

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9768/01
Geographical Issues

Key messages

The response of most candidates was highly informative and wide-ranging. Many answers demonstrated detailed and accurate knowledge with clear, high order understanding of the subject content. Examples were sometimes partial and not relevant but in general they were used effectively and were relevant and detailed. Most answers were logical and with clear organisation. Most questions were interpreted correctly apart from the occasional lapse. There were a few instances of bad time keeping with some unfinished answers. As noted in the introduction, an increasing number of candidates answered a question in **Section C** before attempting **Sections A** and **B**. This could be a useful strategy but it still requires an accurate assessment of the length of time required to answer individual questions. There is still a slight concern about the difference in standard between the Physical and Human Geography answers. The overall impression, on reading the answers, is that candidates had found the teaching and the syllabus stimulating. There is, clearly, much good geography being taught.

General comments

The paper was a very fair test of candidates' knowledge and understanding at this level and across the broad range of geographical concepts and issues. The majority of the candidates performed well and excellent marks were achieved by a significant number. As in previous years, it was very encouraging to see an impressive range of knowledge and understanding, coupled with the ability to present a cogent argument. It is impossible to stress the last point too highly as many questions possessed a component where reasoned assessment was required. This is especially true of the essay questions in **Section C**. This analytical ability not only reflects well on the candidates but also on the teaching. Both Physical Geography and Human Geography questions received excellent responses, but, as in previous years, there was a difference in the levels of knowledge and understanding between the two components. Answers to the Physical Geography questions were sometimes deficient in some respects. This may reflect the different nature of the questions and perhaps a lack of realisation of the precision needed when discussing physical topics. The deficiency often involved an understanding of basic concepts and physical processes. The interaction between physical processes and human activity was better understood. However to evaluate this interaction, it is important to possess a thorough understanding of the operation of the physical processes. Some of these issues are taken up when specific questions are discussed. The answers to questions in **Section C** were often excellent and the breadth of knowledge and understanding shown by a significant number of candidates was remarkable.

Overall the paper was completed by most candidates, although there were occasional indications of poor time management. As noted previously, some candidates failed to match the marks available with the length of time required for sub-questions. This led to the answers to questions in **Section C** sometimes being rushed. There was increasing evidence this year of candidates attempting **Section C** before answering the **Section A** and **Section B** questions. This can be an efficient strategy but, in a few cases it was apparent that this led to the last question, usually in **Section B**, to be rushed and to be unfinished.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The understanding of secondary earthquake hazards was excellent and most candidates achieved full credit.

- (b) The map of earthquakes and earthquake depths appeared to be quite straightforward and there were many excellent answers describing both the variation in depths and the spatial patterns.
- (c) This question posed more problems and was a good differentiator. It was clear that a knowledge and understanding of plate tectonics was highly variable. Whereas understanding of earthquakes along the 'Pacific Ring of Fire' is good, knowledge of plate tectonics in other parts of the world was less substantial. Thus, few candidates knew anything about the tectonics of the Mediterranean and Europe in general. Answers either suggested that there were no plate boundaries or that all the boundaries were conservative. A minority of candidates did understand that the Himalayas represented a collision boundary with no subduction and thus fewer deep earthquakes. More candidates understood the nature of the San Andreas fault in western North America, even though some thought it was the result of subduction.
- (d) Most answers to this question were lacking in the detailed knowledge of techniques employed to attempt a prediction of earthquake activity. Thus, it was very difficult to provide a reasoned assessment of the question. Most candidates asserted that it was very difficult to predict earthquakes but without the evidence to substantiate such an assertion. Thus, many answers failed to achieve marks much above the lower zone of Level 2. There were, of course, exceptions with some very knowledgeable answers with detailed exemplification.

Question 2

- (a) This question posed few problems and some candidates were very ingenious in the hazards they produced in their responses.
- (b) Most candidates were able to provide good descriptions of the pattern of blizzard events and injuries in Wisconsin as well as noting the major anomalies.
- (c) Answers to this part were also convincing with candidates discussing most of the possible reasons noted in the Mark Scheme. Few candidates struggled with this question and some very good credit was awarded.
- (d) This question received a mix response. The greatest disappointment was the limited range of hazardous weather that was offered. Usually hurricanes were dealt with quite efficiently as well as tornadoes. However, apart from a few exception, other types of hazardous weather received less attention. Most answers concentrated on early warning and evacuation with Hurricane Katrina and Super Storm Sandy featuring prominently. The level of detail concerning both was often impressive. However, aspects other than warning and evacuation were often ignored.

