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# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2017

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level

History Unit 2: WHI02

Paper 1B: China, 1900-76

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## **Introduction**

It was pleasing to see a number of responses of a decent standard from candidates attempting the AS Paper WHI02/1B China, 1900-76. The paper is divided into two sections. Section A contains a compulsory two-part question for the option studied, each part based on one source. It assesses source 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.

Candidates tend to find Section A more challenging than Section B mainly because some of them were not clear on what was meant by 'value' and 'weight' in the context of source analysis and evaluation. Some candidates' responses lacked the detailed knowledge base required in Section A to add contextual material to support/challenge points derived from the sources. The ability range was diverse, but the design of the paper allowed all abilities to be catered for. Furthermore, in Section B, few candidates produced wholly descriptive essays which were devoid of analysis and, for the most part, responses were soundly structured. The most common weakness in Section B essays was a lack of knowledge about the topic in the question selected. It is important to realise that Section A and Section B questions may be set from any part of any Key Topic, and, as a result, full coverage of the specification is enormously important.

The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

### **Question 1**

- (a) On Question 1(a), stronger responses required a clear understanding of the source material on the reasons for the defeat of the Guomindang in the Civil War in the years 1946-49 and showed analysis by selecting some key points relevant to the question, explaining their meaning and selecting material to support valid inferences (e.g. the GMD lost the civil war because its army did not support its cause). Knowledge of the historical context concerning the reasons for the reasons for the defeat of the Guomindang in the Civil War in the years 1946-49 needs to be confidently deployed in higher scoring answers to explain or support inferences, as well as to expand or confirm some matters of detail (e.g. The GMD used vicious recruitment squads to round up peasants and conscript them into the army where they mistreated them, leading to low morale and ineffective fighting). In addition, evaluation of the source material needs to be related to the specified enquiry and based on valid criteria to show the value of the source. Similarly, explanation of utility must be referred relevantly to the nature or purpose of the source material or the position of the author (e.g. This is a report by an impartial international organisation). Most candidates did not achieve all of these qualities in their responses and did not therefore achieve level 3. Weaker responses demonstrated limited understanding of the source material on the reasons defeat of the Guomindang in the Civil War in the years 1946-49. The most common problem here was the lack of developed inferences with reference to the source material and use of explanation. Weaker candidates continue to drift into arguments concerning 'lack of value' which is not rewarded in part a. Furthermore, although the concept of utility was often addressed by noting some aspects of source provenance, it was frequently based on questionable assumptions.

(b) On Question 1(b) stronger responses demonstrated understanding of the source material on the experience of students in the Hundred Flowers Campaign and showed analysis by selecting key points relevant to the question, explaining their meaning and selecting material to support valid inferences (e.g. the intention of the Hundred Flowers Campaign was to reveal the identity of the critics of communism). Knowledge of the historical context concerning the experience of students in the Hundred Flowers Campaign was also confidently deployed in higher scoring answers to explain or support inferences as well as to expand, confirm or challenge some matters of detail (e.g. the Hundred Flowers Campaign was originally intended by Mao to expose the Party to the criticisms of the people and students were encouraged to get involved). In addition, evaluation of the source material was related to the specified enquiry and explanation of weight referred relevantly to the nature or purpose of the source material or the position of the author (e.g. Harry Wu's background suggests that he was unlikely to be sympathetic towards Communism when he was a student). Judgements were also based on valid criteria. Weaker responses demonstrated limited understanding of the source material on the experience of students in the Hundred Flowers Campaign and attempted some analysis by selecting and summarising information and making undeveloped inferences relevant to the question. Weaker responses tended to focus in comprehension without drawing inferences. Some responses struggled to ascribe weight to the evidence and used stereotypical set statements about value and limitations such as more sources would be needed to reach a judgement.

Study Source 2 in the Sources Booklet before you answer this question.

(b) How much weight do you give to the evidence of Source 2 for an enquiry into the experience of students in the Hundred Flowers Campaign?

Explain your answer using the source, the information given about it and your own knowledge of the historical context.

(15)

I ~~give~~ I give <sup>some</sup> considerable weight to the evidence of Source 2 for an enquiry into the experience of students in the Hundred Flowers Campaign as the source is an account of a university scholar, but one who has a grudge.

