Examiners' Report

January 2012

GSCE History 5HA03 3A

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates in the fourth session. The paper requires candidates to answer five questions in 75 minutes and some candidates managed to write at considerable length in this time. However, it was noticeable that a 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 overly 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 that 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. 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 and this gives them less time for question 5. It is sufficient to make the inferences and support them from the source, often with a direct quotation. 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. It is better to begin with the purpose and then support this with the message of the source.

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 Liberal welfare reforms. Ensure that candidates focus only on using the sources to test the hypothesis. Achieving the highest marks requires candidates to make judgements on the extent of support and challenge to the hypothesis based on the weight of evidence given in the sources and/or their reliability.

Question 1

Candidates were asked to make inferences about the Battle of Mons. The most obvious inferences were that the Germans suffered heavy casualties; the battle was a success for the British; and the Germans underestimated the British. 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 'We had been driven back by the British' were copying the source, not making valid inferences and were marked at Level 1. Those who suggested that 'The Germans suffered heavy casualties. I know this because the Source says that the 160 German troops that left the wood had shrunk to 100' 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.

Answer ALL questions.

Look carefully at the background information and Sources A to F in the Sources Booklet and then answer Questions 1 to 5 which follow.

1 Study Source A.

What can you learn from Source A about the Battle of Mons?

(6)

From this Source I can infer that, the British wee sucessful in killing the Germans. I know this as it states "the 160 German troops that had left the wood with me were reduced to 100."

I can also infer from this source that the perception of the British had been changed by the Germans and they now saw them as a strong army. I know this as the source says "the same British we had laughed at a few hours before."

Question 2

This question asks candidates to explain the purpose of an illustration by a British artist in 1915 that showed the advance of the British troops at Mons supported by the figure of St George. The majority of candidates were able to identify the message of the source: that the British were winning the battle of Mons because we can see that the British troops are moving forward and there are a number of dead German soldiers. They were able to support this with details from the source.

However, to reach Level 3, candidates had to explain the purpose of the source - what it was intended to make people think or do – which would be to keep up morale in Britain by suggesting that the Battle of Mons was a great victory for the British, with British troops successfully driving back the Germans who suffered heavy casualties. Contextual knowledge would have helped to identify the message and purpose of the sketch - the illustration was produced in 1915 at a time of heavy casualties due to the stalemate on the Western Front when Britain needed more volunteers for the armed forces. Such an heroic illustration, with the figure of St George, would encourage more volunteers.

A minority of candidates confused the message of the source, (the point it is trying to put across), with its purpose, (what the message is trying to achieve). The best candidates made effective use of discourse markers such as 'suggests' and 'persuade'.

2 **Study Source B and use your own knowledge.**

What was the purpose of this illustration? Use details of the illustration and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

(8)

This piece of propaganda was published after the battle of Mons and also after the battle of Marne and a few others. At the time it was published the war was in the state of stalemate meaning it was quite static. The message of this "illustration" ~~was~~ is of the British soldiers storming united, with bayonets in hand towards the enemy alongside a ~~old~~ angle like figure of St George.

The purpose of this source was to keep the people at home, the women and family, that the British were doing well and ~~f~~ fighting bravely. This was to make sure the people kept supporting the war effort and so ~~keep~~ people wouldn't be disheartened. Also it shows a ~~saint~~ very important "Saint of England" riding with them. I think the purpose of this was to show that they had hope and a godly saint helping them, helping

Question 3

The question is asking candidates to decide how far Sources A, B and C agree about the Battle of Mons. A number of candidates achieved higher Level 2 by identifying agreement and disagreement between the sources. The best candidates made reference to the content of the source to establish the extent of agreement and disagreement. Again, well-prepared candidates were able to make skilful use of discourse markers ('similarly', 'on the other hand', 'by contrast', 'to some extent') to get their point across. Candidates who were able to cross-reference effectively and comment on the extent of agreement/ disagreement were able to access Level 3 and could achieve Level 3 (9 marks) or even full marks.

Some candidates, 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. Such candidates were able to access Level 2 but not Level 3. This question specifically asks candidates to cross-reference and make comparisons between the sources.

Again, a minority of candidates demonstrated a tendency to make comments on the provenance of the source without focus on the question. While candidates were not penalised for doing this, it often resulted in time management problems later on in the paper. Comments on the provenance of the source must compare the attitude and motives of the writers of the sources to be credited.