Question 3

This question posed a number of problems. It was clear that many candidates had little knowledge and understanding of the three main components of a storm hydrograph. Most candidates seemed to be aware of base flow but the other two components, throughflow and quick flow, were less well known. Throughflow, the focus of the question, seemed to have escaped the understanding of most candidates.

- (a) Good marks were obtained by the majority of the candidates for this question. The thoroughness with which the pattern of high flood frequency was analysed was admirable.
- (b) The response to this question was encouraging and it proved to be a good differentiator. Many candidates produced sensible arguments to explain this apparent discrepancy, ranging from the ability of human management to reduce the risk of flooding to the nature of the rainfall throughout the year. Perhaps surprisingly, the role of vegetation in reducing the risk from flooding was ignored by many. However, there were many excellent answers and good marks were generally awarded.
- (c) This question posed few problems and most candidates were able to provide a response at least at Level 2 standard. Exemplification was often excellent and many candidates emphasised both the prevention and modification aspects. Hard and soft engineering procedures appeared prominently, although there was occasional confusion over soft engineering techniques. The only disappointing aspect was the failure to recognise that catchment modification can be important. Many candidates emphasised that afforestation could be useful, but stressed planting trees on the floodplain or the river bank rather than in the general catchment. The fact that reducing the amount of flooding in this way makes mitigation *per se* easier, was often ignored.

Section C

Question 4

This year, for the first time, there were answers on the topic **The Geography of Crime**. The responses were encouraging and enlightened.

- (a) Two characteristics of defensible space were readily identified.
- (b) Candidates had little trouble in identifying ways in which the housing development encouraged the incidence of crime.
- (c) The candidates rose to the challenge of identifying ways in which the development could be altered to reduce the risk of crime. Good credit was awarded to many responses.
- (d) This was a wide-ranging question and candidates had to devise their own strategy to answer it. The response was encouraging with a range of social and economic impacts discussed and analysed.

Question 5

- (a) The majority of candidates possessed a general understanding of life expectancy. Some forgot that it was an average figure and many defined it in terms of age at death rather than the number of years since birth. Very few knew the precise definition thus the marking exhibited a degree of flexibility.
- (b) There was good response to this question with most, but not all, being able to describe and summarise the pattern of life expectancy shown on the map
- (c) The response to this question was often excellent although there was a tendency for the answers to be unbalanced. Analysis of the South American trend was sometimes limited with many candidates concentrating on Sub-Saharan Africa. There tended to be an over concentration on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Although this is very important and seemed to account for the falling trend in the later years, there are many other issues that account for the differences in life expectancy figures and trend. The better candidates realised this and produced well-balanced answers.
- (d) The response to this question was generally very good. Knowledge of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) was substantial, with a good understanding of their role. The 'geography' also tended to be accurate and wide-ranging. However, a minority of candidates knew a great deal about the NGOs but not the countries or areas within which those NGOs operated.

Question 6

- (a) The question posed few problems, except that some candidates noted very general issues that were not really indices.
- (b) This was also a very accessible question with most candidates providing a very thorough analysis and gained full credit. Most candidates suggested, quite correctly, that there was only a very general relationship and that there were a number of anomalies. Thus most candidates rose to the challenge posed by the phrase 'to what extent'.
- (c) This question presented a challenge because there was, apparently, no spatial aspect to the way the poverty cycle was portrayed. The response to the question was excellent and stimulating and demonstrated that many candidates are able to take an abstract concept and apply it to a different situation. Some candidates saw it as reinforcing the core-periphery concept whilst others argued that areas caught in the poverty cycle would not receive inward investment, possibly by Trans-National Corporations. Thus, analysis was at a variety of spatial scales from local areas to regions and even to countries.
- (d) This was a very broad question which meant that candidates had to devise their own strategy in answering it. Most did this very efficiently. Top-down and bottom-up strategies were well understood with examples taken from a wide variety of examples and countries. The detail in the answers was often excellent. Many answers did rise to the challenge of the 'critically examine'

although some simply described some approaches without this assessment. As noted last year, this part of the syllabus seems to be well taught and candidates appear to have been stimulated by this teaching.

