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Examiners' Report January 2011

GCSE History 5HA03 3A

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates in the second session of this new modular unit. The paper requires candidates to answer five questions in 75 minutes and it was pleasing that some candidates managed to write at considerable length in this time.

However, it was noticeable that a small number of candidates failed to complete (in some cases even start) question 5. This was due to mismanagement of timing often as a result of writing over long answers to previous questions. Centres should note that the amount of space provided in the booklet for answers, is more than we would expect any answer to take, not a recommendation of the amount candidates should write.

There were strong answers to all questions although, in some cases, there were formulaic responses which did not directly address the question. For example, some answers referred to the reliability of the sources in questions 3 and 5 without directly relating this to either the strength of support or challenge for the cross referencing or the hypothesis.

Contextual knowledge is essential for ensuring understanding of the provenance and meaning of the sources as well as underpinning answers to all the questions. Indeed there were a number of candidates who lacked understanding of the obvious bias and partiality of the British Gazette in Sources A, B and D or to have heard of A J Cook who wrote Source E. This limited their ability to interpret these sources.

An example response from the examination is given for each question in the report. Please note that in some cases part answers only are given as exemplification, not full answers. However, a general summary for improvement in the approach to question types (which are common across the three options) may prove of benefit to centres:

Question 1. Candidates often wrote too much for inference. It is sufficient to make the inferences and support them from the source, often with a direct quote. The reliability of the source is not a relevant issue.

Question 2. Ensure that candidates identify the underlying purpose of the source, not just the message. This could be what the source is trying to make people think or do. This should be supported with evidence from the source itself and/or contextual knowledge.

Question 3. Ensure that candidates focus on the style of a cross referencing question and actually cross reference the sources. They should identify support and differences and make judgements on the extent of support based on the content and reliability of the sources.

Question 4. Candidates should avoid simply describing the contents of the sources. They should evaluate both the information/contents in the context of utility or reliability as well as the nature, origins and purpose.

Question 5. A small number of candidates made little or no reference to the sources and instead wrote extensively about the General Strike. Ensure that candidates focus only on using the sources to test the hypothesis. Highest marks require them to make judgements on the extent of support and challenge to the hypothesis based on the weight of evidence given in the sources and their reliability.

Question 1

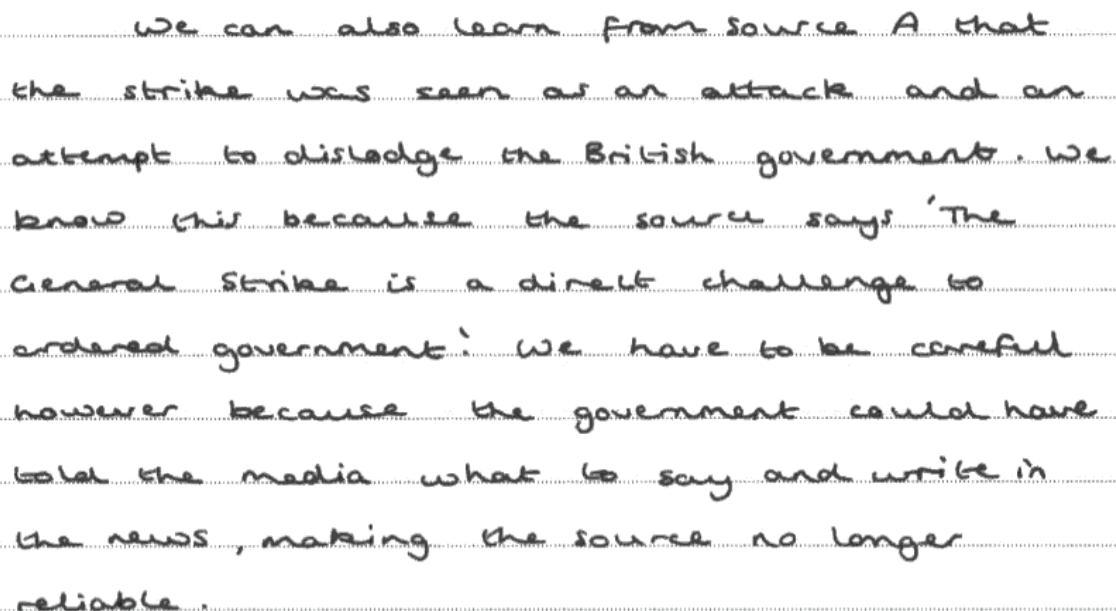
Candidates were asked to make inferences about the General Strike from an article in the British Gazette. The most obvious inferences were that the government would not be bullied by the TUC, the Strike was a threat to the Constitution, the government had no intention of giving in, the Strike would fail, or that the majority did not support the Strike.