3 Study Sources A, B and C.

How far do these sources agree about the fighting at the Battle of Mons?
Explain your answer, using the sources.

(10)

Sources A, B and C all agree and disagree in different ways in connection to the battle of mons.

Sources A and B both agree in that they both show that the British soldiers were coming out on top. Source A: "We were being driven back, badly beaten by the british" and source B: It shows British troops advancing during the battle of mons". Here sources A and B give the impression that Britian forces were dominantly winning the battles of Mons, in that great detail and description from source A and strong imagry in source B. Also sources A and C agree to a greater extent in that, source A: "the same british we had laughed at a few hours ago" and source B: "Our brave army had suffered heavy causualties from German". With this source A and B show that the British possibly had a big loss in men at the battle of Mons which could have motivated them to get back on track.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This is the first part of a level 3 answer in which the candidate immediately cross-references between Sources A and B and Sources A and C, and makes judgements on the extent of support between the sources.

ResultsPlus
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. Remember to identify and explain agreement and disagreement between the sources.
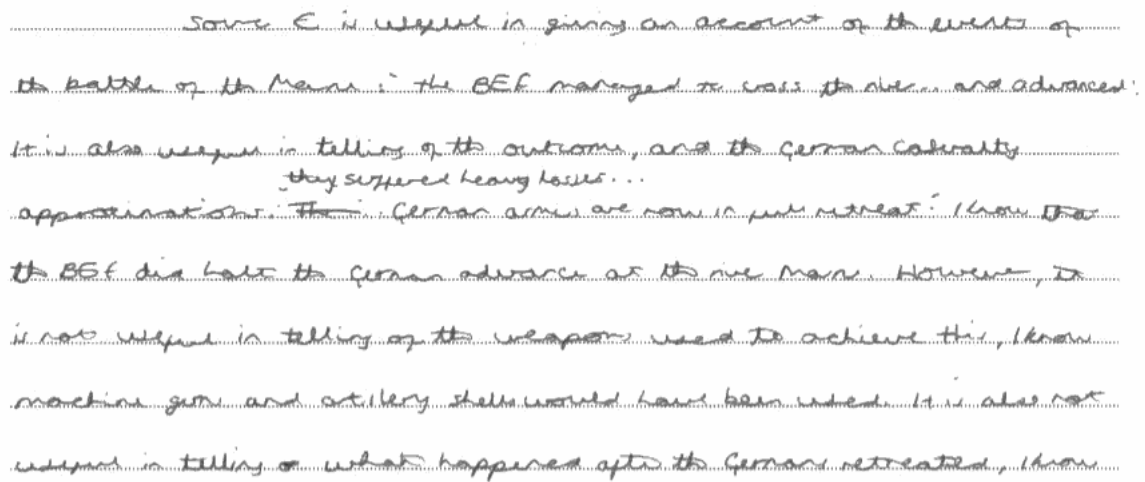
Make explicit judgements about the extent of support/challenge throughout your answer and especially in your conclusion based on the contents and reliability of the sources. Use judgement phrases such as 'strongly agree', 'partly agree', and 'totally disagree'. Ensure that reliability is used to judge the extent of support between the sources.

Question 4

For this question, candidates had to examine the utility of Source D, a painting of the Belgian defence of Liege, and Source E, a report by Sir John French on the Battle of the Marne. 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. Many candidates were able to interrogate the sources effectively, commenting on both their content and provenance. Candidates who were able to do this effectively with both sources could score Level 3 (9/10), with full marks awarded to candidates who interrogated the sources most effectively. Candidates were generally more confident with the provenance of Source E and less so with Source D. Some assumed that Source D was about the British rather than the Belgian defence of Liege.

However, 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. Weaker candidates paraphrased the sources, or made simplistic comments or learned responses about the sources, often referring to them as biased or as primary/secondary sources. Such responses were confined to Level 1. A number wrote at great length about the utility of the contents of the sources, and compared this to their contextual knowledge about the Belgian defence of Liege and the Battle of the Marne, but failed to evaluate the nature, origins or purpose of either of the sources with reference to reliability.

Finally, although utility and reliability questions require the application of similar skills - evaluating the contents and the nature, origins or purpose of the sources - candidates must ensure that they focus on reliability. The question is not whether the two sources are reliable, but whether they are useful.

that they dug down and made trenches, to make sure they were defended from of British attack, and that the British did the same, resulting in a stalemate as neither side could advance.

