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Examiners' Report
June 2011

GCE History 6HI03 B

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates in the second session of the 6HI03 B examination. Indeed, at the end of two years of modular study, many candidates wrote with sophistication and insight.

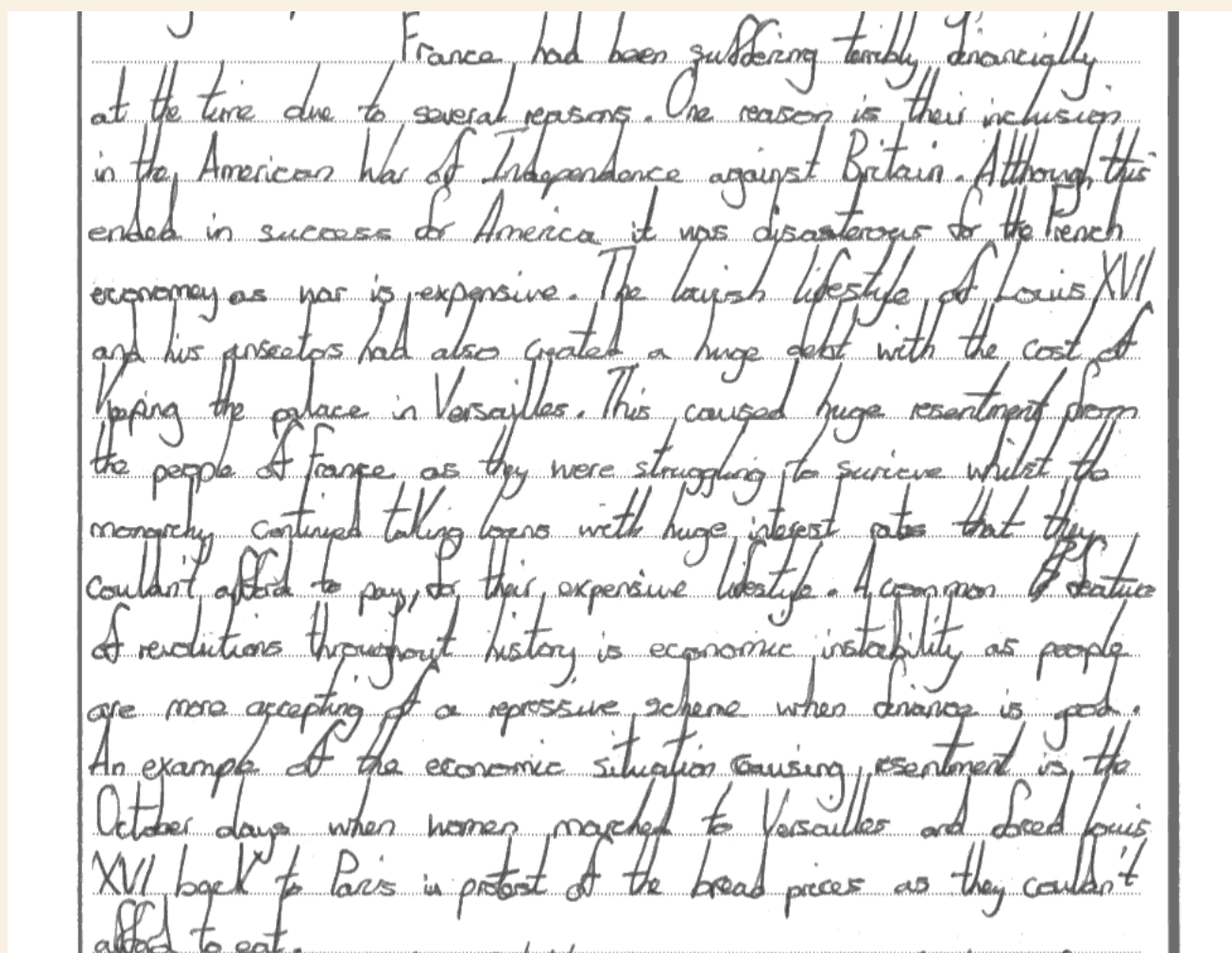
The paper requires candidates to answer two questions (a Depth Study question and an Associated Historical Controversy question) in 120 minutes. Predictably, some candidates were able to write at considerable length in this time but their responses sometimes lacked focus on the question. Relevance rather than length is the key to high marks as 'kitchen sink' responses will take a candidate only so far. Examiners want to see that candidates can use the sources and their own material effectively to answer the question set.

