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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In History (8HI0) Paper 1B

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range in this, AS Level paper 1B.

The paper is divided into three sections. Section A comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting the second order concepts of cause and/or consequence. Section B offers a further choice of essays, targeting any of the second order concepts of cause, consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, and significance. Section C contains a compulsory question which is based on two given extracts. It assesses analysis and evaluation of historical interpretations in context (AO3). Candidates in the main appeared to organise their time effectively, although there were some cases of candidates not completing one of the three responses within the time allocated. Examiners did note a number of scripts that posed some problems with the legibility of hand writing. Examiners can only give credit for what they can read.

Of the three sections of Paper 1, candidates are generally more familiar with the essay sections, and in sections A and B most candidates were well prepared to write, or to attempt, an analytical response. Stronger answers clearly understood the importance of identifying the appropriate second order concept that was being targeted by the question. A minority of candidates, often otherwise knowledgeable, wanted to focus on causes and engage in a main factor/other factors approach, even where this did not necessarily address the demands of the conceptual focus. Candidates in the main were able to apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner suited to the different demands of questions in these two sections in terms of the greater depth of knowledge required where section A questions targeted a shorter-period, as compared to the more careful selection generally required for the section B questions covering broader timespan.

Candidates do need to formulate their planning so that there is an argument and a counter argument within their answer; some candidates lacked sufficient treatment of these. The generic mark scheme clearly indicates the four bullet-pointed strands which are the focus for awarding marks and centres should note how these strands progress through the levels.

Candidates do need to be aware of key dates, as identified in the specification, and ensure that they draw their evidence in responses from the appropriate time period.

In Section C, the strongest answers demonstrated a clear focus on the need to discuss different arguments given within the two extracts, clearly recognising these as historical interpretations. Such responses tended to offer comparative analysis of the merits of the different views, exploring the validity of the arguments offered by the two historians in the light of the evidence, both from the within the extracts, and candidates' own contextual knowledge. Such responses tended to avoid attempts to examine the extracts in a manner more suited to AO2, assertions of the inferiority of an extract on the basis of it offering less factual evidence, or a drift away from the specific demands of the question to the wider taught topic.

8H10_1B_Q01

Question 1 was a popular choice with candidates in Section A of the paper. The vast majority of candidates were able to engage with the conceptual demands of the question sufficiently, and apply appropriate knowledge in order to allow them to access the higher levels. What distinguished within these tended to be down to two issues, which were often related. Firstly, the extent to which candidates were able to go beyond basic explanations of how any particular reason may have caused poverty, in order to explore and assess the impact this actually had. Those who were able to precisely examine and substantiate arguments as to the extent to which population growth, or other factors such as inflation, did actually contribute to increases in poverty, were best placed to reach the highest levels. The second issue was the quality of supporting knowledge. A number of candidates seemed less secure on the given issue of population growth, although the majority were able to offer some explanation of how this contributed to poverty. Other issues which featured regularly were the impact of the dissolution of the monasteries, enclosure, inflation, bad harvests and taxation. Many were able to give detailed knowledge on these issues; stronger responses were clearer in shaping this material towards poverty. For example, on the former, some candidates offered detailed explanations of the impact of the closure of the monasteries which lost sight of the issue of poverty. More successful responses focused the material around clear arguments such as the impact on the monks and nuns, or the loss of support given to the locality when a monastery closed. The strongest offered convincing attempts to ascertain the way in which such reasons contributed and their relative importance, e.g. placing the dissolution within the chronological timeframe of the question and the extent to which it left a longer-term legacy, or exploring

the relationship between factors, such as population growth, inflation and changes in the use of land.