The key to answering this question is to make the inference and use the wording of the source only as the support for the inference. An inference should not be made using the words of the source, as that is likely to produce paraphrasing.

So candidates who stated that 'the General Strike is a direct challenge to ordered government' were copying the source, not making valid inferences and were marked at Level 1. Those who suggested that the TUC were trying to bully the government because the source says 'it is an effort to force upon 42 million British Citizens the will of less than four million' were making a valid inference and supporting it from the source. Such answers were rewarded at Level 3.

On this question, some candidates brought in their own knowledge, either to make the inference or to provide a historical context. This is not a correct approach to the question. Both inferences and support must come from the source. Candidates should make two supported inferences to reach top marks.

A few candidates thought that the article supported the TUC and the Strike. Contextual knowledge would have ensured that they identified the British Gazette as a pro government and anti-strike newspaper.



We can also learn from source A that the strike was seen as an attack and an attempt to dislodge the British government. We know this because the source says 'The General Strike is a direct challenge to ordered government'. We have to be careful however because the government could have told the media what to say and write in the news, making the source no longer reliable.

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Examiner Comments

This is part of a strong answer to this question. The candidate begins the paragraph by giving the inference "an attempt to dislodge the British government" and then supports it with a quote from the source. 'The General Strike is a direct...'

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Examiner Tip

To gain higher marks you must make two inferences supported from the source. Why not say 'I know this because the source says'..?

Question 2

This question asks candidates to explain the purpose of a poster which appeared in the British Gazette during the General Strike. The majority of candidates were able to identify the message of the source, which was to suggest that the government was stronger than the public and was going to win the General Strike. They were able to support this with details from the source, especially the firm stance of John Bull and the more secure Union Jack flagpole as well as the wording at the bottom.

However, to reach Level 3 candidates had to explain the purpose of the source - what it was intended to make people think or do. This poster was meant to increase support for the government and turn the public against the General Strike. This should be supported with details from the source and/or contextual knowledge, possibly with reference to government propaganda and the use of the British Gazette.

A small number of candidates ignored the provenance (from the British Gazette) or did not realise that this was a government newspaper and suggested it was to encourage support for the General Strike.

The message of this source is that it is showing the strikers that the British people are strong and the fact that the Union flag is held up by a sturdy post, and the T.U.C's flag is has clumsily been put in the ground represents the ~~strength~~ strength of both of the people. The purpose that this poster cartoon, would be to create patriotism through out the country, to try and avoid more workers going on strike. The Government were

worried that more people would go on strike, so they published many cartoons and posters like this to increase patriotism.

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Examiner Comments

This is part of an answer. The candidate identifies the message of the source and supports this with evidence from the source itself with reference to the flags. In the second paragraph the answer gives the purpose of the source and supports it with contextual knowledge.