Centres should note that the amount of space provided in the booklet for answers is more than we would expect any answer to take. It should not be seen as a recommendation of the amount candidates should write.

Although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on Option B of students having insufficient time to answer both questions. The ability range of those entering was wide but the paper appears to have worked in the sense that the most able were stretched and the less talented were still able to attempt answers to both parts of the examination. There were also very few rubric errors. As expected, there were far more entrants for B1 (France 1786-1830: Revolution, Empire and Restoration) than for B2 (Challenging Authority: Protest, Reform and Response in Britain, c1760-1830). The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

Question 1

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to discuss the extent to which the army and the privileged orders were responsible for the collapse of absolute monarchy in France in 1789. The best responses offered a clear focus on the stated factors and an informed assessment of the role of other factors (such as the Louis XVI's failure of will, the financial problems of the crown, and popular pressure, particularly in Paris). Weaker answers tended to (1) offer unsupported assertions regarding the reasons for the collapse of absolute monarchy (2) lack focus on key events/developments in 1789 (3) produce narratives with weak links to the question (4) confuse developments in 1789 with those of 1792.



France had been suffering terribly financially at the time due to several reasons. One reason is their involvement in the American War of Independence against Britain. Although this ended in success for America it was disastrous for the French economy as war is expensive. The lavish lifestyle of Louis XVI and his associates had also created a huge debt with the cost of keeping the palace in Versailles. This caused huge resentment from the people of France as they were struggling to survive whilst the monarchy continued taking loans with huge interest rates that they couldn't afford to pay, for their expensive lifestyle. A common cause of revolutions throughout history is economic instability as people are more accepting of a repressive regime when finances are good. An example of the economic situation causing resentment is the October days when women marched to Versailles and forced Louis XVI back to Paris in protest of the bread prices as they couldn't afford to eat.



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Examiners' Comments

This low Level 3 response is broadly analytical but offers limited detail and development. Here, for example, the candidate's assessment of the French monarchy's economic problems lacks depth.



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Examiner Tip

To gain high marks on the the Depth Study question, you must have a sound subject knowledge. Check the specification for the key topics.

Question 2

The best responses to Question 2 had a strong focus on how far Napoleon's domestic reforms were 'conservative in intent', demonstrated a clear understanding of the phrase, and addressed both sides of the argument. Stronger candidates also considered a range of relevant developments or measures such as links with the Papacy, the return of émigré aristocrats, the Civil Code, reforms in education, secularisation of Church lands, and the legal and administrative reforms. Weaker answers fell into several categories (1) narratives about Napoleon's major domestic measures between 1799 and 1807 with few or no links to the issue of 'conservative in intent' (2) responses which focused overwhelmingly on just one or two areas such as the reform of education or restoration of links with the Papacy (3) essays with one side of the argument poorly developed. A significant minority of candidates did not understand what was meant by 'conservative' in the context of the question.

(Section A continued) By November 1799, Napoleon had established his place as leader of France as first consul, this was reinforced by a plebiscite in 1800. Historians debate to what extent, Napoleon's reforms in domestic policy were revolutionary, or were conservative, a mere slide back to the ancien régime, where a centralised autocratic government was in place, less civil rights and freedoms were available and the church and state were separate. The areas which can be examined as his policies in government, administration & law and church. Perhaps Napoleon did have the intent of bringing France back to a more conservative time as he established himself as a single, leader with ultimate authority and set up what many argue was a centralised dictatorship.



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Examiner Comments

This extract from a Level 5 response clearly sets out the terms of the debate and fully understands what is meant by the phrase 'conservative in intent'.

The candidate then goes on to examine several of Napoleon's domestic measures in the light of this opening statement.

Question 3

On Question 3, the strongest responses provided an in-depth assessment of the pressure to reform the political system before 1785. These answers usually focused on the impact of reform movement (e.g. Wilkes, Wyvill, the County Association Movement, and the Rockingham Whigs), the Gordon Riots, and the divisions among the reformers. Weaker candidates offered (1) answers with no real knowledge or development concerning the pressure for reform prior to 1785 - typically thin narratives or focused but largely unsupported responses (2) answers which drifted quickly from the time frame of the question to the politics of the 1790s (3) answers with a very narrow range (e.g. just the career of Wilkes).