8H10_1B_Q02

This was the less popular question within Section A, although it produced a range of responses which were usually well-informed, and in the main offered some degree of analysis. However, the main issue limiting the performance was that a significant minority of candidates did not sufficiently focus on the conceptual demands of the question. This tended to be where, instead of focusing on the consequences of Henry's break with Rome, responses attempted to consider causation, e.g. tending to reinterpret the question as an examination of the reasons why Henry made the break. Thankfully responses which focused almost exclusively on this were infrequent, although a significant minority were produced which had a mixed focus. This meant that candidates who appeared to offer the requisite written ability and knowledge produced responses which had significant sections which did not answer the given question, at times meaning the valid material was a small proportion of the overall response. More successfully focused responses tended to cover the given issue, alongside the impact it had on the power of parliament (with some excellent exploration of these two issues in tandem), as well as religious consequences and other issues such as foreign relations. Some responses explored the longer-term consequences, with valid reasoning considering issues into the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, such as the extent to which any increase in authority was maintained after the changes seen under the Act of Supremacy of 1559. In some cases, responses were less secure in relating consequences back to the break with Rome, e.g. offering disconnected descriptions of rebellions or poverty.

8H10_1B_Q03

This was a popular choice of question within Section B, and a large proportion of the responses produced by candidates were in the higher levels. Sound knowledge was evident in many cases, with commonly featuring issues including the changing fortunes of the wool trade, the impact of overseas exploration, the impact of other developments in foreign trade, e.g. the changing importance of Antwerp, changes to the cloth trade due to the advent of 'new draperies', the impact of religious changes, such as the impact changes in land ownership resulting from the dissolution had on the agricultural production and thus trade, the growth of London and other demographic changes, the expansion of industries such as mining. Where responses were less successful, it tended to be due to the following reasons. Firstly, limited depth, or range of knowledge. Secondly, some candidates offered valid arguments, but made claims that were sweeping and lacking in convincing analysis, e.g. seeing the

dissolution as ending all wool production. Thirdly, a significant number of candidates did not sufficiently focus on the word 'domestic'; whilst it was valid to examine developments overseas, successful responses were those that could convincingly relate this to changes to domestic trade. Stronger responses deployed knowledge carefully to explore the second-order concept of change, and were able to securely relate examples to the given chronological period in order to substantiate arguments.

8H10_1B_Q04

Question 4 produced a broad range of responses, and the majority were able to engage with the comparative demands of the question. Less successful responses tended to be hampered by limited knowledge of the principal ministers of the two reigns, or knowledge which was significantly stronger on or other of the reigns. Such an imbalance was more likely to be evident with more limited knowledge of Burghley. There were also examples where detailed knowledge was offered for both, but with limited comparison. More successful responses made direct comparisons, exploring the extent to which there were similarities, and had a careful focus on the 'powers and influence' of the principal ministers. Common issues for discussion included Wolsey and Cromwell's involvement in seeking a solution to Henry's marital difficulties, Wolsey's loyalty to the pope, Cromwell and Burghley's involvement in the respective religious reforms, Burghley's network of patronage, and his relative long-service. A significant number of candidates highlighted the contrasting backgrounds of the ministers in relation to their respective powers and influence, whilst the argument that Cromwell and Wolsey displayed more self-interest, set against Cecil's powers and influence were geared towards serving Elizabeth's interests, although many candidates did recognise that the influence of all three ministers was contingent upon the monarch's whims. Consideration of their roles and influence in relation to the Privy Council and parliament also featured in many responses, although, in some cases, there was some confusion over the details of this.

8H10_1B_Q05

Most candidates were able to access the higher two levels, generally by recognising and explaining the arguments in the two extracts, and building on this with own knowledge. The strongest responses tended to offer a comparative analysis of the views, discussing and evaluating these in the light of contextual knowledge. Most candidates were able to identify the differences between Extract 1 and Extract 2, such as the emphasis Johnson places on the vigorous action taken, set against Warren's emphasis on more limited success, from a government motivated by a fear of disorder and a need to control. It was pleasing to see that few responses became side-tracked in an attempted analysis of the provenance of the