Harry Wu (author of this account) was a university student during 1956-1957 when the 100 Flowers Campaign took place. Considerable weight is given to this source as it's extremely detailed with quotes from himself, other students, and the secretary of the Communist Party. Also his account lines up with what ~~was~~ ~~known~~ as the 100 Flowers Campaign did just start out as a way of expressing oneself. His account shows that in the beginning of the Campaign, the Party was only asking questions as they wanted to hear from the citizens of China about their thoughts and ideas and later on, how it quickly turned into a purge of rightists as there was a torrent of criticisms flooding in from all over the country. Harry Wu mentions that he "was forced to make confessions, to tell on my classmates, and accept the Lead of my Communist



League classmate." This clearly describes how one was treated if labelled a rightist and fits in with what I know about China at that time. Therefore, giving this source considerable weight into an enquiry of the experience university students during the 100 Flowers Campaign.

However, this source is the account of only one university student and doesn't give an indication about what life was like for the million of other university students. Also, Harry Wu was the son of a prosperous banker (a social class that the CCP - Communist Center Party was trying to abolish) so it's possible that he was singled out and his experience during that time may have been worse compared to that of other students at the time.

Moreover, his account of what transpired back in 1956-57 was only published in 2009, casting some doubts about his memory recall (particularly with the quotes) and he had the time to polish his account to show ~~him~~ himself as a victim of the 100 Flowers Campaign. Not to mention the fact that he most likely holds a grudge against the Party for his imprisonment during the end of the



20<sup>th</sup> century (19 years is a long time). Therefore, not much weight can be given to the source as it doesn't depict what was occurring at the time and was only published in 2009; giving the author ample time to polish his account and bear a grudge against the Communist regime in China.

Another discrepancy in Harry Wei's account is the opinion that the 100 Flowers Campaign "was a disguised way of finding out who was for, and who was against, the Communist revolution." I disagree with this statement as the origins of the 100 Flowers Campaign was never that straightforward and I don't believe that Mao intended it as a trap. For in 1956, the 1<sup>st</sup> 5-year plan was ending and Khrushchev had just taken over Russia (as Stalin had died) and Mao wanted China to differ from Russia and believed that one of Russia's failures was its inability to communicate with its people. So ideologically the 100 Flowers Campaign was set up as a way for the people to voice their opinions ("let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred different schools of thought" - quote from Mao when setting it up). And only became a purge because the Communists were afraid \*→

In conclusion, I would give this source some



weight into an enquiry into the experience of university students during the 100 Flowers Campaign as the author of the account had firsthand experience backed up with his extensive recall of what occurred. However the fact that he came from a social class that was being abolished by the Party at that time may have caused his experience to be harsher than that of his fellow classmates. Therefore, some weight is given as it does portray one student's experience, but this particular student also has a grudge against the Party which means that this source may not be entirely accurate as Henry Wu may have omitted or changed his account so that the Party would be portrayed unfavorably.

\* that they were losing power and feared that riots and protests could occur if someone ~~was~~<sup>was</sup> able to mobilize the people against the Party.



This is a level 4 response demonstrating some understanding of the time period and the values held at the time. There is consideration of the weight of the source in reaching the judgement.



## **Question 2**

A very small number of candidates answered this question. On Question 2, stronger responses need to target the extent to which the growth of railways was the most significant factor in the economic development of China in the years 1900-27. This requires an analysis of relationships between key issues and a focus on the concept (significance) in the question. Sufficient knowledge to develop the argument is required (e.g. the expansion in construction of lines and of rolling stock, the role of foreign investment, the importance of railways in communication, the importance of river traffic, the development of the textile industry, the importance of Shanghai). Judgements made about the extent to which the growth of railways was the most significant factor in the economic development of China in the years 1900-27 need to be reasoned and based on clear criteria. Weaker responses to this question tended to be generalised and focused on any development, political and cultural rather than economic, in the time period specified in the question. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on significance or were essentially a description of policies and events during the period under discussion. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it tended to lack range/depth. Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

## **Question 3**

There were a very small number of responses to this question on the extent to which the treatment of religion in China changed in the years 1949-76. Stronger responses included an analysis of the links between key factors and a clear focus on the concept (change). Sufficient knowledge to develop the argument (e.g. the initial toleration of Confucianism which changed during the Cultural Revolution, the consistent targeting of Christianity) was demonstrated. Judgements made about the extent to which the treatment of religion in China changed in the years 1949-76 were reasoned and based on clear criteria. Higher scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated. Weaker answers tended to have limited knowledge of the treatment of religion and relied instead on generalisations or material that was not relevant to the period under discussion. They did not target the concept of change. Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

