



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

History A

40402B

(Specification 4040)

Unit 2B: Britain, 1815–1851

Report on the Examination

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40402B Britain, 1815–1851

General Issues

The general quality of the work produced by students was good and impressed the examiners. Most students demonstrated a broad knowledge of the period and an understanding of the main concepts through the key issues identified in the specification and the people and events specified. No part of the paper was misinterpreted and there were few cases where students had failed to provide an answer. Even weaker students were able to write at often considerable length on the later parts of Questions 1, 2 or 3. While the main issues and trends in the history of the Britain 1815–51 that the paper covered seemed well understood, there were some small specific areas where students displayed weaker knowledge and understanding. This was evident in relation to the answers to Question 3. However, it is good to see students in the examination integrating their knowledge of the period with the historical skills they have learned to demonstrate convincing historical reasoning. The value of the large, colour images used in the paper was evident; they proved stimulating and accessible across the full ability range.

The demands of this paper were broadly consistent with those of last year. Both Question 1 and Questions 2 or 3 of Section B offered a manageable and largely enjoyable opportunity for all students to show what they understood, knew and could do. It was noticeable that the more able students distinguished themselves on Questions 1(e) and on 2(c) or 3(c). In Question 1 of the paper many students used knowledge well to support their answers to parts 1(c) to 1(e). In Section B students showed a preference for Question 2 about Working Class Protest and Organisation over Question 3 on The Poor.

Section A

Question 1(a)

The majority of students successfully comprehended and drew inferences about child labour in factories from these sources. Knowledge of the factories was not called for, but many students chose to use their own knowledge in this question. The majority of students reached a high Level 2, being able to draw more than one valid inference about child labour. Conditions for children were commonly summarised at a low Level 2 as being harsh or bad. At Level 2 students were able typically to make comments that referred to the cruel treatment of children, poor conditions and low pay, and the dangers from the ripped clothes. Able students emphasised that the sources showed that child labour was a serious issue at the time or that it was controversial. Other answers at this level indicated that it was an issue that was considered at the time to be of comparable seriousness with that of slavery. There were a small minority of Level 1 responses that simply paraphrased Source B.

Question 1(b)

The majority of students showed comprehension and drew inferences about the different impression of child labour shown in the Sources C and D to that posed in Sources A and B. Students found the sources easy to deal with in terms of their ideas and language. A majority of students were able to reach Level 3 through correctly identifying contrasting impressions in the two sets of sources. Weaker answers often made a simple comparison between the sources based on what they said or suggested about child labour, and for this the response gained reward at Level 2. The focus of the marking of this question was the inference that could be made from Sources C and D; reference to Sources A and B, or the context of these sources was acceptable, if it was implicit. Students would be well advised in their answers to focus sharply on the ideas in Sources C and D and express them in their own words. Students made observations about the impression of child labour in Sources A/B as cruel

and dangerous, whereas in Sources C/D it was one of happiness and family need. Students noted that in Source B the children were forced to work, whereas in Source C they were willing to work in order to improve the lives of their families. Many students noted the difference between Source B and Source D; in the former it was indicated that children had no time for their families, whereas in the latter they seemed to be having plenty of time for the family to be together. Students contrasted the need to turn to crime and to steal in Source B with the leisure time to play cards, and socialise in Source D. A few students observed that the children had money to buy playing cards and even suggested that they might have received some form of education in order to be able to count in their games. Able students mentioned that there were different bases for the arguments in the sources. The case was made that Source B spoke critically of factories as slave plantations and favourably of prisons on moral grounds, whereas in Source C the argument is based on need and survival. In Source B, answers pointed out, it was implied that parents disapproved of the long hours that the children worked but in Source C they approved of them working. Some examiners noted once again that many students mixed up 'how' and 'why' sources differed in their responses to this question, thus they began answering Question 1(c) during their answer to Question 1(b).

Question 1(c)

In this question students had a clear target to explain why there were differences between Sources A/B and C/D. Students showed understanding of the skill being tested here and most used the differences between the authors or the time of writing or drawing to underpin their answers. The general level of thinking in answers to this question was good and led in the main to Level 2 and Level 3 marks.

Although this question elicited a full range of responses, at a basic level a number of students wanted to explain how the sources were different. A number of students ignored the provenance of the sources and merely described **how** the impression of child labour differed. This approach received Level 1 marks (one-two). A common feature of answers at Level 2 was to explain differences between the sources as rooted in the fact that the author of Source B was a factory reformer and the artist in Source D was Belgian, who may not have seen the things that he painted. The fact that Source D was painted much later than the other sources was thought by many students to be very influential. The development of the time differences in detail and context usually brought level 3 marks to the candidate (six-seven marks). Many students at this level concentrated on the dates of 1831 and 1832 to note that this was just before the 1833 Factory Act so the sources were part of a national debate and a very live political issue. There were some fine answers at Level 3 that understood clearly the relationship between newspapers and their readership. Some Level 4 answers involved discussion of the person who commissioned the painting (Source D) and the boisterous, happy street scene as a eulogy to factory life. However, as these answers pointed out the painting was not showing the inside of the factory as Source A did.

Question 1(d)

Students found the source straightforward and it was easy for them to discuss its utility. The size helped students discuss the details of this source. Answers that were solely descriptions of Source E were limited to Level 1 (one-two marks). The majority of students who offered answers to this question that were rewarded at Level 2 (three-four marks) based their answers around the content of the source rather than the provenance of the source. In the main they explained that the source showed volleys of bricks fired into the countryside and backed up by full hods of mortar with sharp trowels heading for the fields. Much good use was made of the caption and writing inside the cartoon. Students' responses recognised the references to 'barbarians' and 'Mr Goth'; they correctly said they represented a lack of civilisation. Most significance at a high level was attached to the 'new Streets' that were plainly of a poor quality of construction.

