



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

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

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found on the website at:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

Summer 2019

Publications Code 8HI0_1E_1906_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2019

Introduction

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range in this, the fourth year of the reformed AS Level Paper 1 Option 1E: Russia, 1917-91: from Lenin to Yeltsin. 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 a 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 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_1E_Q01

On Question 1, stronger responses targeted the reasons for the difficulties faced by the Soviet governments in the years 1917-28 and included an analysis of the relationships between the key issues and the concept (causation) involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the stated factor (economic problems) and a range of other factors (e.g. political opposition to the Brest Litovsk Treaty, resistance to the imposition of one-party rule (Kronstadt and Tambov), the internal power struggle (1924-28)). Judgements made about the relative importance of economic problems were reasoned and based on clear criteria. High scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated.

Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of the reasons for the difficulties faced by the Soviet governments in the years 1917-28. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on causation or were essentially a narrative of the period under discussion. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it was not developed very far or offered only one narrow aspect of the question (e.g. one aspect of the stated factor such as War Communism or the NEP). Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

8H10_1E_Q02

On Question 2, stronger responses targeted the reasons for political stagnation in the USSR in the years 1964-82 and included an analysis of the relationships between the key issues and the concept (causation) involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the stated factor (Brezhnev's leadership) and a range of other factors (e.g. the Stalinist political legacy, the role played by senior communists such as Suslov and Shelepin, Brezhnev wanted a more responsive political system by increasing party membership and introducing the 1977 Soviet Constitution). Judgements made about the relative importance of Brezhnev's leadership were reasoned and based on clear criteria. High scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated.

Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of the reasons for political stagnation in the USSR in the years 1964-82. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on causation or were essentially a narrative of the period under discussion. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it was not developed very far or offered only one narrow aspect of the question (e.g. one aspect of the stated factor such as Brezhnev turned the communist leadership into an ageing oligarchy). Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

8H10_1E_Q03

On Question 3, stronger responses targeted the the extent to which the role of the Soviet secret police changed in the years 1917-85 and included an analysis of the relationships between the key issues and the concept (change/continuity) involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the argument (e.g. after Stalin's death, the level of secret police terror declined considerably, under Andropov the KGB employed more sophisticated techniques to control dissident groups, throughout the period, the Soviet secret police was a powerful institution and its central role was to protect the communist regime). Judgements made about change/continuity regarding the role of the Soviet secret police were reasoned and based on clear criteria. High scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated.

Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of the extent to which the role of the Soviet secret police changed in the years 1917-85. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on change/continuity or were essentially a

narrative of the period under discussion. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it was not developed very far or offered only one narrow aspect of the question (e.g. Stalin's use of the secret police). Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements

8H10_1E_Q04

On Question 4, stronger responses targeted the significance of the Soviet regime's attempts to promote a stable society in the years in the years 1953-85 and included an analysis of the relationships between the key issues and the concept (significance) involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the argument (e.g. terms and conditions of employment, extension of healthcare and housing provision, increase in state welfare spending, lack of job contentment, serious worker unrest over food prices/shortages, persistence of social problems such as alcoholism and divorce). Judgements made about the significance of the Soviet regime's attempts to promote a stable society were reasoned and based on clear criteria. High scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated.

Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of the significance of the Soviet regime's attempts to promote a stable society in the years in the years 1953-85. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on significance or were essentially a narrative of the period under discussion. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it was not developed very far or offered only one narrow aspect of the question (e.g. just a focus on employment policy under Khrushchev or Brezhnev). Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

8H10_1E_Q05

On Question 5, stronger responses were clearly focused on the extracts, and possessed the confidence and understanding to develop an extract-based analysis of the view that the Soviet Union collapsed because of the impact of the nationalist resurgence in the Soviet republics in the late 1980s. Higher scoring answers offered some comparative analysis of the two extracts, and used own knowledge effectively to examine the merits/validity of the views presented (e.g. the impact of nationalism including Yeltsin's challenge to the Soviet state, the consequences of Gorbachev's reforms and the impact of economic decline). Stronger responses were also focused on the precise question (the Soviet Union collapsed because of

the impact of the nationalist resurgence in the Soviet republics) rather than the general controversy and put forward a reasoned judgement on the given issue, referencing the views in the extracts.

Weaker answers tended to show some understanding of the extracts and attempted to focus on the impact of the nationalist resurgence in the Soviet republics in the late 1980s but were likely to under-use Extract 2 (Bell). Such responses sometimes demonstrated limited development by relying on a basic 'Gorbachev was to blame' approach. At the lower levels, basic points were selected from the extracts for illustration and comparisons made between the two extracts were fairly rudimentary. Weaker candidates sometimes also relied almost exclusively on the extracts as sources of information about the issue in the question. Others made limited use of the two extracts and attempted to answer the question relying largely on their own knowledge. Moreover, in lower scoring responses, the candidate's own knowledge tended to be illustrative (e.g. just tacked on to points from the extracts) or drifted from the main focus of the question. Furthermore, these answers were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

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 were:

- 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
- A careful focus 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