extracts. Where candidates were less successful, this tended to be down to a failure to see the differences between extracts, or limited use of contextual knowledge. With regards to the former, a minority of candidates at times tended to select quotations from the extracts which were to some degree removed from the wider context of the argument offered, and thus in some cases suggested the extract argued something it didn't. A minority of responses did not focus sufficiently on the government's response to the crisis, focusing largely or even exclusively on whether there was growing social distress. One final issue was that a small number of responses had difficulties with the concept of Elizabeth's government, e.g. seeing this as an entirely separate entity from Elizabeth herself. Candidates' knowledge and understanding of issues was in the main good, with commonly featuring issues being the poor laws, bad harvests and their consequences, risings and the impact of the war. A discriminating factor in success was to some extent was the deployment and development of knowledge offered, i.e. the difference between referencing an issue with contextual knowledge linked to the extract, and, at the higher levels, exploring this in relation to the precise focus of the question, and assessing the validity of argument. With regards to judgement, some candidates appeared to come down too easily on one side or the other, without sufficient consideration of different views. Whilst it is perfectly valid for to reach a judgement which is firmly one way or the other, candidates should seek to ensure they consider the merits of different views in the light of evidence. Examiners are looking for reasoned argument. Overall conclusions may be forceful and come down one way or the other, but discussion and analysis requires some degree of balance.

Paper Summary

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

Section A/B responses:

Features commonly found in responses which were successful within the higher levels:

- Candidates paying close attention to the date ranges in the question
- Sufficient consideration given to the issue in the question (e.g. main factor), as well as some other factors
- Explain their judgement fully – this need not be in an artificial or abstract way, but demonstrate their reasoning in relation to the concepts and topic they are writing about in order to justify their judgements
- Focus carefully on the second-order concept targeted in the question
- Give consideration to timing, to enable themselves to complete all three question with approximately the same time given over to each one
- An appropriate level, in terms of depth of detail and analysis, as required by the question – e.g. a realistic amount to enable a balanced and rounded answer on breadth questions.

Common issues which hindered performance:

- Pay little heed to the precise demands of the question, e.g. write about the topic without focusing on the question, or attempt to give an answer to a question that hasn't been asked – most frequently, this meant treating questions which targeted other second-order concepts as causation questions
- Answer a question without giving sufficient consideration to the given issue in the question (e.g. looking at other causes or consequences, with only limited reference to that given in the question)

- Answers which only gave a partial response, e.g. a very limited span of the date range, or covered the stated cause/consequence, with no real consideration of other issues
- Assertion of change, causation, sometimes with formulaic repetition of the words of the question, with limited explanation or analysis of how exactly this was a change, cause, of the issue within the question.
- Judgement is not reached, or not explained
- A lack of detail

Section C responses:

Features commonly found in responses which were successful within the higher levels:

- Candidates paying close attention to the precise demands of the question, as opposed to seemingly pre-prepared material covering the more general controversy as outlined in the specification
- Thorough use of the extracts; this need not mean using every point they raise, but a strong focus on these as views on the question
- A confident attempt to use the two extracts together, e.g. consideration of their differences, attempts to compare their arguments, or evaluate their relative merits
- Careful use of own knowledge, e.g. clearly selected to relate to the issues raised within the sources, confidently using this to examine the arguments made, and reason through these in relation to the given question; at times, this meant selection over sheer amount of knowledge
- Careful reading of the extracts, to ensure the meaning of individual statements and evidence within these were used in the context of the broader arguments made by the authors

- Attempts to see beyond the stark differences between sources, e.g. consideration of the extent to which they disagreed, or attempts to reconcile their arguments

Common issues which hindered performance:

- Limited use of the extracts, or an imbalance in this, e.g. extensive use of one, with limited consideration of the other
- Limited comparison or consideration of the differences between the given interpretations
- Using the extracts merely as sources of support
- Arguing one extract is superior to the other on the basis that it offers more factual evidence to back up the claims made, without genuinely analysing the arguments offered
- Heavy use of own knowledge, or even seemingly pre-prepared arguments, without real consideration of these related to the arguments in the sources
- Statements or evidence from the source being used in a manner contrary to that given in the sources, e.g. through misinterpretation of the meaning of the arguments, or lifting of detail without thought to the context of how it was applied within the extract
- A tendency to see the extracts as being polar opposites, again seemingly through expectation of this, without thought to where there may be degrees of difference, or even common ground