Problems existed with the existing political system. For example, only 5% of the population could vote and even when voting took place, there were no secret ballots. Corruption was rife in Parliament and outside. MPs would buy the votes of voters and patronage was common within Parliament. Representation was unequal and there were rotten and pocket boroughs across England. For example, Dunwich. Sheffield had a population of 32,000 but didn't have an MP. These problems were noticeable inside and outside of government - pressure for reform was becoming emerging.



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Examiner Comments

This Level 3 response lacks a consistent focus on the question. Here the candidate moves away from an assessment of the pressure for reform and begins a discussion of the inadequacies of the political system which is only weakly linked to the question.



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Examiner Tip

If you use the key phrases from the question throughout your essay, this will help you to write a relevant analytical response.

Question 4

The majority of responses were able to offer an explanation for the defeat of radicalism in the 1790s. Stronger candidates often demonstrated impressive range and depth by examining the role of government repression in detail and then balancing it against the impact of other factors (such as the growth of patriotism due to the conflict with France, divisions amongst the reformers, and the impact of religious revivalism). Low scoring responses typically offered (1) a descriptive account of radicalism in the 1790s with few or no links to the question (2) a narrow focus on some aspects of government repression which largely or wholly ignored the role of other factors.

Comparing Pitt's repressive legislation at this time to ~~the~~ ~~see~~ on English version of the French 'Terror' is unfair. Though the suspension of Habeas Corpus did infringe on personal liberty, it was hardly in the same league as the events in France - and led to far less arrests and executions. ^(~200) Were Pitt and his legislation the only force against radicalism in Britain at this time, perhaps it could be credited solely with its defeat, but it was not. Evangelicism had reappeared in the 1790s, undergoing somewhat of a revival. The main group was the Clapham Sect with its prominent member, William Wilberforce.

Advocating the moral reform of the governing classes, evangelicism looked towards a vital Christianity. It
 (Section A continued) spoke of the ones in positions of power accepting their moral duty to look after those in the lower / labouring classes - and in return those lower classes would abjure radicalism and be content with their lot. Though perhaps

abjure radicalism and be content with their lot. Though perhaps rather simplistic and rooted in ^{the} class hierarchy, pamphlets such as Hannah More's Cheap Repository Tracts - a series of fifty pamphlets that extolled a moral pathway and were aimed at the labouring classes - were actually very popular as an alternative to the worryingly extreme radicalism some feared was infiltrating Britain.



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Examiner Comments

Here, in this Level 5 extract, the candidate makes an effective judgement about the role played by Pitt's measures before moving on to consider the impact of another relevant factor - evangelicalism. Note how the analysis is focused on the question.

Question 5

This proved to be an accessible and popular question. Many candidates made good use of the sources and their own knowledge to develop a confident line of argument about the relative importance of Louis XVI's mistakes and misjudgements in bringing about the downfall of the monarchy. The best responses were firmly focused on the relative importance of the stated factor and examined the debate thoroughly in the light of the issues raised by the sources. At this level, candidates were also likely to recognise the interaction of factors (for example the links between the King's misjudgements and hardening republican sentiment). Weak answers tended to (1) generalise about the reasons for the downfall of the French monarchy in 1792 without offering specific development on the issue of Louis XVI's mistakes and misjudgements (2) describe (rather than assess) the evidence for the end of the monarchy presented in the three sources with little or no integration of own knowledge for support.

While the declaration of Pillnitz in 1791 had met little outrage the Brunswick manifesto in 1792 had the opposite effect adding "to the sense of crisis" since then the moderate Leopold II had died and been replaced by the younger impetuous Francis who was far more likely to want a war when Austria allied with Prussia in early 1792 it increased tensions culminating in the Brunswick manifesto by the Prussian commander. This "threatened with the death any citizen opposing the allied advance" this was a direct threat to their safety and as source 3 states "intensified irrational fears and panic". While source 2 claims "Louis had specifically requested his fellow monarchs not to allow the conflict" the people were under the impression that

(Section B continued) the king along with the Austrian Committee were supporters of the foreign kings and wanted a war.

