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# **Examiners' Report**

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE History

(8HI0 2B)

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## **PE Report 8H10 2B June 2018**

AS paper 2B, which covers the options of the German Reformation (2B.1) and the Dutch Revolt (2B.2) again saw responses from across the ability range. The paper is divided into two sections. Section A contains a compulsory two-part question each based around one source and assesses 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.

In general, candidates again found Section A, the compulsory two-part source question, the more challenging largely because many were not clear what was meant by 'value' and 'weight' in the context of source analysis and evaluation (AO2). In addition, the detailed knowledge that is required to add contextual material to support and/or challenge points derived from the sources was often absent. That said, there were fewer generic comments on the provenance of the sources and more which, taking their nature, origin and purpose into consideration, were able more effectively to evaluate the use of the sources to the enquiry in each question.

Section B, the section in which candidates were given a choice of three essays in order to assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1), still tends to be done better. There were few wholly descriptive answers with most candidates attempting to engage analytically with the demands of the questions. The majority of answers were soundly structured and clearly expressed. They also made some effort to come to a judgement. Lack of detailed knowledge of the material is still an issue for some as is a tendency not to engage fully enough with the specific focus of the question. Also, there is still a significant number of answers which lack balance in their response to the questions – candidates are reminded that, at this level, there is a requirement that the stated factor in essay questions requires some development of a counter-case.

### **Question 1 (a)**

Most candidates were able to identify from the source the reasons for the controversy sparked by Tetzel's preaching and many used their own knowledge to place this in the context of the Church's teachings on purgatory and the reasons for Luther's objections. There were some very good responses which were able to infer the manner in which Tetzel manipulated his audience of largely poor peasants. Weaker responses, though aware of the historical context of the source, often paraphrased the source or were drawn into descriptions of the indulgence controversy without reference to the source itself or the enquiry.

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

There were some very good responses to this question which convincingly placed the source in the context of the Catholic Church's response to Luther and so were able to come to a valid judgement about its weight to the enquiry. So, for example, many pointed out that, despite his clear distaste for Luther, Aleandro is forced to concede the support he is gathering both in Worms and throughout Germany. Many also considered the degree to which the Cardinal was a reliable witness, arguing that because his intention was to secure a full condemnation of Luther at the Diet, he may be exaggerating its threat. However, among weaker candidates and even among those who knew the historical context well, there was a tendency not to consider fully the content

of the source – candidates are reminded of the need to make valid inferences from the source material which can be supported and developed in order to reach the higher levels.

### **Question 2 (a)**

Most candidates were able to identify this source as a peace treaty which was attempting to regularise relations between Spain and the United Provinces at least on a temporary basis. Stronger candidates tended to have more detailed understanding of the historical context and were able to place it against the background of the fatigue felt by both sides in the 1600s which forced them to consider peace even though its terms were not what either side desired. Weaker answers tended to develop only lightly the content of the source without attempting to analyse its value and a significant number clearly had no knowledge of the Truce of Antwerp. Candidates are reminded that, having been named in the specification, questions may be targeted at this document.

### **Question 2 (b)**

Good answers to this question clearly identified the content of Jacobz's diary as evidence for Alva's failure to reconquer all of the Netherlands by 1573 and considered, as a factor in assessing its weight, the position of the author as witness. They were able to infer from the source's content both the weaknesses of Alva (notably his lack of funding leading to the failure to pay his men and their increasingly mutinous state) and the determination of Orange's forces. They were able to develop this with their knowledge of Tenth Penny for example. Weaker candidates tended to take the source at face value and/or failed to use its evidence to draw conclusions about Alva's failure. There was also a tendency to write quite a lot about the background causes of the Dutch Revolt which was not the focus of this question.

### **Question 3**

This was by far the most popular question and elicited some excellent responses. Candidates generally knew a great deal about the reasons for the survival of Lutheranism in the 1520s however, many missed the specific reference in the stated factor to 'the weakness of Charles' position as Holy Roman Emperor'. While there were some very considerations of the financial and military restrictions placed on Charles which made him dependent on the cooperation of the princes in dealing with Luther, many read this as an invitation to discuss his difficulties elsewhere in the Habsburg Empire, Spain especially. However, many answers were able to discuss a range of other relevant factors, the intervention of Frederick the Wise for example, as well as the strengths and popularity of Luther's arguments for reform.