Section C

Question 7

This was not a particularly popular question. Responses, however, were usually well-informed. Most candidates recognised that many, if not all, geographical issues are multi-faceted and that there was not a simple cause-effect relationship. This being so, strategies needed to incorporate a variety of aspects and approaches. The depth of knowledge was often impressive but sometimes there tended to be a narrow focus on one particular issue. The countries most favoured for analysis were Haiti, Botswana and Nicaragua. The depth of geographical knowledge was often impressive and was frequently reinforced with some very detailed maps. Detail on the strategies was sometimes less well known and understood

Question 8

This was, overwhelmingly, the most popular question in this Section, and received a good response. A variety of geographical hazards were chosen to illustrate the discussion. Earthquakes and volcanoes were most frequently discussed and there were good comparisons between hazards in MEDCs and LEDCs in relation to the severity of their impacts. Although answers tended to concentrate on situations where the severity of the impact had been increased by human activity, many candidates did recognise that the severity of the impacts could be reduced. Most answers possessed a logical organisation with candidates, in general, demonstrating good analytical qualities. A minority of candidates produced no introduction and the conclusion was often minimal if present at all.

Question 9

There were good discussions concerning the nature of socio-economic issues although a few candidates launched into the question without any introduction in which to set the scene. The environmental aspect of the issues was less well addressed and the discussion of them was implicit rather than being explicit. Discussion was sometime speculative and conclusions were often assertive and not based on the provision of rational argument. However, there were some good, well-structured answers, with conclusions based on the discussion and the evidence provided. As stressed last year, it must be remembered that the overall structure of the answers is an important criterion in awarding a mark. It is good to be able to report that in most cases the structure of the answers was good.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9768/02
Global Environments

Overall the standard of answers was of a lesser quality than previous years although on a Centre basis there was evidence of improved performance and a greater understanding of the demands of the assessment.

Key messages

1. Detailed factual knowledge needs to be supported by a clear understanding of the physical processes which are then related to the question being addressed.
2. Knowledge; understanding and case studies must be analysed evaluated and APPLIED to the question asked. The first three without direct application cannot reach the higher levels of the GMS. This skill comes via careful deconstruction and practise of questions.

Topics

Some areas of the syllabus are not studied by any Centre, notably, Glacial and Periglacial environments. This year the most popular questions came from a narrow range of both topics and questions within those topics. Most Centres study Coastal Environments and the Atmospheric Environment. Within those topics **Questions 6 and 12** proved the most popular.

Approaches and knowledge and understanding of Physical Geography

It is important that candidates are aware that this paper tests their knowledge and understanding of physical processes. Some questions test physical processes alone, for instance, **Question 1; Question 3; Question 7; Question 9; Question 11**, whilst the other questions require a knowledge and understanding of the interaction of physical processes and the human environment. In most instances the physical Geography should be the springboard for discussion of the way in which these processes may be influenced by human activities. Fundamental to any successful answer (i.e. those achieving the highest Levels of 4 and 5) should be Physical Geography. This should be borne in mind by candidates when approaching questions such as **Question 6 and Question 12**. Without an outline of the greenhouse and/or enhanced greenhouse effect when discussing Obama's wide-ranging statement about climate change, it is difficult to convince the Examiner that it is an effective physical geography response. Equally a detailed exposition of what is meant by strategies such as managed retreat, holding/advancing the line, coastal realignment and hard and soft engineering without reference to coastal processes does not produce an effective answer on a physical Geography paper. Candidates can be prone to overplaying their discussion the economic/aesthetic and social pros and cons of different coastal protection strategies and forget that these very strategies have an impact of the physical processes of erosion, transportation and deposition along a stretch of coastline/within a sediment cell. Similarly it is easy to talk about climate change in general terms assuming the Examiner understands the term, knows what it means and how it occurs without definitive written evidence in the answer.

However, the advantage of questions such as **Question 12** is that it is a wide-ranging question which offers candidates a variety of approaches so that provided the idea of increased atmospheric temperature, caused by the enhanced greenhouse effect and its possible effects and impacts in relation to natural disasters on a global scale were addressed, then the response was successful. Often much of this was taken for granted so many candidates failed to address Obama's statement directly.

If these comments appear question specific it is for two reasons: **(a)** they were overwhelmingly the most popular and **(b)** they raise similar general issues.

