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Examiners' Report
June 2011

GCSE History 5HB03 3D

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Introduction

This was the third series of this 2009 Schools History Project Source Enquiry. The topic for WOTH this series was The Great Fire of London. The earlier period chosen caused some candidates difficulty and was responsible for some anachronisms. Most candidates were however able to demonstrate responses that were worthy of at least some credit. There was evidence that more responses were achieving the higher levels required by the mark scheme. There remain a number of areas where candidates' responses could improve and hopefully the following report will help them achieve that. There was evidence that many centres had learnt from the experience of the first two series. That said there was evidence that some candidates experienced difficulty in terms of allocating time in the examination to questions in relation to the mark tariff that they are worth. Too many long answers to questions 1 and 2 were answered with much more effort and depth than many responses to question 5. The latter was despite the fact that question 5 had many more marks allocated to it. There were fewer responses written in the wrong sections of the answer book. This is a particular problem in responses to question 4 which instead of using the next page of the answer book after completing the first page of question 4 continue their answer on the last page of question 3. There were far too many simplistic responses concerning the value and utility of sources. Many of these are inaccurate and misinformed. Too many responses saw all primary sources as reliable and useful and secondary as worthless.

As mentioned in previous reports the value of tackling questions under examination conditions is a useful way of preparing candidates to respond appropriately to the demands of an examination under timed conditions.

Question 1

The great majority of students were able to extract relevant detail from the source about the size of the fire, the wind fanning it on, the buildings in ruins and the boats on the Thames. Most were able to make effective inferences such as the fire being out of control, the river Thames acting as barrier, people's homes being destroyed. These inferences were mainly supported from the source, however some simply commented on the destructive and dangerous fire without any further reference. A number commented on the origin of the source itself and dealt with its reliability which was irrelevant to this question. A number identified the fact that the illustrator was German and claimed that this alone made the source utterly unreliable. A few attempted to answer the question simply using knowledge of their own. A small number of candidates used the background information, instead of using Source A as required by the question. However there were many solid answers which made full use of the source with intelligent inferences.

1 Study Source A.

What can you learn from Source A about the Great Fire of London?

(6)

The Source shows that the fire was a great destructive force, this is due to how the flames have been illustrated as being large and spread out over a wide to wide, large area.

Furthermore it can be seen how the fire made people scared and panicked as the ^{many} boats on the nearby river suggests that people/residence of the area in which the fire took place, were trying to escape the danger and flee for their lives.

Also the picture depicts the fire occurring in a separate part of London and how other parts of London were unaffected and proved a safe haven for the people fleeing the fire, the idea of the parts of London being separate and away from the danger of the flames can clearly be seen in how the person who drew the illustration used the river as an object of separation while the bridge indicates the safe area of London still has connections with the area being affected at the time and

has connections with the area being affected at the time and is still in danger of the fire spreading to it.

This shows how while certain areas of London may have been safe havens, the fire was so great, vast and consuming that it was spreading, slowly but surely over London.



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Examiner Comments

Here the candidate makes several valid inferences and supports these with good support from the source.



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Examiner Tip

Avoid just describing detail from the source as this is unlikely to get more than the basic minimum of marks. Use the source to support your inferences as just making an inference will not get a candidate beyond Level 2.

Question 2

Generally most students were able to offer some simple statements either about the impression of the picture or selected detail from the source such as buildings can be seen in the flames or there were boats on the river. At times the impression offered was fairly simplistic, such as it was a dark time for London which is expressed in the dark colours of the picture. Most students offered valid comments about the impression of the destructive and out of control fire, leaving the people nowhere safe other than the river. Several students commented on the sad occurrence leaving people stranded with nowhere to go but hoping to save themselves and reach safety. Few students achieved an explained impression detailing the scope and destruction of the fire, explaining that even important buildings such as churches were on fire, describing the people fleeing with just their lives and little else. Most achieved a level 2 or 3 for their answers. The most effective responses combined detailed analysis and interpretation of the painting and linked this strongly to their stated impression.

2 Study Source B.

What impression of the fire has the artist tried to create? Explain your answer, using Source B.

(8)

Source B has no artist's name attached to it but we can clearly see their feelings about the effect the fire had on the people of London.

Portraying the scene at night, the artist shows the flames clearly lighting the London skyline up brilliantly in the darkness. This dramatic use of contrast shows the imposing nature of the fire creating the impression of its dominance over London and its inhabitants.

A church burns in the centre of the picture which may be the artist making comment on the relentless inconsiderate nature of the flames destroying anything in its path.

The artist clearly shows people in the foreground leaving that appears to be the engulfed area in boats with their possessions. This is possibly to create the impression that the people of London

create the impression that the people of London were escaping rather than fighting the fire denoting the helplessness of the situation.