Source E could be reliable as it is an official army report to Minister of War, and so French could not exaggerate or risk losing reputation. However, he did have incentive to and perhaps did, as he was commander of the BEF, and could have wanted to exaggerate their successes to gain him higher status.

Sources D and E agree in the sense of the German not being able to advance, as the Belgians in D are holding off their attack, and the BEF defeat them at Marne. However, they are reporting on different battles, and so don't agree on much else. Source D does not mention the BEF, and source E doesn't mention the Belgians.

Source E is more useful than D, which would have been censored under D.O.R.A, so unreliable, but also it could have been manipulated to make a better painting. It also doesn't show consequences of the Battle or so even when it was, while E tells of both these, though for a different battle. Both are useful in giving ideas of trench warfare, which was used in 1914, or the race to the sea and other major tactical events.
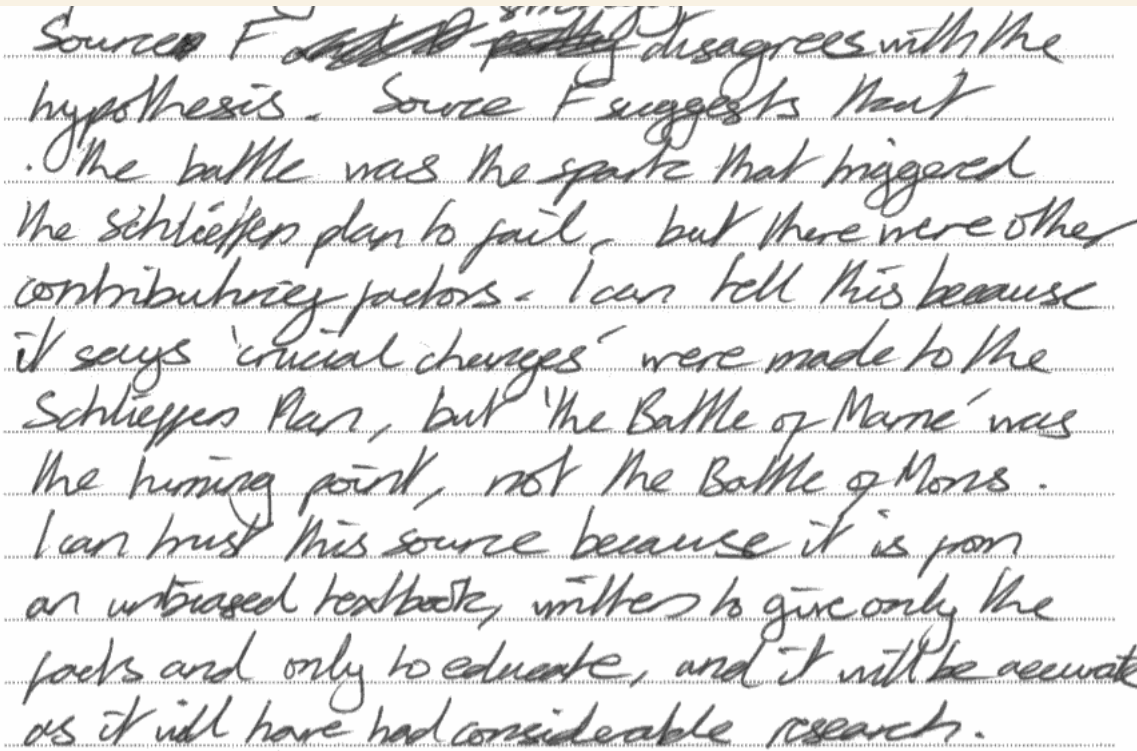
Question 5

There were a number of well-structured answers to this question that asks whether the sources support the hypothesis that the Battle of Mons was the most important reason for the failure of the Schlieffen Plan. 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 and 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 woven into the wider argument of whether or not the source supported or challenged the hypothesis, with candidates making explicit judgements about whether the reliability of the source weakened or strengthened it as evidence. 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 whether the Battle of Mons was the most important reason for the failure of the Schlieffen Plan. 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. Candidates should not bring in their own additional knowledge to support or challenge the hypothesis. They should use their contextual knowledge to identify the issues involved and to evaluate the provenance of the sources.

> Overall, the sources suggest that the Battle of Mons was not the main reason, but the combination of the Battle of Marne and the Belgians and the changes to the Schlieffen Plan. However, taking reliability into context, the sources still suggest it was not the Battle of Mons, as sources E and F disagree and are reliable.

Grade Boundaries

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