



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel

In GCE History (8HI0/1H)

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1H: Britain transformed, 1918-97

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8H10 1H

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range in this, Advanced Level paper 1H.

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 was the more popular of the two questions in Section A. Candidates were asked to examine whether government policies were the main reason for improvements in living standards in the years 1918-79. The vast majority were successful in demonstrating a range of sound knowledge, which was in the main focused towards the analytical demands of the question. On the given reason of government policies, the post-war development of the welfare state featured heavily, as did the general commitment to Keynesianism and full employment, along with the economic policies of various governments across the period, with Labour (1945-51) and Conservatives (1951-64) featuring most frequently. Specific legislation such as the Consumer Credit Act was also mentioned by a significant number.

In terms of other factors, typically offered reasons were the rise of a consumer society, technological and business innovation, and the knock-on effects of changes to working hours, productivity, changes to borrowing practices, increased leisure time and entertainment.

The key determinants of success tended to be (i) the quality of knowledge, particularly on the given factor, and (ii) candidates' ability to focus material towards the analytical demands of the question. For example, a number of candidates relied heavily on material relating to the development of the NHS when considering government policies, and thus to some extent, lacked range. Whilst such material could indeed be substantially relevant, less successful responses tended to lack clear development to relate such material to the issue of improvements in living standards. Stronger responses were more confident, whether dealing with government policies or when bringing in other issues, in clearly examining how, and to what extent, these contributed to improvements in living standards.

Question 2

This was the less popular option in Section A, and it proved to be a challenge for a significant number of candidates. Where candidates were less successful, this tended to be due to one or both of the following: (i) a limited or intermittent focus on the requisite second order concept of an analysis of the consequences, and (ii) a lack of sufficient knowledge of industrial relations. For the former, as seen at times across this paper, candidates seem more likely to drift from this focus when asked about consequences, or attempt to answer what is not being asked, e.g. there were responses which essentially answered what were the reasons for economic problems in the 1960s and 1970s. Candidates who carefully applied what they did know to the demands of the question stood the best chance of maximising their performance. In terms of the knowledge candidates were asked to apply, a significant number did seem to be less confident on industrial relations than is generally found for Sections A and B.

More successful responses were able to offer a range of knowledge on industrial relations, typically including material on some or most of the following: attempts by politicians to reform industrial relations, such as In Place of Strife, Heath, the Industrial Relations Act and the miners, the Winter of Discontent, the issue of wildcat strikes and shop stewards, and relations in other specific industries, such as the Seaman's Strike of 1966. In terms of alternative consequences, political strife, changes in government, the breakdown of consensus and social effects were found with some frequency.

The strongest responses offered valid examples, and thus had sufficient knowledge to carefully explore issues, within responses structured around an analysis of the different consequences of industrial relations. Related material, such as the oil crisis of 1973, or the general failure of previous economic policies, did feature in many. What distinguished how stronger responses included such material was how they carefully applied this, e.g. using this to qualify analysis of the extent to which economic problems were the main result of industrial relations.

Question 3

This question was the less popular choice within Section B, although in general, it tended to produce responses with a good focus on the conceptual demands of the question. A key discriminating factor was candidates' ability to support analysis on the given issue of comprehensive education. Those with sufficient depth to substantiate claim for or against the significance of its development were able to access the higher levels, with common reference to the problems with the tripartite system and the move to comprehensives in some areas from the 1950s, the Crosland Circular, changes in funding, and the extent which comprehensives had become the norm by the 1970s. There were many responses which developed impressive understanding through focused arguments which examined significance in terms of the degree to which comprehensives marked a change from the tripartite system or established their significance using a weight of factual evidence to demonstrate their spread and impact.

With regards to other significant developments, a range of issues were offered, with the most commonly featured being the Butler Act and the tripartite system, the Robbins Report and the expansion of university education, the Plowden Report and the influence of progressive ideas. In general, candidates seemed to have good knowledge of educational policies from the second half of the twentieth century.

Stronger responses offered sufficient coverage of issues (typically the given issue and two other substantial points), the necessary detail to substantiate claims, and a clear and critical focus. With regards the latter, many candidates in the higher levels were able to explore the relationship between different developments and weigh their relative significance through consideration of their scale, transitional impact, and in some cases, the extent to which they lived up to expectation. Responses in the lower levels tended to offer material on educational policy without addressing the specific question, or through confusing different acts and issues.

Question 4

This was a popular question, and in the main, candidates demonstrated the abilities required for success: knowledge of issues related to the position of women, a broad coverage of the full period, and an ability to focus these on the issue of change. In particular, many candidates showed a really good understanding of the period, with detailed own knowledge of political, economic and social issues, and many responses were structured around an analysis of change within these three themes. This question also tended to produce considered and focused conclusions examining the extent of change.

Where some candidates were less successful, it tended to be due to either, or both, of the following two factors. Firstly, responses which offered plausible argument, demonstrating broad understanding of issues, but with limited detail to substantiate arguments, such as those which raised valid points relating to the impact of war. Secondly, a minority of responses tended to describe relevant issues, with only limited or intermittent focus on change. There were also a number of candidates who wrote otherwise strong responses, which were limited by their chronological coverage, focusing predominantly or exclusively on the period from the Second World War onwards.

Responses displayed a range of issues, with the most common being war work, as well as political enfranchisement, government legislation over issues such as marriage and divorce, relevant aspects of the development of the liberal society and the women liberation movement. Only a minority included relevant material relating to the education of girls. At the higher levels, there was some impressive detail cited on issues such as the contraceptive pill, the Abortion Act, Divorce Act, labour saving devices in the household, women in politics, and events such as the Dagenham Ford Strike. Responses which carefully focused such material on the conceptual demands of the question were the more successful.

Question 5

Most students appeared to understand the demands of the Section C question, and thus were able to engage with an analysis of the given views in relation to the proposition in the question. Most students analysed the arguments in the extracts, with housing and property ownership, the social impact of economic policies, the North-South divide and variations in the experience of the component parts of the UK, trade unions and strikes. Most candidates were able to demonstrate understanding of the extracts and select key points of interpretation in relation to these issues, and in the main there was a good breath of contextual knowledge on display across all levels, with only a minority relying upon the extracts as a source material without further development. At the higher levels, candidates were more likely to offer a developed comparison or synthesis of the two perspectives, and responses which cross-referenced and compared the views in the extracts, tended to perform more highly, although this was by no means the only way to do so.

Examiners did note that some responses were very one-sided, with many appearing to have strong preconceived arguments – largely against Thatcher and her governments. In some instances this undermined the quality of the responses, with limited analysis and superficial dismissals of arguments on the basis that they didn't accord with the candidate's own view. A significant number tended to present evidence that supported one view, and evidence which disagreed with the other, and thus were limited in their discussion. The strongest responses tend to be those where both interpretations have been subjected to the same level of scrutiny. Candidates reaching conclusions either for or against the proposition can of course score the highest marks but should strive to ensure these conclusions are substantiated by the preceding analysis.

Stronger responses were also more likely to focus on the precise issue of 'political and social division', clearly addressing both elements within the question; here, many responses were able to develop their judgements and distinguish between each issue. The most common factors limiting the success of some responses were (i) use of the extracts in a manner not fully suited to Section C, e.g. use largely or entirely as illustrative support, or attempts to analyse provenance in a manner more suited to AO2 (ii) limited own knowledge, or a lack of integration of this in order to examine and evaluate the arguments, and (iii) a small minority made very limited use of the extracts, essentially treating this like a Section A/B AO1 essay.

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 ground.