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Examiner Tip

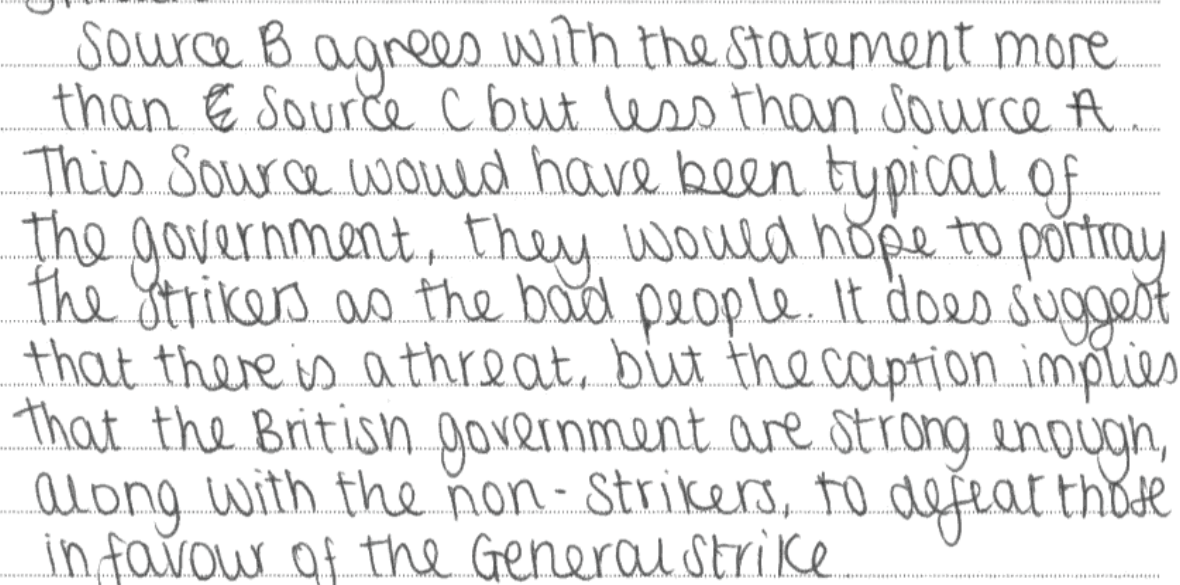
The key to Level 3. Why not go straight to the purpose of the source? Remember, however, that this must be explained fully by reference to the source itself and/or contextual knowledge. Try to do both to ensure top marks.

Question 3

The question is asking candidates to decide to what extent the first three sources, A, B and C, agree that the General Strike was a threat to the British Government. A number of candidates achieved higher Level 2 by identifying agreement and disagreement between the sources. For example they suggested that Sources A and B agreed that the General Strike was a threat to the government and supported this with evidence from each source and that Source C challenged the views of the other sources by suggesting it was not a threat to the government. Some achieved Level 3 by making judgements about the extent of support between the three sources based on their contents and/or reliability.

Some, however, gave formulaic comments on reliability and did not use these to address cross referencing and the extent of support. Others compared each source to the view given in the question and showed little or no evidence of cross referencing between the sources.

This is one part of a much lengthier answer. The candidate begins the paragraph by making judgements about the extent of support/challenge between the sources. However, it then mines Source B to show the degree of support from the source to the view.



Source B agrees with the statement more than Source C but less than Source A. This Source would have been typical of the government, they would hope to portray the strikers as the bad people. It does suggest that there is a threat, but the caption implies that the British government are strong enough, along with the non-strikers, to defeat those in favour of the General Strike.

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Examiner Comments

This was part of a good Level 3 answer.

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Examiner Tip

As well as comparing each source to the given view, ensure that you cross reference between the sources and give evidence of support and challenge. Make explicit judgements about the extent of support/challenge throughout your answer and especially in your conclusion based on the contents and reliability of the sources.

Question 4

For this question, candidates had to examine the utility of Source D, a photograph published in the British Gazette, and Source E, a report by A J Cook a few weeks after the Strike about how the Strike ended. Most candidates achieved Level 2 by examining the contents/information given in each source or commenting on the nature, origins or purpose of the sources. Those that reached Level 3 had based their judgements on both. For example many saw the value of the contents of Source D as suggesting that the government had services under control, especially transport. Moreover, some suggested it was useful as evidence of the propaganda used by the government during the General Strike.