They have many possessions with them and do not appear to be panicked. This is possibly as the artist is trying to create the impression that the people of London were so shocked to deal with the fire and rather had to leave.

This may also be how the artist is trying to create an impression about the intensity of the fire as he clearly displays it pursuing the escaping people.

This scene shows an artist that is trying to convey the impression that the people of London could not fight the fire successfully and so escaped rather than fight.



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Examiner Comments

This was a solid response that managed to achieve Level 3. It is able to use detail from the painting together with a reasonable group of comments on the impression the artist may have been trying to create.



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Examiner Tip

First identify the impression and then use detail or treatment of content to explain how the impression is put across.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to gain a solid level 2 by identifying areas of support or challenge and sometimes both. Most students were able to offer some generalised answer often selecting some detail from the source without linking it to the question. Many responses were by nature methodical going through each source individually and tending not always successfully to cross reference at the end. However, although many appreciated the need to cross reference, fewer were able to do so effectively or confidently. Most students were, however, able to identify elements of support and/or challenge based on matching details of the sources content. Relevant comment in C was often simply matched to perceived support or challenge in the other two sources. Usually students dealt with all three sources; at times however they only showed the support or challenge of a source, stating simply that D completely supported C or that E completely disagreed with it. Few students achieved level 3, not only by cross-referencing source content but identifying the content that demonstrated that both D and E support and challenge C. Others concluded that D was more supportive than E and by indicating the reason why, evaluated the extent of support. When this level was achieved, students proved very perceptive of the nuances of the language particularly in D looking at the confusion and exhaustion mentioned versus the notion of shock.

Some responses focused on the nature of each individual source. Here, there were a lot of simplistic learnt responses on the value of sources that was generic rather than specific and not related to the questions focus.

3 Study Sources C, D and E.

How far do Sources D and E support the impression given in Source C that people were too shocked to be able to deal with the fire? Explain your answer, using these sources.

(10)

Source C explains how people were shocked by the fire that spanned for '10 miles'. It explains how people were crying instead of dealing with the fire and they 'made no attempt to save their possessions'. The source conveys the sense of hopelessness and inability to fight the fire, this impression is implied furthermore in both source D and source E, but to different extents.

Source D really agrees with Source C's impression. It explains how the Lord Mayor had crumpled under the pressure and his 'response was to

under the pressure and his 'response was to cry out like a fainting woman'. Pepys, the author, goes on to say how the Lord Mayor was 'exhausted' and felt that 'people will not obey me: ~~so he left~~ This ~~is almost~~ supports the view given in Source C which also shows people 'crying out' and describes the people as 'frightened creatures.'

On the other hand, Source E shows a different story. In comparison to the failure and hopelessness shown by the people in both Source C and Source D, Source E shows 'people walking together, the fire was not out'. It seems to oppose Source C as it suggests people worked in a logical way to overcome the difficulties of extinguishing the fire. Yet it also comments on the Lord Mayor's 'real failure', which was described in Source D.

On one hand, Source D was written on the 2nd September, the day the fire began, so it would be expected to see confusion and shock, similar to that shown in Source C, on the 3rd September. Both sources (C and D) are diaries. This suggests that they are written for personal use so there would not be much bias in them. They were both eye witness accounts too, so should be accurate portrayals of the event. In contrast, Source E is a book published in 1920. Walter Bell (the

is a book published in 1970. Walter Bell (the author) may have made things more exciting to sell more copies, so it may not be an accurate account of the feelings. Also, it was written about the 5th September, near the fire's end. You would expect to see progress in putting out the fire after 4 days.

To conclude, Source D strongly links with source C's ideas that shock prevented people dealing with the fire. Source E mainly suggests that people were composed and extinguished the blaze, but also comments on 'earlier failures.'



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Examiner Comments

A well argued response that provides effective cross referencing as well as relevant comment on the provenance of the sources.



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Examiner Tip

Make sure you avoid mentioning what each source says in turn without cross referencing.

Question 4

Many candidates were able to achieve level 2 or 3 with very few not being able to address the question.

Students achieving a level 1 often selected some basic detail regarding what the sources show and made a simplistic comment such as E was a secondary source, F a primary source hence favouring F as more useful. At times F was chosen as more useful due to it being a picture which does not leave the reader to imagine things. However if the student favoured text then the same argument was reversed. Often students simply based their judgement on E showing three methods of fire fighting, F only showing two hence E, being more valuable. Some students also based their judgements on how effective or plausible they believe the methods to be. Most students achieved level 2 focusing on what the sources could or could not tell us, implying some element of simple judgement. Mostly students attempted to discuss how representative the source was in a simplistic way such as E showing a bigger fire therefore being more representative. Fewer students achieved a level 3 by combining both elements of L2 by commenting on both provenance and considering the value of the information given. Students achieving this level looked carefully at how representative the picture was, pointing to E showing an extreme case hence calling for drastic measures and more varied methods of fire fighting and F showing a smaller fire hence showing less people involved and less methods applied.