## **Question 4**

This was the most popular question and the great majority of candidates answered it. The stronger responses targeted how accurate it is to say that the Five Year Plans of 1952-62 were largely unsuccessful in modernising the Chinese economy and included an analysis of the links between key factors and a clear focus on the concept (consequence). Sufficient knowledge to develop the argument (the industrial growth under the First Five Year Plan, the improvements in transportation, the Backyard Furnace Campaign, the Great Famine) was demonstrated. Judgements made about whether the Five Year Plans of 1952-62 were largely unsuccessful in modernising the Chinese economy were reasoned and based on clear criteria. Higher scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated. Candidates distinguished between the achievements of the First and the Second Five Year Plans. Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of whether the Five Year Plans of 1952-62 were largely unsuccessful in modernising the Chinese economy. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on consequence or were essentially a description of some policies in the relevant period. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was often evident, it tended to lack range/depth. Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box  and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 2  Question 3  Question 4

The Five Year Plans were not entirely unsuccessful in modernising the Chinese economy as it can be argued that the First Five Year plan came with some initial successes. Although the ~~second~~ second Five year Plan also known as the Great Leap Forward brought disaster onto China, which ended in several millions of death.

The First Five Year Plan which was a replica of the Soviet model, met with great industrial successes. Its focuses were on increasing industrial production. Soviet experts were called in to help with the production of steel, coal and machinery. During this time steel production increased from 1.2 million tons per annum to nearly 5 million tons by 1957. Urban living standards were increasing, state control was increasing, as well as life expectancy. However Soviet experts were being payed using grain surpluses from the country side. This ~~did~~ did not meet well with a population increase, and by



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the end of the First Five Year Plan was a ~~major~~ major factor of discontent as it had led to food shortages.

During the second Five Year Plan otherwise known as the Great Leap Forward, Mao raised the expectations of development much higher than China was capable of achieving. He expected China to catch up to Britain's development rate which was impossible.

To pay for most of the development, he encouraged for households to form larger communes of Agricultural Producer Communes. He encouraged people to work together, there was almost no private ownership. Land, tools, animals were shared within APC's. Women were sent to work and children were watched over in cripshes. This was ~~all~~ all done to increase the efficiency and quantity of productive labour. Mao wished for all the communes to help in steel production as it was for him the most important element of development. By 1960 at Wuhan conference Mao as well as other experts had



checked the quality of the steel produced in blast furnaces from local communes. 49% of the steel production came from local furnaces and even Mao admitted that the quality of the steel was not good. This was made worse as famine in the country and cities was spreading. The four no's campaign had led to an invasion of caterpillars which destroyed harvests, natural hazards such as torrential rains and floods destroyed fields. Agricultural production was slumping, ~~Ru~~ Soviet experts had to be paid. And communes lied about the reality of their low yields in fear of upsetting chairman Mao.

Overall it can be argued that the first five year campaign was a success. However the Great Leap Forward turned into a disaster, causing more than 30 million deaths in the span of 5 years. After the Great Leap Forward the economy was in a horrible state. Peasants were exhausted from ~~extensive~~ intensive labour work. Production of steel from local furnaces went to waste.



This response enters level 4. It is supported by relevant own knowledge and has some judgement.

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

### Section A

#### Value of Source Question 1(a)

- Candidates must be more prepared to make valid inferences rather than to paraphrase the source
- Candidates should be prepared to back up inferences by adding additional contextual knowledge from beyond the source
- Candidates need to move beyond stereotypical approaches to the nature/purpose and authorship of the source e.g. look at the specific stance and/or purpose of the writer
- Candidates should avoid writing about the deficiencies of the source when assessing its value to the enquiry

#### Weight of Source Question 1(b)

- Candidates should be prepared to assess the weight of the source for an enquiry by being aware that the author is writing for a specific audience. Be aware of the values and concerns of that audience.
- Candidates should try to distinguish between fact and opinion by using their contextual knowledge of the period
- In coming to a judgement about the nature/purpose of the source, candidates should take account of the weight that may be given to the author's evidence in the light of his or her stance and/or purpose
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to assess reliability by considering what has been perhaps deliberately omitted from the source

### Section B

#### Essay questions

- Candidates must use more factual details as evidence to develop their answers. Weaker responses lacked depth and sometimes range
- Candidates should take a few minutes to plan their answer before beginning to write
- Candidates should pick out three or four key themes and then provide an analysis of (for e.g.) the target significance mentioned in the question, setting its importance against other themes rather than providing a description of each
- Candidates need to ensure that the knowledge they select is relevant to the theme of the question and the time period set in the question
- Candidates would benefit from paying careful attention to key phrases in the question when analysing and use them throughout the essay to prevent deviation from the central issues and concepts

- Candidates should try to explore links between issues to make the structure flow more logically and the arguments more integrated.

