



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel

In GCE History (8HI0/1B)

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations  
Option 1B: England, 1509-1603: authority,  
nation and religion

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## PE report 8HI0 1B

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range in this, Advanced 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. This was most evident on Section C, as would be expected. Whilst the impact of this cannot be fully mitigated against, and the best advice is thus to plan time accordingly in the first place, the responses that appeared to experience such timing issues yet overcame them to some degree, were those who offered more direct responses. To wit, those who wrote abbreviated question 5 responses that focused sharply on arguing and analysing the given views, rather offering extensive explanations and quotes, were more likely to still produce a reasonably effective response, than those failing to reach any comparative analysis and evaluation. Finally, 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 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.



## Question 1

This question was the more popular choice within Section A, and produced a range of responses, although in general, it tended to produce responses with more specific supporting detail than most other questions. Stronger responses were able to offer sufficient material, and clearly shape this towards the demands of the question.

Candidates overall did seem less secure on the given reason, with some tending to rely on references to Catholic plots and Mary Queen of Scots. More secure responses were able to consider the ability of the nobility and gentry to afford recusancy fines, gain protection from reprisals, and shelter and support Catholic priests. At the higher end, some candidates took the opportunity to explore the relationship between these and other factors, e.g. the geographical remoteness of much of the surviving Catholic gentry and nobility, or impressive consideration of the symbiotic relationship between seigneurial Catholicism and seminary and Jesuit priests.

Other factors commonly examined were the role of the monarch and the government's policies, the role of seminary and Jesuit priests, the religious settlement and the geographical spread of Catholicism in England. In exploring issues at the higher levels, a number considered how the relative importance of these factors shifted over time and placed religious issues in the wider historical context. Responses in the lower levels tended to offer material on religious policy without addressing the specific question or offered limited knowledge.

## Question 2

Question 2 was the less popular of the two within Section A. The vast majority of candidates attempting this question seemingly found it accessible and straightforward, and thus it was generally well answered. Most candidates were able to offer some evidence relating to a range of methods of control; as well as the given factor of the Council of the North and the Marcher Council, Justices of the Peace, the local nobility and the Lords Lieutenant commonly featured. A minority did make use of material relating to issues such as the printing press, portraits or Elizabeth's progresses, as well as consideration of rebellions such as the Pilgrimage of Grace and the Revolt of the Northern Earls, with at times some success in relating these to the demands of the question, although in some cases this was not convincingly related to the analytical demands of the question.

On the given issue, responses were generally well focused, and were able to develop material to examine how these councils contributed to control. The strongest responses were more likely to offer specific exemplification, but also deploy this to examine developments over the time period. Stronger responses also were more likely to explore the different forms of control the reasons examined offered.

The most successful were able to offer a focused and critical assessment of the relative significance of the different methods used by the monarch, e.g. through exploring the interconnection between the different means, examining the many changes across the period, or considering issues such as their geographical reach, the scope of their authority (such as in political, social terms) and the extent to which they could be relied upon by the monarch. Where responses were less successful, this tended to be limited depth of knowledge, or a failure to develop an exploration, i.e. having sound knowledge, but not sufficiently exploring how this related to effectiveness in control of the kingdom.

### Question 3

This was the more popular of the two questions available to candidates in Section B and produced a range of responses. Those scoring in the higher levels were able to focus on the second-order concept of change and offer sufficient relevant material. In terms of issues covered, consideration of parliament dominated, and there were a number of responses which only considered parliament. Other aspects of government which were examined were typically the role of the monarch's principal ministers, the Privy Council, local government and the legal system. Some candidates did attempt to make use of other material from across the course studied, with mixed success, e.g. valid points were made relating to Elizabeth's marriage, religion and foreign relations, although in some cases this was not well focused.

As a whole, responses were more confident in discussing changes to the role of parliament than the continuities in the role of parliament, although those with a secure grasp of the essential function of Tudor parliaments recognised these. Some good responses were clear in identifying and examining how the powers of the monarch and the role of chief ministers remained essentially the same across the period, with specific reference to individuals (primarily Henry and Elizabeth as the 'bookends' of the broader period), despite changing personalities and needs of the particular time. Most importantly, such material was successful when securely focused on the question.

Overall, whilst undoubtedly there is a clear correlation between the retention of knowledge and success in a response to any given question, the application of this was the determining factor, as seen with responses which performed well, whilst perhaps lacking coverage of the full range of possible issues. Less successful responses tended to be those who seemed insecure in their understanding of the concept of government, or who lacked focus on the demands of a question targeting the issue of change.

#### Question 4

This was the less popular question in Section B of the exam. Many candidates seemed well prepared, both in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the topic, but also ability to focus on the demands of the second order concept of significance. With regards to the given issue of the growth of grammar schools and universities, most candidates were able to offer a range of knowledge applied to valid arguments, with detailed knowledge and figures on the growth of grammar schools, the impact these schools and developments in the universities had on Tudor society and culture, the relationship between these and religious change, and other aspects of culture. As far as other issues were concerned, patronage, music and religion were the most commonly found issues, and were largely well dealt with, although some responses tended to offer a wealth of material on religion but were less secure in relating this to the question. Language, poetry and drama and English identity were also addressed by a significant number of responses.

Stronger answers were able to focus on 'most significant feature' and be able to explore material in relation to this, e.g. the restrictions of education to certain social groups and males, or the extent to which the developments within schools and universities were tied to other cultural developments. Less successful responses, tended to focus on explaining and detailing aspects of Tudor culture, with a less consistent focus on significance. There were also cases where candidates attempted to include material of varying degrees of relevance, e.g. the influence of overseas trade, or religious changes, but were less successful in relating this to cultural change. Thankfully, the majority were largely successful in doing so, and produced responses that were both varied and of good quality.



## Question 5

Most candidates were able to access the middle and higher 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, e.g. how Extract 1 appears to give a realistic assessment of what the Elizabethan government could do in response to war and other problems, and takes a broadly favourable view over its response, whereas Extract 2 emphasises the negative consequences of these problems, and the reaction they caused. 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 (i) a tendency to describe and explain the extracts, rather than attempt to discuss their arguments, or (ii) limited use of contextual knowledge, or offering valid contextual knowledge, but with limited linkage to the discussion of the views.

Candidates' knowledge and understanding of issues was in the main good, with commonly featuring issues being those such as real wage decreases, poor laws and attempts to alleviate shortages, and detailed material on the ramifications of 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, it was pleasing to see a substantial number of candidates offer reasoned and considered assessments of the merits of both arguments, regardless of their ultimate decision. Overall, Question 5 produced a strong response from a large number of candidates.

## 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 questions 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, consequences, etc, 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.