### **Question 4**

There were no answers to this question.

### **Question 5**

The notable feature of many responses to this question was the number of candidates who interpreted it as being focused on Luther's declining influence on the Reformation in Germany more generally rather on the impact of the Bigamy Scandal specifically. As a result, quite a number wrote about the damage done by Luther's support for Philip of Hesse in his marital difficulties before going on to consider this alongside his condemnation of the Peasants' Revolt for example, or the rising influence of

Melanchthon. This was not a relevant approach. On the other hand, there were some very good answers which weighed up the negative publicity gained by Luther in allowing Philip's bigamy and the damage it did to the Lutheran cause against the evidence that it was unlikely to have done much more than embarrass Luther in the religiously-polarised atmosphere of the 1540s.

### **Question 6**

This was a popular question and there were some very good responses which confidently analysed the contribution of religious factors to the increasing political instability of these years, referencing Philip's determination to enforce religious conformity, the impact of the Huguenots and the effects of the Iconoclastic Fury for example. Against this, many candidates argued that the political aims of the Grandees were not necessarily religiously-motivated and that economic issues contributed to the disorders of the time. Weaker answers lacked precise knowledge of the period and often ranged beyond it to discuss the impact of Alva for example.

### **Question 7**

This was the least popular question and many candidates struggled to evidence the successes or failures of Orange's leadership in this period with any degree of confidence. Many knew only about his contribution before 1573 and there were few who were able to discuss, for example, his role in the campaign against Parma in the late 1570s or his encouragement of Anjou.

### **Question 8**

Though many candidates were able to discuss reasons for Maurice's military successes in the period defined by the question, rather fewer were able to evidence the contribution of foreign support beyond a rather general consideration of that given by Elizabeth I. As a result, the stated factor in the question was rather glossed over and marks suffered as a result. Another feature of this question was the number who struggled with the significance of the dates and ranged more widely, especially after 1600.

Based on the performance on this paper therefore, candidates are offered this advice:

#### **Section A – Question (a)**

- Read the sources carefully with regard to the specific demands of the questions
- Prioritise making valid inferences relevant to the question using brief quotes to highlight your reasoning
- Back up these inferences by adding relevant contextual knowledge from beyond the source to explain or expand
- Move beyond generic or stereotypical comments on the nature, origin or purpose of the sources – look at the specific stance and/or purpose of the writer
- Avoid writing about the deficiencies of the source when assessing its value – concentrate instead on what it adds to the enquiry

#### **Section A – Question (b)**

- Read the sources carefully with regard to the specific demands of the questions
- Prioritise making valid inferences relevant to the question using brief quotes to highlight your reasoning
- Back up these inferences by adding relevant contextual knowledge from beyond the source to explain, expand upon or challenge its evidence

- Be aware that the author is writing for a specific audience and purpose
- Try to distinguish between fact and opinion by using your contextual knowledge of the period
- In coming to a judgement, take account of the weight you may be able to give the author's evidence in the light of their position or purpose
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to consider what has been, perhaps, deliberately omitted from the source – however, simply stating that a source is limited because it does not cover other events or developments does not establish weight as no source can be comprehensive.

### **Section B**

- Questions can be asked on any element of the Key Topics in the specification
- This is a Study in Depth so it is vital to have precise and detailed knowledge of the issues to score well – you are required to have both range and depth in your answer to access the higher levels
- Questions can be asked by targeting any of the five second order concepts – cause, consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference, significance
- Pay full attention to the stated focus of the question – aim to explain this fully before considering alternatives to give the answer balance and enable you to come to a judgement
- Be sure to respect the time frame in a question – make sure that the material you use is both relevant and covers the chronology as fully as possible
- Try and show links between the issues raised in your answer, especially in coming to a judgement