Most students knew that a successful answer to this question involved both content and provenance. At Level 3 the majority of responses had difficulty explaining the satire or were unaware of Cruikshank's work or approach; these answers made some generalised observations about 'cartoons'. Sometimes students merely referred to the cartoon as an 'exaggeration' and did not push the idea any further. Students who used the content and commented on provenance well were rewarded with Level 3 or 4 marks. These answers were rarer, but there were many answers that knew the satirical nature of Cruikshank's work or Punch magazine and drew significance from this. At the highest level some students were very perceptive to link this image with the Factory and Public Health Acts. These answers were very conscious of the public health implications of rapid urban expansion. A few students linked the migration to the towns for work by country folk with this migration of the towns into the countryside in order to accommodate them.

Question 1(e)

There were some good answers to this question and the question proved to be a good discriminator. The question worked well because it differentiated those students who could identify the difficulties of trying to improve factory conditions from those who were able to explain those difficulties. A large number of answers did just describe conditions in the towns and factories. Students who knew some simple details about the living and working conditions were rewarded at Level 1. At Level 2 many students made simple but vague reference to the difficulties of bringing about change. This usually involved a discussion of the *laissez-faire* principle. At Levels 3 and 4 students concentrated their answers on the dominant ideas that influenced thinking at the time. Consequently answers discussed: the *laissez-faire* principle; a political system controlled by an elite; a fear of revolution; an unwillingness to spend money; Malthusian ideas and a belief that the poor were sinful.

Section B

Question 2(a)

Many students answered this question. The mark scheme at Level 2 was looking for students to display an understanding of the broader context of why the Swing Riots were important. It was answered well on the whole with students scoring Level 2 marks. Most students reached Level 2 by showing how fears generated by the French Revolution influenced thinking about the Swing Riots. It was noted that the riots influenced Government thinking about reform. It was surprising that more students did not have more to say about who feared revolution. Students who gave factual details of what happened in the Swing Riots and where they occurred scored marks at Level 1. A number of students associated the Swing Riots with factory reform.

Question 2(b)

This question drew many good answers from the majority of students who tackled it. Many students relied on Source F as a `starter` and were able to indicate how Trades Unions organised publicity, petitions and protest marches. There was some very good, and occasionally excessive, knowledge shown about the Tolpuddle Martyrs. The most frequent other point made was about the Trades Union focus on working hours, conditions and pay. Those students who examined Source F closely were easily able to gain an answer worth three to five marks. Although mentioned, students often lacked the specific detail on the broader methods of Trades Unions that would have merited Level 3. At Level 3 a broader perspective on the work of Trades Unions was seen with students noting the provision of libraries, education classes and provident societies. Students who discussed and explained these aspects in detail were usually rewarded at Level 3.

Question 2(c)

This question discriminated well and was popular with students. The question did elicit a few very detailed and thoughtful answers. Most students focused on the key factor given in the question or the failure of petitions, which discredited the Chartists. Students knew details of Chartists violence which enabled them to access Level 2 marks, as did those students who provided several factors that were simply expressed. In many cases examiners noted students who were desperate to mention a long list of reasons but only briefly. The most popular reason for any treatment in depth was recognition that the Chartists' violence discouraged middle class support. Furthermore, the division amongst the leadership about the Chartists methods lessened the impact of their campaign. Such answers resulted in high marks within Level 2. The responses of students at Level 3 were distinguished by their ability to explain reasons in detail. Responses at this level were able to explain, for example, the impact of economic conditions on Chartism and the efficiency of the government response, as well as the Chartists' lack of press support. The students who reached Level 4 often had a telling contrast to make between the Chartists and the Anti-Corn Law League.

Question 3(a)

This was a popular and straightforward question. Many students were clearly aware of how, when and why these systems operated. At Level 2 the key elements to their importance was firstly where these systems operated well and where they did not. Secondly, students were confident in explaining the impact of these systems on the motivations of the poor, local farmers and the cost of the Poor Law.

Question 3(b)

This question gave a great deal of help in the picture provided. Source G was quite rightly used by many students who commented on harshness of the workhouse conditions under the New Poor Law. Answers did tend to focus at Level 2 on the ‘less eligibility’ principle of the workhouses, and discussed the separation of families and the desperation required to submit to the new regime. Higher marks were usually gained by students who explained the intention to save money that was enshrined in the provisions of the New Poor Law. The ability to look at the New Poor Law from the perspective of the providers rather than the recipients was frequently what distinguished Level 3 responses, and students’ treatment of the question at this level often had an admirable amount of precise historical fact.

Question 3(c)

The question was straightforward and some students enjoyed the opportunity to display their understanding. At Level 1 students had a few points to make usually about the Poor Law. At Level 2 students frequently wrote about Chadwick exclusively and lost sight of the reforming of the Poor Law. Furthermore, many students’ answers understandably strayed into a discussion of Chadwick and Public Health changes. The most frequently observed comments in answers focused on the ideas of Bentham and Malthus. At Level 3 it was pleasing to see a number of students referring to: the drivers of saving public money; the *laissez-faire* principle, and contemporary discussions inspired by the ideas of Bentham and Malthus. The top answers at Levels 3 and 4 did appreciate that the reformed system still had much local and regional variation in how it was implemented and operated, particularly in respect of outdoor relief. There were a few students who composed excellent answers with a summary judgement about the relative importance of the factors involved.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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