(Section B continued) the king along with the Austrian Committee were supportive of the Sovereign Kings and wanted a War to overthrow the revolution. The Girondins in the ~~Assembly~~^{Assembly} wanted a war for this reason to draw attention to the Kings treachery and to ~~bring~~ lure out other traitors. It is this which "deepened the gulf between the moderates and extremists" who did not want war such as Robespierre who believed the greater threat was from counter revolutionaries which increased the fear of "traitors lurking around every corner."

The "gulf" created mentioned in source 3 was due to the flight to Varennes which in turn contributed to the huge mistrust of the king and suspicion over his involvement with foreign powers brought about by the Brunswick Manifesto.

The king had seemingly betrayed the constitutional monarchy by fleeing to Varennes. His conscience was uncomfortable at his agreement to the oath of civil constitution and he felt trapped in Paris by the Assembly. He hoped that he could negotiate better from a position of freedom and so fled on the 20th June 1791. This was a huge betrayal to the people and lost him a lot of trust and support, it also undermined the constitution as Louis had left clear instructions that he did not agree with any aspect of the revolution. He had clearly misjudged the popularity of the measures and was greeted by "stunned

(Section B continued) the King along with the Austrian Committee were supportive of the Sovereign Kings and wanted a War to overthrow the revolution. The Girondins in the ~~Assembly~~^{Assembly} wanted a war for this reason to draw attention to the Kings treachery and to ~~bring~~ wipe out other traitors. It is this which "deepened the gulf between the moderates and extremists" who did not want war such as Robespierre who believed the greater threat was from counter revolutionaries which increased the fear of "traitors lurking around every corner."



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has produced a Level 3 answer by extracting some information from the sources and integrating a moderate amount of own knowledge. There is scope to offer more of both and to cross-reference the sources more effectively.

Question 6

This also proved to be an accessible question. The strongest candidates offered a sustained source-led analysis with impressive range and depth to reach a judgement about the impact of the Russian Campaign of 1812 on Napoleon's fate. At this level, responses confidently weighed the stated factor against the unity of the coalition Bonaparte now faced and the weakening effects of the Peninsular War, integrating relevant own knowledge where appropriate. Weaker answers often (1) adopted a weak 'potted' summary approach to the sources or else include little or no own knowledge in support of their argument (2) uncritically accepted the view that the Russian Campaign ruined Napoleon and failed to consider properly the other arguments set out in the sources (3) relied on largely narrative accounts of Napoleon's later campaigns.

Source 4 shows that the Russian campaign was indeed a significant blow to Napoleon's power, calling it 'catastrophic', a conclusion correlated by Source 5 which refers to the 'disaster of 1812'. Indeed, the bare figures of the campaign support this view - out of an initial force of 450 000 invading, only 25 000 remained by the end of the campaign and it can be assumed this had an effect on all later campaigns as experienced veterans were lost to an eventually fruitless endeavour. Zamoycki's assertion that this event 'sealed Napoleon's fate' is expanded upon by citing the corresponding blow to the Emperor's prestige - it 'tarnished [his] aura of superiority' to an extent that Napoleon never regained the status of 'master of Europe', and Source 4's assertion that 'every nation which resented his dominion... took heart' is supported by the fact that in 1813 and 1814 many of France's satellite states such as the Duchy of Warsaw and Holland began to abandon it through conquest or rebellion. Another way in which Russia can be seen as a turning point for Napoleon was its

(Section B continued) contribution to the state of military overextension which existed in the last years of the Empire - Napoleon chose to open up another, largely unnecessary front which spread his armies even thinner than before and brought no additional military glory. However, in other ways it can be argued that Russia was not pivotal for Napoleon - Source 5 points out that after 1812 Napoleon 'was able once more to raise a new army', suggesting the effects of the campaign in terms of troop losses was not so serious considering the vast populations Napoleon controlled by this point. Moreover, Source 6's reference to 'dramatic... French victories in early 1814' shows that the decisive event in Napoleon's career was yet to come.