Diagrams and maps

These continue to be omitted from many answers. Where they appeared this year many were tagged onto the end of the answer or the end of the script, although some of these were integrated by means of figure number which was fine but many did not enhance the answer because they were basic, not fully labelled and/or inaccurate. Poorly executed coastal configurations with few landforms, little labelling and little indication of the processes operating are of little value. It should be noted that well-labelled diagrams can stand in place of paragraphs of prose description and explanation and this in itself is a demonstrable skill.

Essay organisation and structure

It is now becoming evident that Centres are aware that the response should have a clear introductory paragraph which relates directly to the question asked and there should be a middle section demonstrating knowledge and understanding and a conclusion. Many candidates preface their final paragraph, 'in conclusion' or 'to conclude'. This is a way of signalling clearly and definitively to the Examiner that they are coming to the end of the discussion. This is effective and sensible. See comments on **Question 10, 11 and 12** for elements which constitute higher level conclusions.

However, this year, there were many instances of a lack of a clearly set out introduction with definition of 'managed retreat, for instance or the context of coastal protection generally, or an awareness of the aspects of Obama's statement that needed to form the basis of the discussion. Climate change seemed to be the trigger words and often candidates completed their answer without mentioning Obama's quotation from the question.

Analysis/ synthesis/ evaluation/ application

Knowledge and understanding alone are not sufficient for a response to be awarded credit at the highest levels, there needs to be evident analysis, evaluation and application of the subject and object of the question. This needs to be done in relation to factors which are not mentioned also and all of these aspects of the assessment needs to be in relation to the physical environment. For instance, it is not enough to analyse methods of hard engineering economically, aesthetically and socially. Without some reference to the ways in which man-made structures interact with wave action, erosion, transportation and deposition, the answer will not fulfil the criteria demanded for high level mark in the Generic Mark scheme used with this paper.

Comments on Specific Questions

Arid and Semi-arid Environments

Question 1

Most candidates who tackled this question are aware of the influences of the general circulation, ocean currents, mountains and continental interiors in producing deserts. They used appropriate examples but the details were not always accurate. There was confusion about the winds and pressure belts that influence the Patagonian and Atacama deserts and the relative roles of mountains and ocean currents in those deserts in South America. The knowledge was not always secure.

However a minority of candidates went beyond defining these deserts in terms of rainfall. Few engaged with the 'characteristics of' deserts. Few quoted temperatures and none mentioned evaporation; transpiration ratios in relation to water availability. There was little detail about variability, reliability, regularity and seasonability of rainfall in relation to the different factors determining the location of deserts.

Altogether the knowledge and understanding was not secure in this answer.

Question 2

It is quite possible to take the line of argument that human activities are not constrained by climate but there are constraints and although an optimistic approach is clearly preferred it should be noted that credit is given for a more balanced point of view and or at least some evidence to the contrary. It is good to see that candidates are not deterministic per se but there are examples of where it is difficult to produce more than a subsistence standard of living because of the climatic constraints although remoteness and lack of physical

and economic infrastructure may also militate against commercial success (e.g. in the Sahel). The prolonged drought whether natural or human-induced may also be a climate-related constraint.

Coastal Environments

Question 5

Knowledge of relative sea level change was familiar to those candidates who tackled this question. However, there was often a lack of awareness of the range of drowned river valleys and how a eustatic rise produces these and modifies a river valley. There was often little attention to the details of landform modification and morphology of the coastline as a result. A raised beach was mentioned in some responses but without the effect that the relative change has had on the cliff line. Raised beaches were not described in detail in order to demonstrate their unmistakable characteristics. This was a straightforward knowledge based question with scope for 'examination' therefore comparative size, scale and dimensions etc. would have been appropriate as would a range of well-integrated diagrams. Sadly neither was offered.

Question 6

Managed retreat is one of a range of strategies now adopted along coastlines in an attempt to control recession. As one candidate suggested the term 'coastal realignment' is a more appropriate term for a range of strategies which could include holding the line by means of hard engineered structures, softer methods such as replenishment, mangrove conservation, salt marsh buffers or advancing the line by means of reclamation.

