Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel

In GCE History (8HI0/1C)

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1C: Britain, 1625-1701: conflict, revolution and settlement

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range in this first post-Covid AS Level Paper 1 Option 1C: Britain, 1625-1701: conflict, revolution and settlement.

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 handwriting. 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.

Q01

On Question 1, stronger responses targeted the reasons for the instability of republican government in the years 1649-60 including an analysis of the relationships between key issues and concepts required by question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the stated factor (parliament) and a range of other factors (e.g. the development of radical religious groups, Oliver Cromwell's refusal to become king, the limitations of Richard Cromwell). Such responses demonstrated a fair depth of knowledge, applied to analysis, and offered reasoned judgements within a clearly organised and effectively communicated answer.

Lower scoring responses offered a generalised and, at best, a fairly simple limited analysis of the reasons for the instability of republican government in the years 1649-60. Such responses also tended to be off focus or essentially a narrative of the period under discussion. Weaker responses sometimes offered limited development using relevant knowledge, but this was not developed very far, or else only covered one narrow aspect of the demands of the question (e.g. of the stated factor – parliament). Low-scoring responses also tended to be fairly brief, lacking in coherence and structure, and based on unsubstantiated judgements.

Q2

On Question 2, stronger responses targeted on the reasons why religious nonconformity was able to survive persecution in the years 1660-85 and included an analysis of the relationships between key issues and concepts required by question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the stated factor (Charles II's actions) and a range of other factors (e.g. the impact of the Clarendon Code, the government lacked effective instruments of persecution, various dissenting sects were well established by 1660). Such responses demonstrated a fair depth of knowledge, applied to analysis, and offered reasoned judgements within a clearly organised and effectively communicated answer.

Lower scoring responses offered a generalised and, at best, a fairly simple limited analysis of the reasons why religious nonconformity was able to survive persecution in the years 1660-85. Such responses also tended to be off focus or essentially a narrative of the period under discussion. Weaker responses sometimes offered limited development using relevant knowledge, but this was not developed very far, or else only covered one narrow aspect of the demands of the question (e.g. of the stated factor – Charles II's actions). Low-scoring responses also tended to be fairly brief, lacking in coherence and structure, and based on unsubstantiated judgements.

Q3

On Question 3, high-scoring responses targeted how accurate it is to say that the status of women remained unchanged in the years 1625-88 by analysing the relationships between key issues and the concept (change/continuity) involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the argument (e.g. the patriarchal nature of 17th century British society, the limitations/benefits of the Marriage Act of 1650, the role of some women during the Civil War and the influence of the spread of Puritanism). Such responses demonstrated a fair depth of knowledge, applied to analysis, and offered reasoned judgements within a clearly organised and effectively communicated answer.

Lower-scoring responses offered a generalised and, at best, fairly simple limited analysis of how accurate it is to say that the status of women remained unchanged in the years 1625-88. Weaker answers tended to be off focus (not properly engaging with change/continuity) or essentially a description of women's lives during the period under discussion. Weaker responses sometimes

offered limited development using relevant knowledge, but this was not developed very far, or else only covered one narrow aspect of the demands of the question (e.g. the Toleration Act of 1650 or the Marriage Act of 1653). Low-scoring answers also tended to be fairly brief, lacking in coherence and structure, and based on unsubstantiated judgements.

Q4

On Question 4, high-scoring responses targeted the significance of the cloth trade for the development of the British economy in the years 1625-88 by analysing the relationships between key issues and the concept (significance) involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the argument (e.g. increased population and the putting-out system lowered the costs and raised the productivity of the cloth trade, the influx of skilled textile workers from abroad stimulated expansion of the industry, the impact of agricultural developments and imperial expansion, the development of London as a major trading centre). Such responses demonstrated a fair depth of knowledge, applied to analysis, and offered reasoned judgements within a clearly organised and effectively communicated answer.

Lower-scoring responses offered a generalised and, at best, fairly simple limited analysis of the significance of the cloth trade for the development of the British economy in the years 1625-88. Weaker answers tended to be off focus (not properly engaging with significance) or essentially a description of the British economy during the period under discussion. Weaker responses sometimes offered limited development using relevant knowledge, but this was not developed very far, or else only covered one narrow aspect of the demands of the question (e.g. the introduction of the ‘new draperies’ in East Anglia driven by Dutch immigration). Low-scoring answers also tended to be fairly brief, lacking in coherence and structure, and based on unsubstantiated judgements.

Q5

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 Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 encouraged the growth of parliamentary power. 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 growth of parliament’s financial control, the restrictions imposed by the Act of Succession, the monarch could still ‘hire and fire’ ministers and judges). Stronger responses were also focused on the precise question (the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 encouraged the growth of parliamentary power) rather than the general impact of the Glorious Revolution 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 extent to which the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 encouraged the growth of parliamentary power but were likely to contain misunderstandings, particularly on Extract 2 (Murphy). Such responses sometimes demonstrated limited development by relying on a basic 'parliament versus monarch' 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.