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Examiner Comments

This Level 5 response has several strengths. In the extract shown about the Russian campaign (1) the arguments put forward by Source 4 are thoroughly examined (2) key points are supported by own knowledge (3) the other two sources are used briefly but effectively to qualify the impact of the Russian campaign.



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Examiner Tip

During the planning stage, after you have identified the key issues raised by the sources, add your own knowledge to these points. That way, you'll find it easier to integrate the two elements in the actual essay.

Question 7

Here, the strongest candidates demonstrated a firm grasp of the controversy and assessed the source arguments about the reasons for the 'danger of riot and revolution' confidently. At this level, own knowledge was often extensive but, more importantly, it was firmly tied to addressing the debate within the sources (which concentrated on lack of effective policing, radical attitudes and social and economic conditions). Weak responses typically offered (1) a largely unsupported commentary on the dangers of riot and revolution in the period 1815-30 which was inadequately linked to the sources provided (2) a basic 'potted' source by source commentary with little or no cross-referencing which prevented the development of a support/challenge approach (3) a generalised narrative account of social disorder in the post-1815 period which barely addressed the question.

Source 7 shows that the interpretation of Douglas Hurd is that Peterloo needed effective policing and that ^{that} would have diminished the "Massacre" in Peterloo, and that the calling in of the army was too soon along with the "quick use of firearms by frightened men against a threatening crowd" which is true, Peterloo is nicknamed "Peterloo Massacre" referring ^{some of} to the civilians and protesters that ~~some~~ were killed. However, I believe the way Hurd interprets the problem of law and policing to be excellent. He notes that although there was "no Chief constable, no police station, no bobby on the beat," ~~the situation~~ we have to remember we are (as was the source written) in the 21st century, we ~~realise~~ ^{realise} how important policing is.

(Section B continued) in times of protest, rioting etc. but back in the 1800s magistrates were seen as extremely important along with Prime Ministerial responsibilities. When looking back at historical information and what had occurred we need to be sure to remember the differences in ways of thinking from our 21st century minds to the past.



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Examiner Comments

This Level 2 response illustrates two common weaknesses in answers to the Associated Historical Controversy question. The candidate adopts a basic source by source approach with no cross-referencing and adds little own knowledge.



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Examiner Tip

When planning your answer, read through the sources carefully and list all the support and challenge points you can. This will help you to cross-reference effectively in your answer.

Question 8

On Question 8, the strongest candidates made good use of the sources and their own knowledge to develop a confident line of argument about the impact of economic change on the labouring classes from c1780 to 1830. At this level, responses offered a sustained source-led analysis with impressive range and depth. Indeed, several in this category extensively cross-referenced the sources to develop a nuanced analysis which emphasised that economic change brought poverty and opportunity to different groups. Weak candidates tended to produce (1) a largely unsupported commentary on the impact of economic change on the labouring classes between 1780 and 1830 (2) a basic 'potted' source by source commentary with little or no cross-referencing which prevented the development of a support/challenge approach (3) a generalised narrative account of the British economy and/or working class life from 1780 to 1830 which barely addressed the question.

Summary

A general summary of the areas for improvement in the approach to the Depth Study question and the Associated Historical Controversy question on Option B may prove of benefit to centres.

Depth Study question

1. Candidates need to ensure that their subject knowledge conforms to the specification. Weaker responses usually lacked range and/or depth. A few discussed a period or development which was not the focus of the question.
2. Candidates need to be more aware of the time frame attached to a question. Many lower scoring responses devoted much time and space to discussing the years either before or after the period targeted by the question.
3. In order to address the question effectively, candidates need to offer an analysis not a descriptive or chronological account.

Associated Historical Controversy question

1. Candidates need to treat the sources as a package to facilitate cross-referencing and advance a convincing line of argument. Many weaker candidates resorted to 'potted' summaries of each source which failed to develop a support/challenge approach.
2. Candidates need to integrate the source material and their own knowledge more effectively to substantiate a particular view. Weaker responses were frequently too reliant on the sources provided and little or no own knowledge was included.
3. Candidates should avoid memorised 'perspectives' essays and base their responses on the issues raised by the sources instead. The Associated Historical Controversy question is an exercise in interpretation not historiography.
4. Candidates should not provide extensive and unnecessary accounts of the provenance of each source.

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