Some candidates were not secure in their knowledge of the term 'managed retreat' and could not define it clearly. The best examples for instance, Abbott's Hall Farm on the Blackwater estuary in Essex, offered several candidates a means to an end by describing exactly what has been done there. However, only a small number of responses could explained that the deliberate breaching of the sea wall and allowing the area behind to flood and due to plant succession create a salt marsh is what managed retreat means. The fact that salt marshes serve a dual purpose in that they offer a natural buffer against erosion as they dissipate wave action and in many cases prevent waves from reaching the inland area which not mentioned in many responses. They also provide as an adjunct a wetland site i.e. areas of fragility which are endangered in this country and sites for wildlife which can double up as tourist and conservation assets.

A blanket statement about 'terminal groyne syndrome' is not the most detailed way of explaining the down drift implications of longshore drift along the Holderness coastline. The implications for Cowden and Spurn Head could have been dealt with in much more detail. Then the relative merits and disadvantages of holding the line as opposed to managed retreat could have been assessed.

Tropical Environments

Question 7

This was not a popular question and the few who chose it did not address the concept of biodiversity strongly. Plant and animal species were needed and it is possible to dispute the statement by reference to the wide range of small and micro-organisms found on the forest floor. Few candidates seemed aware of this. Detailed knowledge was the principal omission in these answers.

Question 8

There were some pleasing answers to this question. They were rooted in knowledge of both subsistence i.e. argued as sustainable, and commercial argued as the reverse. Also there were appropriate and detailed case study material included and some balanced discussion. Most candidates were able to relate the human activity and its scale to the physical processes which operate within the tropical rain forests they discussed. Clearly familiarity with the environments assisted candidates appreciation of the topic but these answers were encouragingly well-structured and fulfilled the GMS requirements for Level 3 and above.

Temperate Grassland and Forest Environments.

Question 9

Soils are never an especially popular topic and several answers although adequate on the conceptual aspects of the question could not illustrate the concepts of functioning via nutrient cycling to produce a zonal soil for particular latitude. Analysis and evaluating required some notion that anomalies exist and therefore sub-climaxes may produce variations within. Soil-profile diagrams were missing from most answers. However, there were one or two promising answers in terms of knowledge and understanding of nutrient cycling and the functioning of the ecosystem which was encouraging but only a partial answer. The subject of the question was 'zonal soil'. Hence the focus of the answer should have been chernozems, brown earths and podzols. Of course, human activities could and have played a role in these environments.

Question 10

Without a stated awareness of the natural environment under discussion in these responses the answers are bound to founder to some extent. Many candidates managed to write a response without mentioning a species of tree, shrub or plant. Some responses also did not make clear enough reference to their chosen environment. Admittedly 'landscape' can be interpreted broadly but nevertheless at the functioning level of coppicing, introduction of new species, fires and recreational activities, it is thought that some awareness of the species that constitute forests and grasslands is required. Not only that, but the functioning i.e. the physical processes which operate is an essential part of a complete, comprehensive answer. Therefore, concepts such as nutrient cycling and plant succession were expected to be applied. Without them a significant aspect of the GMS cannot be accessed. There was evidence of potentially detailed case-studies and examples within these answers but, in most cases, the development of the argument and application of the principles was not sufficient to fulfil the higher level demands of the GMS. It was noticeable that there was intelligent and imaginative handling of both knowledge and conceptual material in many responses. However, there was rarely enough detailed development of argument. Higher level conclusions would project the role of human activities into the future perhaps suggesting that nowadays conservation will tranquilise some human activities within these environments.

The Atmospheric environment

Question 11

Without a sound grounding of factual material about the influence of both air masses and depressions on cool temperate maritime climates such as the UK's climate, these answers would not be successful. Equally unless the question of 'short-term variation' is addressed, then the higher levels of the GMS cannot be accessed. This was the principal characteristic of most the answers to **Question 11**. Even in the best answers there was a preponderance of details about each and every air mass accompanied by an appropriate map, less detail about depressions, some awareness of blocking anticyclones but a lack of connection between a blocking anticyclone and reference to the air masses which were described at the beginning of most answers. These lack of connections suggest learnt factual material but a slight lack of appreciation of the connections and atmospheric dynamics in temperate latitudes. This was more evident when it came to the attempt to relate the surface conditions to upper air movements in the form of jet streams. Good knowledge was evident but there was an overall lack of understanding of the three dimensional nature of the atmosphere and the dynamics and processes within. The variability results from depressions to some extent and no candidate **explained** the scale and changing weather conditions across a depression from warm front, to warm sector and then the cold front. There were few explanations of the actual contributions of depressions to cool temperate weather. Good answers could have concluded with a projection of the evidence for more variable extreme weather both now to some extent and in the future.

