



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel

In GCE History (8HI0/2B)

Paper 2: Depth study

Option 2B.1: Luther and the German
Reformation, c1515–55

Option 2B.2: The Dutch Revolt, c1563–1609

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AS paper 2B, which covers the options of the German Reformation (2B.1) and the Dutch Revolt (2B.2) again saw responses from across the ability range. The paper is divided into two sections. Section A contains a compulsory two-part question each based around one source and assesses 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.

In general, candidates again found Section A, the compulsory two-part source question, the more challenging largely because many were not clear what was meant by ‘value’ and ‘weight’ in the context of source analysis and evaluation (AO2). In question (a), some candidates still waste time by attempting to address how the source is not valuable to the enquiry which is not relevant to this question. More generally, the detailed knowledge that is required to add contextual material to support and/or challenge points derived from the sources was often absent. Also, some candidates continue to make generic comments on the provenance of the sources though more, taking their nature, origin and purpose into consideration, were able to evaluate the use of the sources to the enquiry in each question.

Section B, the section in which candidates were given a choice of three essays in order to assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1), still tends to be done better. There were few wholly descriptive answers with most candidates attempting to engage analytically with the demands of the questions. The majority of answers were soundly structured and clearly expressed. They also made some effort to come to a judgement. Lack of detailed knowledge of the material continues to be an issue for some as is a tendency not to engage fully enough with the specific focus of the question. Also, there is still a significant number of answers which lack balance in their response to the questions – candidates are reminded that, at this level, there is a requirement that as well as developing the stated factor in essay questions, they also require some development of a counter-case.

Question 1 (a)

In general, candidates were able to identify from the source that Luther was condemning the peasants for several reasons, including their violence and for no longer subjecting themselves to Luther's guidance. There were some good responses which were able to develop such points with regards to Luther's desire for a magisterial reformation for example. Weak responses, though aware of the historical context, often paraphrased the source without attempting to draw inferences from it. Also, a number added information on the Peasants' Revolt without reference to the source content.

Question 1 (b)

There were some good responses to this question. These were able to draw inferences from the sources with regards to Luther's part in the indulgence controversy, notably that his frustration with the behaviour of the indulgence sellers led him to at first write to his superiors and then compose his Ninety-Five Theses. However, too many candidates used the subject of the sources to write long sections on Luther's attitude towards indulgences without reference to the source's content. Comments on the source's reliability tended to be generic and/or based on questionable assumptions, for example that Luther's memory would necessarily have faded by 1546, though some candidates did begin to examine Luther's motives in writing about his part in the controversy towards the end of his life.

Question 2 (a)

There were no responses to this question.

Question 2 (b)

There were no responses to this question.

Question 3

This was a popular question and elicited some very good responses. Candidates generally knew a great deal about the role of the printing press in spreading Luther's message to the literate and illiterate alike. Where candidates were sometimes less successful was in linking this specifically to the success of Luther's challenge to the Church and in considering the impact of other factors in this process, the failure of the papacy to respond more quickly or Luther's qualities as a theologian for example.

Question 4

The best answers to this question provided sound and detailed evidence of Melanchthon's contribution to the development of Lutheranism, particularly the impact of his 'Loci Communes' and his contribution to the drafting of the Augsburg Confession. Some also cited his calmness and approachability in contrast to the rather more abrasive qualities of Luther himself. This case was often balanced by a consideration of Luther's role, as well as those of other individuals and the Schmalkaldic League.

Question 5

There were fewer answers to this question but some good responses which were clearly able to examine Charles V's personal responsibility for the failure to defeat Lutheranism in the years specified, his dynastic interests outside the Empire most notably, alongside other reasons for this failure, the role of the German princes or the enmity of France and the Ottomans for example.

Question 6

There were no responses to this question.

Question 7

There were no responses to this question.

Question 8

There were no responses to this question.

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

Section A – Question (a)

- Read the sources carefully with regard to the specific demands of the questions
- Prioritise making valid inferences from the content of the sources that are relevant to the question, using brief quotes from the source to highlight your reasoning
- Back up these inferences by adding relevant contextual knowledge from beyond the source to explain or expand
- Move beyond generic or stereotypical comments on the nature, origin or purpose of the sources – look at the specific stance and/or purpose of the writer
- Avoid writing about the deficiencies of the source when assessing its value – concentrate instead on what it adds to the enquiry.

Section A – Question (b)

- Read the sources carefully with regard to the specific demands of the questions
- Prioritise making valid inferences from the content of the source that are relevant to the question, using brief quotes from the source to highlight your reasoning
- Back up these inferences by adding relevant contextual knowledge from beyond the source to explain, expand upon or challenge its evidence
- Be aware that the author is addressing a specific audience and purpose
- Try to distinguish between fact and opinion by using your contextual knowledge of the period
- In coming to a judgement, take account of the weight you may be able to give the author's evidence in the light of their position or purpose
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to consider what has been, perhaps, deliberately omitted from the source – however, simply stating that a source is limited because it does not cover other events or developments does not establish weight as no source can be comprehensive.

Section B

- Questions can be asked on any element of the Key Topics in the specification
- This is a Study in Depth so it is vital to have precise and detailed knowledge of the issues to score well – you are required to have both range and depth in your answer to access the higher levels
- Questions can be asked by targeting any of the five second order concepts – cause, consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference, significance
- Pay full attention to the stated focus of the question – aim to explain this fully before considering alternatives to give the answer balance and enable you to come to a judgement
- Be sure to respect the time frame in a question – make sure that the material you use is both relevant and covers the chronology as fully as possible
- Try and show links between the issues raised in your answer, especially in coming to a judgement
- Use subject-specific terminology precisely and accurately.

Exemplars

Question 1 (a) – 0507002220006

This L3 answer demonstrates understanding of the source material and adds some contextual knowledge in support of the inferences it draws. It provides reasoning for its assertion of value to the enquiry.

Question 1 (b) also 0507002220006

This answer shows analysis of the source material by making several valid inferences relevant to the question and supporting these with accurate contextual knowledge. It does consider the limitations of the source in attempting to weigh the value of its evidence to the enquiry. It was given a L4 mark.

Question 3 0507002219201

This essay considers the ways in which the printing press both helped and hindered the success of Luther's challenge to the Church. It displays sufficient knowledge to demonstrate understanding of the conceptual focus of the question and weakly identifies criteria for making a judgement. However, it does not consider any of the other factors in the success of Luther's challenge that are relevant to the question. It was given a high L3 mark.

Question 4 – 0507001760196

This essay focuses clearly on Melancthon's contribution to the development of Lutheranism and uses precise and accurate knowledge to demonstrate a full understanding of the key demand of the question. Alongside this, the candidate considers the role of the Saxon Model and the Schmalkaldic League before coming to a reasoned judgement based on clear criteria. It was given a top L4 mark.

Question 5 0507002219199

Though this essay does address the problems faced by Charles V in defeating Lutheranism and consider alternative explanations for this failure, it lacks a little in range and depth and does not focus on the implications of the word 'personally' in the question. Furthermore, it is clearly unfinished and does not reach a final judgement, though there are some attempts to establish some criteria for this. It received a L3 mark.