should be identifying agreement and difference (or disagreement) either by quoting directly or paraphrasing the sources. A large number of candidates considered the extent of support but some of them did not provide rewardable support. It is not enough to repeat the areas of agreement and difference and then make a judgement of 'partial' agreement. Instead candidates should look for evidence of the depth of support or difference. How strongly is the case made in the source? Is there a difference in tone or overall message, as opposed to just detail? What is not required, however, is a consideration of the reliability of the individual sources. What candidates are asked to do is compare what the sources say, not whether what is said is trustworthy.

Question part (c) asks the candidates to consider a historical interpretation and the extent to which they agree with it, based on what the sources and extract tell them and their own contextual knowledge. The most effective way of beginning to answer this question is to establish what it is the extract says about the given interpretation and consider whether it in any way contains contradictory information. If so, this should be used as part of the counter-argument. Having said that, candidates should be careful about how they use the information in the extract. There is clearly a problem with arguing that the interpretation given in Extract X is correct because there is information in Extract X which supports it. Valid support for the interpretation must come from the two sources and the candidate's own knowledge - as must evidence disputing what the interpretation says.

Centres are reminded that to reach the highest marks candidates need to reach a judgement on the validity of the interpretation. Many candidates leave this aspect of their answer until a concluding final paragraph, but best responses are often those which state their position at the beginning of their response and follow it through in each paragraph.

Paper 2 Section B focuses on Assessment Objectives 1 and 2 with an emphasis on change and causation.

Part (a) asks for a candidates to explain two ways in which an aspect of a country's history in one period was different from (or similar to) another period. In this year's examination, comparison between the two periods was strong, rather than leaving the examiner to work out the differences from a narrative account of the aspect in both periods. Candidates are encouraged to use comparative vocabulary, such as 'similarly' or 'whereas', in helping demonstrate similarity or difference.

Part (b) asks candidates to consider the causes of change. Most candidates are very much at ease with this type of question, though once again this year, many responses gave the reasons for change but did not explain why those reasons brought about the change specified in the question. This is critical in reaching the marks in Level 3.

Part (c) asks candidates to consider the extent of change or the causes of that change. Sometimes this is phrased as the extent to which an event or development might have been the key turning point. The evidence from this year's paper suggests that most candidates had a good understanding of how to address such questions. Most also appreciate that to score in the higher levels, they must bring factors into their responses which are additional to the two stimulus points given in the question.

Centres are reminded that in accessing responses, examiners consider:

- the quality of explanation in answering the question
- the use of contextual knowledge in supporting the explanation
- the candidate's overall judgement and justification of that judgement.

Paper Summary

Centres often ask about common errors in candidates' responses. Reference has been made above to some of those errors, but the below may provide a useful summary.

- In Part (a) candidates sometimes provide over-lengthy responses or fail to make it clear that they are providing information on two separate features. Judgements are often left to a short summary at the end.

* In Part (b) candidates may show that there are similarities and differences in the sources, but fail to support their statements with information from the sources (though this is not possible where the suggestion is that one source says something which the other does not). Best answers sometimes explain similarity and difference but do not go on to consider the extent of the agreement/disagreement.

- In Part (c) candidates sometimes fail to address both sides of the argument, or interrogate the sources/extract in sufficient detail to find support and opposition to the hypothesis. Contextual knowledge is not always used to support arguments, leaving responses as little more than a source/extract audit. Judgements are often left to a short summary at the end.

Individual Questions

In Section A, responses were overwhelmingly addressed to the questions on the First World War (Question A1) and the USA (Question A3).

In **Question A1** part (a), Austro-Serbian rivalry and the Battle of Heligoland Bight were both attempted by candidates and there were some well-informed answers. In part (b), most candidates were able to identify both similarities and differences between the sources and many candidates went beyond these to address the extent to which the sources agreed. Part (c) was generally

answered well with many candidates using the source material and the extract effectively, though it was notable how many appeared to lack knowledge of the Battle of the Somme.

In **Question A3** part (a), government policies towards immigration in the 1920s and the Banking Act were both answered by candidates though precise knowledge was sometimes lacking. In part (b) most candidates had little difficulty pointing out similarity in the sources with regard Bonus Marchers but fewer were able to identify difference. In part (c), many candidates assessed Hoover's reaction to the Bonus Marchers effectively using the sources and extract to argue that he made a serious error which may have cost him the 1932 election.

In Section B, there were responses mainly to Changes in Medicine (B2) and China: conflict, crisis and change (B4).

In **Question B2** part (a), candidates had some grasp of the ways in which local authorities became more active in public health matters. In part (b), similarly, reasons for the lack of progress towards combating infectious diseases were known by most though fewer were able to link them directly to the outcome.

Answers to the part questions were often impressive in their knowledge, for example of chloroform and germ theory in (ci), however, they sometimes struggled to address, in this instance, how far these factors effected improvements in surgery. Likewise, in part (cii) there was some very good knowledge displayed of the work of Florey and Chain or of developments in plastic surgery. Some struggled, however, to come to a reasoned judgement on the role of the First World War (or other factors) in the improvements in medicine.

Question B4 part (a) saw some good responses but many lacked precise knowledge of the changes introduced by the late Qing reforms. Similarly, some candidates struggled in part (b) with regard to the fall of the Gang of Four. In part (ci) some candidates found it difficult to address themselves to how challenges to the government of Chiang Kai-shek changed between 1925 and 1949. A significant number simply described the different threats to the rule of the GMD with the barest attempt to consider how the nature of these challenges changed or remained the same. There were some answers to part (cii) but often, the focus of the question, on change's to women's lives, was missed entirely.