Question 12

This was probably the most wide-ranging open-ended question on the paper. It needed some careful deconstruction before being tackled. Some candidates saw reference to 'climate change' and wrote an essay offering their knowledge without reference to Obama's statement referred to in the question. No response suggested that his statement represents the 'doomsday scenario' a stance often adopted by those proponents of human-induced climate change. What was needed was a direct engagement with 'the reality' of the change, i.e. evidence for; 'frightening' perhaps, certainly 'global', 'new' possibly and 'man-made disaster'. The words 'man-made' indicate that candidates would be expected to define their interpretation of

man-made probably via the enhanced greenhouse effect. Correct terminology of long and short wave radiation and the identification of greenhouse gases beyond CO₂, their location and their role were needed.

There were many approaches that could be taken so credit was given on the merit of each answer. However, engagement with the question, physical processes and evidence of climate change with some accompanying statistics reinforced the better answers of which there were some more imaginative approaches which was pleasing.

HISTORY

Paper 9769/03
US History Outlines c.1750-2000

Key Messages

- It is important to respond to the exact question set
- It is important that knowledge is sufficient to make arguments convincing
- Communication of a clear argument is a vital requirement

General Comments

There was a very wide range of responses. At the higher end of the mark range, there was some very strong, well-focused and thoughtful work. It is important for the question to be answered directly and for its terminology and implication to be grasped and responded to, and better responses achieved this. Where there is a wide period, as in thematic questions, there must be an adequate coverage of that period. Reading the question carefully remains of paramount importance: if a question is about Wilson's first term, then that must be what is addressed; if a question asks about US policy in dealing with international problems, then those problems must be the focus of the answer, rather than a general consideration of isolation; if a key word is used in the question, for example in **Question 1** with 'unreasonable', then it must be considered fully in the answer. Better responses showed an awareness that using knowledge to support arguments is vital, but even interesting and detailed knowledge should not just be inserted for its own sake. Few candidates offered highly indiscriminating narrative answers, although there were instances of the aim seeming to be more to show knowledge than to use it flexibly. Examiners do not expect specific content, but answers which omit major elements will not offer a convincing analysis. For example, in an answer to the question which asks about the importance of States Rights as a cause of the Civil War, then that issue must be at the heart of the answer which should not be just a list of factors bringing about war. Discrimination in the selection of knowledge is vital.

Where there is argument, but it is expressed in an obscure and indirect way, then answers will lack effectiveness. Much depends on candidates engaging with key concepts in the question. For example, **Question 7** was focused on the concept of Jacksonian Democracy; it does not require a description of Jackson's policies and actions with some comments on successes and failures. It is important that historical terminology should be understood and that the concepts inherent in the questions should be considered. Many answers did present developed and complex arguments and it is particularly important that not only are these carefully related to the question to ensure clarity but also that they are legible, which was not always the case. However, there was much strong work, well-focused argument and good knowledge, with a wide range of topics being written about in an interesting way, which showed real reflection and interest. The personal engagement of many candidates with the topics studied is a positive and encouraging feature of this paper, and Examiners were impressed by many lively and well-informed responses. Those questions which produced too few responses for meaningful comments to be made are not commented on below.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Stronger answers engaged with the concept of 'unreasonable' and offered some strong and balanced analyses, with a sustained focus on the question. Some appeared to be prepared for a question on the causes of the War on Independence. These candidates considered a number of events and developments from 1763 to 1776, often in descriptive mode; these responses would have benefited from greater reference to the 'attitude of the Americans'. The weakest responses offered a list of causes with little or no reference to the question. Some answers did respond to the question directly but would have been improved by a fuller coverage of the period before 1776.

Question 2

There were some well-focused answers, although some interpreted this question as one that demanded an assessment of Saratoga as a 'turning point'. Those that did often presented a fair line of argument, even if the focus of the question was really asking if the battle was 'decisive'. Most regarded the intervention of the French as the key impact of Saratoga, though more could have analysed the limits of this development. Few candidates were able to explore in sufficient depth the ways in which the battle was important. Many preferred to list the more general reasons for the outcome of the war – Washington, weaknesses of British generals, terrain, nature of the war etc. Sometimes this was covered in a descriptive way. To improve responses, these candidates needed, generally, to respond more to the specific demands of the question.

