

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
in History (5HA04) Paper 01

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Publications Code UG039127

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## General comments

This summer saw work moderated from a Specification A candidature of nearly 34,000 students, and a Specification B candidature of nearly 41,000 students. The most popular CA choices were CA5, CA6 and CA8, with CA9 and CA10 also the choice of many centres. Moderators also saw work from CA1, CA3. As with 2012 and 2013 CA7, CA12 and CA13 were done by relatively few centres. Regardless of which CA was chosen Moderators were pleased to note that clearly many centres had taken on board the advice that was given in the 2013 PM Report, Moderator Reports and subsequent training opportunities that had been provided by Edexcel.

The efforts made by the teachers involved to implement the requirements of this unit, and to apply accurately and consistently the generic mark scheme, were greatly appreciated by the moderating team. The work of many students demonstrated a genuine effort to engage with the demands of this unit, and suggested that when students are given the opportunity to research genuine historical questions and make personal judgements about how the past is represented, they rise to the task and produce interesting and original work.

The administration and presentation of the work was usually thorough and diligent with many centres organising the sample in numerical order with highest and lowest students clearly identified. Many centres had clearly internally moderated the work and made this very explicit on either students work or on spread sheets. All of this assists immeasurably with the moderation process.

However, despite the above some problems were still observed by moderators and continue to stem from misunderstanding of the regulations, inaccurate application of the generic mark scheme and a lack of understanding of what the specific parts of the Controlled Assessment task actually require.

### Part A: Enquiry

Centres either determined which of the two enquiry questions all students were to study or allowed their students to choose a question themselves. Both approaches allowed students to produce enquires that were interesting, well researched and produce personal judgements rather than just narrative and description.

Where students performed the best the following features were evident:

- The focus of the answer was always on the focus of the enquiry – if the focus had a date range the answer contained evidence and analysis that stayed within that range – if the focus was on impact the answer contained evidence and analysis of effects and consequences.

- Answers were not always lengthy – students who addressed the focus and selected evidence to support their judgements secured L3 and L4 marks.

Where students performed the weakest the following features were evident:

- Answers gave an overview of the whole topic and did not focus on the question.
- Answers that were based on over-detailed notes that led to unstructured description and narrative.

Moderators noted that in some centres student responses were very much the same. Moderators looked at notes and plans to see if a template had been used. Also, there were occasions where some students had written paragraphs that were practically identical. There were also students who had produced answers seemingly without any planning or notes.

Centres were made aware in the 2013 report that high marks are not possible if some method of referencing the sources used is not evident in the body of the student answer. This is now a clear position that all centres should be aware of and ensure that they incorporate it in their assessment of the enquiry task.

During the moderation process this summer Moderators reported that many centres had got to grips with the above issue and students clearly identified their sources. However, there are centres that are not supporting their students with this requirement, and subsequently some mark reductions have been applied.

The overall impression from moderators was that many centres had taken on board lessons learnt from 2013 and that teacher's and students were much more confident in what the Enquiry task required. Indeed, many Moderators noted that student responses were interesting, insightful and demonstrated some high level enquiry and research skills.

## **Part B: Representations**

It was noted in 2011, 2012 and 2013 that some students treated the work on representations in the same way as they would treat sources in a Unit 3 examination question. The questions in Bi and Bii were not asking about how reliable or how useful and, therefore, an approach which focused on issues such as nature and origin should not score highly.

Moderators reported this summer that centres had addressed this when it had been referenced in the previous Moderator Report.

However, it still needs to be stressed that students need to appreciate that representations give an overall impression and their discussion and judgements need to be about that impression. The representation has been

created by somebody, or institution and they need to think about what has been selected and omitted in the creation of that representation.

## **Part Bi**

Moderators commented that the vast majority of answers were at Level 2; students identified similarity and difference in detail, and that teacher's very confidently and accurately marked at that level.

The most successful approach was where students began their answer by identifying and comparing the overall impression created in each representation and then used the details of each to support their analysis. Also, students focused on the subtle nuances of difference and similarity in the representations. The following extract is from answer that displayed some of the above features.

*'Both representations display aspects and perspectives of the Paramilitary Organisations within Northern Ireland particularly the emotion showed by both representations. Representation 1 provides an image depicting the emotional side of the paramilitary groups in the troubles and that of the anger and sadness that it had caused the republican movement. Representation 2 provides an extract from a book that was written to show some of the horror of the troubles that were caused by paramilitary organisations such as the UVF and the IRA. The author does not try to write emotionally but merely to provide the reader with an insight into the happenings in Northern Ireland. The reader is enticed to read on and understand some of the emotion and violence going on at the time, and the anguish and sadness it caused innocent people.'*

## **Part Bii**

It was noted in the 2013 report that this was the question where the biggest reduction in marks.

Moderator comments for this summer suggest that the above issue is still a factor and similarly felt that it was within this question that they saw inconsistency of marking, and application of the mark scheme within centres and across centres.

Therefore, there were many answers which assessed reliability and discussed bias. Many assessed on the grounds of nature, origin and purpose. Some students treated the exercise as one of cross-referencing and spent most of their answer comparing the representations based on what one included, or did not again the others.

Some Centres still need to be reminded that students need to use some contextual own knowledge to support judgements about accuracy, or to explain why it is significant that something has been omitted. It is not

sufficient to simply state 'I know this to be the case from my own knowledge'.

Also, it is important to stress that when the task is designed it is not the case that one of the representations is automatically the best. Students should be encouraged to consider for themselves and make judgements about which might be the better factually, or objectively, or emotionally. Indeed, they may judge that despite a representation being factually weak, it nevertheless portrays 'best' what the period or the issue was like at the time.

Students that successfully approached this task planned carefully the criteria they thought were the most appropriate, and had supporting contextual knowledge.

### **Administration**

On the whole the administration of the Controlled Assessment by centres was thorough, accurate and well presented. However, Moderators commented that some issues still persist. Moderators suggest that the following help with the moderation process:

- Moderators need a copy of the third representation
- If the centre allows students to choose the Enquiry in Task A a copy of all the available tasks the students chose from should be sent
- Highest/lowest scoring work should be included whether on the OPTEMS or not
- Marks should be the same on student work/authentication sheet/OPTEMS
- A copy of the Controlled Assessment Task(s) should be included with the sample
- The sample is packaged in score order (highest to lowest)
- Each students work is packaged so that in order there is Task A and notes/plan/bibliography, Task Bi and notes/plan, Task Bii and notes/plan
- Some brief evidence of marking and internal moderation is on students work
- Some brief indication of how the CA was carried out and the nature of the timings for the write up sessions

### **Conclusion**

It is always appreciated as a Principal Moderator to witness the effort, professionalism and dedication that History teachers show towards preparing their students for examination work. It was clear this summer that many centres have been prepared to seek advice, and act upon advice, in order to ensure that they give their students the best opportunity to engage with this unit. It is also clear that given those conditions students enjoy and rise to the challenge that this unit offers – their work is

interesting, insightful, honest and replete with the skills that will equip them for further study and the 'outside world'.

Centres should continue to pay careful attention to E9 reports even if marks adjustments were not made. To those centres where adjustments have been recommended it should be noted that the judgement of the initial moderator has been reviewed and discussed by either a team leader or the principal moderator.

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>



