



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In History (4WHI2)
Unit 2: Investigation and Breadth Studies

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4WHI02 ERA

Introduction

General Comments

This report should be read together with the report on 4HI02 (linear) qualification which contains examples of candidate responses.

The paper has two sections, Section A and Section B.

Section A questions have three sub-parts:

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.

Part (a) is well-answered by most candidates, and the practice of writing two separate paragraphs beginning ‘one feature’... ‘a second feature’, continues to be the best approach to answering this question although markers will still award marks for two features where this convention is not used. While some candidates write lengthy responses to this question, and generally gain high marks by doing so, the most effective responses support concise descriptions of the key features with precise and well-chosen historical detail.

Part (b) is also well-answered by most candidates and the majority identify both areas of agreement and disagreement. This is often supported by cross-references and direct comparisons. Candidates often attempt to provide some reasoning about the extent of support to reach the top levels of the mark scheme. Often this reasoning appears in a short conclusion which is a helpful approach. However, candidates can be awarded top level marks wherever this reasoning appears. Candidate performance could be improved by using that precise cross-referencing to produce a more holistic impression of the overall view provided by the sources.

In Question Part (c) candidates often produce well-structured evaluations which review the alternative views presented in the sources and the interpretation with some impressive analysis of those materials on show. Candidates must look to support their evaluations with relevant contextual knowledge and there were many good examples of candidates doing so. However, this use of contextual knowledge is an area in which many candidates could improve their performance. The role of contextual knowledge is to be used precisely to support the evaluation. This is not often achieved by writing full paragraphs of own knowledge but rather with precisely selected knowledge that is used **directly** to support the evaluation. The range and depth of this knowledge is not what is being rewarded but instead the mark schemes rewards candidates for the way it is

used. In other words, successful candidates build an argument around the sources and interpretation which is then supported by short but specific points of knowledge. A significant number of candidates analysed the provided materials impressively but without reference to contextual knowledge. Candidates often produce strong overall judgements which focus on the validity of the interpretation. Often candidates deliver these judgements in a focused conclusion but some very strong responses deliver judgements throughout the response.

Section B questions have three sub-parts:

Part (a) asks for 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. Candidates generally produce comparative responses to this question and pay careful attention to the dates mentioned.

Part (b) requires candidates to explain the causes of a given outcome. Where candidates had good knowledge of the topic they were able to provide well-structured responses focused on two clear causes supported by accurate and relevant information. In some cases, candidates wrote descriptions of the outcome itself rather than focusing on its causes or essentially repeated the same cause but with slightly different supporting information.

Part (c) asks candidates to consider the extent of change or the causes of that change. As required by the mark scheme candidates are generally able to provide an additional aspect not stated in the paper. Candidates who directly addressed the focus of the question, instead producing an unfocused narrative of events in the period, were able to reach the top levels of the mark scheme. There were many sophisticated and analytical responses to these questions.

A1

In part (a) the majority of candidates chose to write about the key features of the failure of the Schlieffen Plan with very few answers on the Second Moroccan Crisis. The majority of candidates were able to offer two key features in response to these questions.

For part (b) many candidates were able to identify key similarities and differences between the sources such as the speed of the German advance (similarity) and the level of organisation of the British defences (difference). Some were also able to show understanding of the extent of support.

In part (c) the most successful candidates used excellent contextual knowledge to support explained evaluations of the views expressed in Extract C. This knowledge was used to place the Ludendorff Offensive in the context of both its own military

innovations and the consequences for the overstretched German army. However, a significant number of responses did not make use of contextual knowledge.

A2

Candidates performed reasonably well on this question. In part (a) candidates often knew two key features of the impact of the war on Russia without always focusing on the political effects. A smaller number of candidates chose to answer the question on the effects of the New Economic Policy but those who did were generally able to identify two distinct effects.

For part (b) the sources were understood well with many candidates able to demonstrate understanding of the extent of difference and they often did this by explaining the overall views of the authors.

In approaching part (c) candidates were able to understand a single historical event in its broader historical context and they were rewarded for using their knowledge of both the events and consequences of the Lena Goldfields Strike as well as broader understanding of Tsarist rule in the period 1905-14. There was some strong analysis of the extract and sources.

A3

Candidates showed good familiarity with the impacts of the Depression on people's lives in part (a) and the vast majority of candidates chose this question. Some candidates offered generic statements about the likely impacts Depression which were not supported by good knowledge and understanding of the period.

In part (b) candidates showed a good understanding of both the specific differences and similarities between the sources as well as understanding of the extent of difference based on the views of the authors.

In part (c), contextual knowledge was used effectively and sparingly to support the evaluation. In contrast, a minority of candidates did develop the knowledge aspect of their answers at the expense of evaluating the interpretation and these felt like pre-learned responses which did not quite focus on the specific interpretation.

A4

There were a limited number of candidates for this option. Most candidates chose to answer part (a) on the role of President Johnson instead of the renewed North Vietnamese offensive (1972). Candidates writing about the role of Johnson often made generalised points about the fighting in Vietnam without focusing clearly on the role of Johnson himself.

There were many strong answers to part (b) and subtle differences between the sources were identified as well as more obvious points.

In part (c) the evaluations were often strong although some candidates relied on generalised contextual knowledge about the Vietnam War from later in the period, especially features that happened under President Johnson, to support their analysis.

A5

There were insufficient responses to this question to write a report on performance.

B1

There were insufficient candidates for this question to write a report on performance.

B2

This was the most popular question on the whole paper and many candidates have significant knowledge of the topic.

For part (a) many candidates understood the difference between the use of penicillin before and after the work of Florey and Chain but sometimes struggled to offer two distinct differences with most focusing on its availability.

Part (b) was answered quite well with a range of responses explaining the causes of lower death rate from surgery in the years 1848-1905 although in some cases candidates described changes rather than focusing on the causes of change.

For part (c) both options were well answered by many candidates. In the majority of cases candidates offered a third aspect and avoided caps in the mark scheme. It is also important that candidates learn to differentiate between individual scientific advances and changes to public health although these are often linked.

B3

There were insufficient candidates for this question to write a report on performance.

B4

Although this is a popular option on the linear paper there were insufficient candidates to write a report on performance on this modular paper.

B5

This was a popular option on this paper.

For part (a) most candidates were able to explain similarities between the UN roles in Mozambique and Somalia although some did credit the UN with successes in Somalia that were not accurate.

Candidates were very comfortable with part (b) and were able to explain two causes of the League's failure to prevent Japanese aggression in Manchuria. Responses were generally well-structured which helped examiners to award high marks.

Candidates showed a strong preference for (c)(ii) when choosing their part(c) question and detailed knowledge of the changing ability of the UN to maintain peace in the period 1945-89 was on display. Most candidates were also able to offer a third aspect.

B6

There were insufficient candidates for this question to write a report on performance.

B7

There were very few responses to this question.

On part (a) candidates showed a good general understanding of the changing relations between Israelis and Palestinians before and after the Second Intifada and used good examples to illustrate their points such as the election of Hamas and political changes in Israel.

Candidates were able to identify reasons for Nasser's renationalisation of the Suez Canal but often drifted into general descriptions of his actions rather than the causes.

Candidates generally opted for part (c)(i) on the changing nature of British policy in (c)(i). Candidates were well prepared for this question and showed impressive levels of knowledge and answer structure.

B8

There were insufficient candidates for this question to write a report on performance.