Question 5

Of those who stuck to the period in the question (rather than the years after 1820), some concentrated on the reasons why the South wanted to keep (rather than restrict) slavery. Some did focus more directly on the question set and most of these would have benefited from a consideration of 'how successful', rather than a concentration on the reasons for the survival of slavery.

Question 6

Most accepted the view that slavery was 'a system of ruthless exploitation' and would have improved their answers by presenting more than a one-sided response to this question. Some did acknowledge the counter-argument, and fuller and more evenly distributed effective analysis would have benefited essays further.

Question 7

Attempt to discuss both the negative and positive role of Jackson were seen in some answers; a greater understanding of the implications of the term 'Jacksonian Democracy' would have aided some responses.

Question 9

This was a popular question. Better answers gave the issue of States Rights good attention and compared this issue with others, some showing in effective analysis how the issues were linked, but still offering a clear judgement. Less successful responses struggled to adequately define the notion of States' Rights. Some assessed how this issue helped cause the civil war, before considering other factors in turn, but used more of a 'list of causes' approach. Besides slavery, most candidates discussed the cultural differences between North and South, the economies of the two Sections and the election of Lincoln. There was often a strong understanding of the factors in themselves, and more on the relationship between them, and their relative importance, would have helped to produce even better responses.

Question 10

This was also popular. There were some strong answers which explained why the key issue was important and assessed it against other elements. Most understood the 'management of men' and tried to apply it in various ways – Lincoln's Cabinet, his generals, Congress – with varying degrees of success in terms of analysis or development. Some stretched the concept too far to include Lincoln's standing in public opinion. Other qualities of Lincoln were also considered, such as his oratory, the initiative of the Proclamation, his experience in office and his willingness to repress dissent. Some lost focus by trying to broaden the scope of the essay to include an explanation of factors that explained the victory of the North such as resources, Southern weaknesses etc. Some offered lengthy reflection on the Emancipation proclamation – greater linkage to the question would have benefited some of these answers.

Question 15

Most answers provided a summary comment of the work of a number of authors, giving each a paragraph. There needed to be more of an attempt to assess the accuracy of the novelists. The relationship between the novels and their time required greater consideration in terms of this question. Cross referencing them would have helped – especially in the avoidance of disjointed answers. Some gave space to 'Gone with the Wind' which was not relevant.

Question 17

There were few answers to this question. There were, however, some perceptive and well-argued analyses, assessing the role of corruption and showing a sound understanding of different factors. Weaker responses tended to rely too much on description of features of Reconstruction.

Question 19

Some argued the view that US foreign policy was imperialistic, rather than addressing the specific question. The majority of those who focused on the question looked at a range of factors that explain the extension of US influence, usually with sound supporting evidence. The analysis of these factors could have been fuller and more candidates could have provided a judgement about the relative merit of economic factors.

Question 20

Answers would have been more successful if there had been more engagement with what was implied by 'great'. Rather, the emphasis was often on the successes and failures of Roosevelt, at home and abroad. Some also considered his personal qualities. Some compared him to Lincoln but without establishing common terms of reference. Most answers were competent on the history of Roosevelt's presidency, and would have benefited from a deeper consideration of 'greatness'.

Question 21

Some went beyond the years 1913-17 (January) and, instead, focused on the second term. More candidates could have attempted to define Wilson's principles. The majority also preferred to concentrate on Wilson's foreign policy, and especially relations with Mexico. Many of the answers seen needed to consider more closely the requirements of the question in terms of time period and scope.

Question 22

This was a popular question. The majority of answers were concerned to assess the degree of continuity or change in the 1920s regarding the latter as the reason for, or equivalent of, 'a crisis of values'. To some extent this was a valid approach which allowed discussion of attitudes and beliefs. A few more thoughtful answers were constructed on the values using the developments of the period as support. Some ran through familiar issues such as Prohibition, flappers, immigration and so on, rather than providing a sustained engagement with the exact terms of the question.

Question 24

There were some good answers which focused on the period as a whole and analysed in terms of the question. Other responses, while showing some understanding of US policy, appeared to be answering a question about the extent of isolationism, rather than the effectiveness of the US to resolve problems.