Source E proved more problematic. Some candidates had no contextual understanding of A J Cook - the secretary of the MFGB and a key figure in the General Strike. They misunderstood the source believing it was praising the TUC. Those who successfully identified Cook realised that, in fact, he was being very critical of the TUC.

A number of candidates used formulaic responses in which they went through the nature, origins and purpose of each source without making direct reference to how these affected utility. Others simply described the contents of each source - what they could see or read. On the other hand, there were a number of strong and balanced evaluations.

This is the last part of an answer. In the earlier section the candidate had explained the value and limitations of the contents of each source. In this section, the candidate evaluates the reliability of each source in relation to utility. In the last part the answer identifies Cook's motives in writing the report: 'they would want the TUC to appear cowardly'.

war' to the government. Source D may not be reliable because it was published in the British Gazette which is a government produced magazine, this photo could have been staged to give off the impression that the British workers were dealing with the General Strike well. ~~the~~ source may not be ^{reliable} useful as it is produced by a secretary for the miner's federation, they would want the TUC to appear cowardly after leaving the strikers feeling betrayed. These the problems with reliability therefore make it less useful as evidence for how the workers helped in the ~~war~~ ^{strike} and how the strike ended.



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Examiner Comments

This was part of a good Level 3 answer.



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Examiner Tip

Remember to mine and interrogate each source. Make judgements on the information/contents as well as the origins, nature and purpose of each source.

Question 5

There were a number of well structured answers to this question which asks whether the sources support the hypothesis that the collapse of the General Strike was due to government propaganda. Some candidates were able to achieve at least Level 3 by addressing the issues inherent in the question and the extent to which the sources addressed them. At Level 4, candidates were able to select, draw inferences from, use extracts from the sources to address the question set. The best candidates were able to weigh the evidence from each source, based on contents and/or reliability, and use their conclusion to make a final judgement based on the weight of evidence given in the sources for or against the hypothesis.

Use of provenance/reliability varied in quality and often was overtly mechanical making it difficult to ascertain the direction of an answer. The most effective use of provenance/reliability was weaved into the wider argument of whether the main reason not the source supported or otherwise the idea that propaganda was the main reason for the collapse of the Strike. In a minority of cases, time management issues undermined candidates' responses to this question.

A small number of candidates failed to make sufficient use of the sources and used their own knowledge to explain the reasons for the failure of the Strike. Remember that this is a source enquiry question. Candidates are being asked to evaluate the strength of the evidence in the sources themselves - in their content and reliability. Contextual knowledge is important in helping them to identify the issues involved. In this question, the government use of propaganda through the British Gazette (Sources A, B and D) and other reasons for the failure such as the use of volunteers in Source D and the so-called 'betrayal' of the TUC mentioned in Source E. Those with strong contextual knowledge are able to make much more effective use of the contents and provenance of the sources.

This is the first part of an answer. In this section the candidate immediately makes a judgement about the strength of the evidence agreeing with the hypothesis and supports this with evidence from the four sources. This is well-focused although the answer could be improved if the candidate interrogated the provenance of each source and made judgements about the strength of the support from each of the sources.

Of course sources A, B and D strongly agree with the hypothesis as they are actually pieces of propaganda and this certainly had an affect on the public. As we can see the propoganda was produced in many ways (e.g. a cartoon) to reach to all audiences and to call an end to the strike. Source B shows the TUC looking down to show their shame and how its only a matter of time before they break and surrender. Source A also stated the strike as a "hold-up" which means soon it will be over. Source D shows that people are doing a good thing and stepping in so those who can't step in show at least support those who can. All these sections of the British Gazette helped to cause the TUC to surrender and end the strike. Source F also says "the government won over public opinion through the use of radio broadcasts and the British Gazette" and so propoganda played a vital role. Also says F is considered reliable as its ^{in a "modern world"} written by history book.



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Examiner Comments

This was part of a strong Level 4 answer.



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Examiner Tip

Ensure that you use the sources to make judgements on the hypothesis. Do not simply summarise each source or use own knowledge. Your overall judgement should be based on the weight of evidence given by the contents/reliability of the sources.

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