Question 30

Some attempted to argue that detente was somehow an objective different from containment, rather than a different way of achieving the same objective – to contain communism. These responses were not always convincing. Better responses were aware of other objectives – strategic and economic; less successful essays would have been improved by greater balance and broader analysis.

HISTORY

Paper 9769/04

African and Asian History Outlines c.1750 - 2000

Key Messages

- Key words in the question should be considered carefully
- Better answers will go beyond lists of explained factors
- Clear communication of argument is essential

General Comments

Most answers focused on China, with some venturing into Japanese history and some essaying India. The questions on Africa and South East Asia, received few responses. There was a distinct sense of enjoyment and interest evident in many of the responses on Asian history. The best answers were very impressive, and demonstrated a control of the material and a focus on the question that showed not only thorough preparation, but mature understanding and reflection. Outstanding answers responded directly to the question, covering the period required, addressing all aspects of the question and showing very sound knowledge. This knowledge was used in a flexible way to support arguments and led to judgements being convincing. The best answers communicated very effectively. The line of thought was always clear, and prose was direct and unpretentious. This aspect cannot be overstressed. There is no need to write in 'high style' which often obscures argument. Clarity of thought and expression is vital. Strong knowledge, of which there was a considerable amount in many answers, must be used flexibly. Obviously, candidates must be aware of key historical issues and must have considered debates and alternative explanations. This was the case in better responses - these candidates were able to consider exactly what the question demanded, and to select knowledge with discrimination.

Few candidates offered purely descriptive answers, although some produced unnecessarily lengthy descriptive passages which needed to demonstrate a greater use of knowledge. There was a great deal of sound explanation, but better answers did not rely so much on 'lists' of explanations, but engaged more with assessing factors or balancing judgements. This more demanding skill led to some insightful analysis. Better answers showed a high level of intellectual independence and flexibility.

The following comments relate to questions which produced a reasonable number of answers.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 17

There was some good knowledge of attempts to reform within the period, but though there was mostly some analysis of 'successful', it might have been helpful to offer more analysis of the criteria used to assess success and to consider the context of the period rather more.

Question 18

Many did not merely offer a discussion of the outcomes of change, but tried to engage with the concept of 'revolution'. There were a variety of approaches, some considering continuity and change, others looking more at the outcome of the revolution. Some focused on the nature of the 'revolution', questioning whether its aims were for complete change. Candidates who simply explained the causes of the revolution or described events without really grappling with the concepts in the question, tended to offer less convincing answers.

Question 19

Though there were some strong balanced analyses offered, some responses need fuller coverage of the period or greater consideration of the policies of modernisation and the attempts to regenerate China. Some offered a narrow focus on the inadequacies of the Nationalists prior to 1949. If there is a designated period, then candidates should try to deal with it and to consider whether achievements varied. Also, 'achievements' implies more than outlining actions and policies.

Question 20

There were some very strong answers which considered the correct period and dealt with both of the main elements in the question. Most responses tended to agree with the idea that there were destructive experiments and engaged with the implications of 'experiments', stressing the novelty of the policies and uncertainties about their outcome. There were some well-informed analyses which focused more on the successes and failures of the policies, rather than responding directly enough to the question. Some answers were uncertain about the period and wrote about the period of Mao's rule in general.

Question 21

This question produced some well-organised responses which looked at different aspects, making a distinction between economic and political or social change.

Question 23

Most answers offered a comparison of Jinnah and Gandhi, with a lot of discussion of the latter which the question did not really invite.

Question 24

Candidates might have been better advised to consider 'persistent' rather more and to cover more of the period. Responses which focused just on the situation after independence were not really answering the question fully.

Question 27

Most answers tackled 'superficial', though some tended to consider the general level of change, rather than specifically 'westernisation'. There was some good supporting material which ranged quite widely and few answers which described developments would have benefited from offering some judgement. Better answers offered a balanced view and explored what might be a way of judging the superficiality of westernisation.

Question 28

Though not many answers were seen, the approach taken varied quite a bit. There were some answers which relied rather heavily on description; some responses did not go beyond 1937; there were some impressive surveys of the whole period which did offer a balanced discussion of the significance of Manchuria.

Question 38

Good responses were seen, although this question did produce rather list-like explanations from some candidates, which tended to emphasise Chinese weaknesses and deal with European strengths in a somewhat limited way, reducing the element of discussion. Explanations were often well developed and answers well-informed; debate/assessment could have been more developed than in some of the answers discussed above.