This question requires the evaluation of evidence in context in order to achieve higher-level marks. Question 4 requires candidates to examine the nature (type of source), origin (who produced it and when) and purpose (what reason explains why it was produced). Candidates who did well tended to see sources having value but some more than others. There was some evidence that some candidates are doing better at source evaluation and avoid the pit falls of the simplistic learnt response.

As indicated in last year's report, "Students would benefit from an examination of a wide range of sources and encouraged to comment on their strengths and limitations to any historical investigation."

4 Study Sources E and F.

Is Source E or Source F more valuable to the historian who is enquiring into the methods used to fight fires in seventeenth century England? Explain your answer, using Sources E and F.

(10)

~~Plan~~

Plan.

Who - Great fire of London mention

What - Great fire of London - several methods mentioned

Fire in Devon - water, praying, grappling hooks.

Where - Devon - County -
London -> City

When - Devon 1617 - earlier than 1666 G.F.O.L.

When - Devon 1617 - earlier than 1666 G.F.O.L.

source

E → subjective, only accounts one person's view.

Also writing from after the time.

source → Primary source

F Detailed - Quite comprehensive

Judgement... - - -

Answer

Source E portrays ~~the~~ the event of the Great Fire of London in 1666 through an extract published in 1920.

Source F is a primary source which depicts methods used to fight fires in Devon in 1617. I would say both sources are comprehensive in mentioning/showing several different methods used to fight fires in the 17th century. For example

both sources mention ^{show} the use of water, and the pulling down of houses to stop fires spreading. In addition both sources offer an extra method such as "gunpowder" in source C (to bring down houses) and also "stamping out the flames". Source F depicts the use of religion and praying ~~to~~ as a method to conquer fires in the 17th century. To a historian who is enquiring about methods used in the 17th century to stop fires I would say that both sources are equally useful in context.

Because source E ~~is~~ is a secondary source it offers the value of hindsight and overview to a historian. However it is also subjective & maybe doesn't account for other/tru

it is also subjective & maybe doesn't account for other/traditional methods used to stop fires in the 17th century. On the other hand, source F is a primary source & depicts methods used at the time & from the time making it valuable to a historian. It does however only portray one event & therefore cannot account for all the methods used in the whole of the 16th century.

In conclusion, I would say that both sources have limitations but because of the fact that source F is a primary source & offers a comprehensive picture of several methods used in the 17th century to fight fires I would say it is the most valuable to a historian.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate evaluated the sources for utility in terms of both content and nature. The response achieved a good Level 3.



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Examiner Tip

Make use of content and provenance and relate both to the focus of the question.

Question 5

This question was not always attempted or was not completed, possibly because students had not timed their responses effectively. When it was attempted, almost all students were able to offer some generalised answer stating that the information was all burnt hence making research impossible. Some students listed all the research that cannot be consulted such as videos, stating that therefore there is no reliable or useful research possible. Most students identified problems with the fact that the source, being from an unknown website casts doubt on its reliability. Students were mostly referring to Wikipedia which can be altered by anyone and therefore is not regarded as reliable but then proceed to suggest other websites that could be used to cross-reference this one. Most of the avenues for further research offered were fairly simplistic, stating diaries and newspapers could be consulted. However, some students were more specific suggesting diaries of people involved such as the fire fighters or Sir Christopher Wren, or pointed to financial records, building plans and legal claims and archives that could be consulted. By also offering concrete examples of points to research many managed to achieve at least a level 3.

Some spent too much time discussing the merits of source G only and failed to address the question set. Some used sources in turn, discussing whether or not they supported Source G. There were more Level 4 responses than before but less than one would hope. Better responses could make effective use of their own knowledge as well as the sources but many tended to trawl through the sources one after the other.

*5 Study Source G and use your own knowledge of the work of the historian.

This source suggests that the impact of the Great Fire on London was enormous.

Explain the difficulties in finding evidence to check this and suggest other research the historian could do to discover the actual impact of the fire.

(16)

Historians face many difficulties in finding evidence to check that the impact of the ^{Great} fire for a number of reasons. For example, paintings and illustrations of that time - such as the ones shown in sources A and B - are either from one person's perspective of the fire, and their interpretations of the impact (source B), ~~and~~ or only show one side or view from the fire, that could have been less badly damaged (source A). Many paintings of the

(Source A) Many paintings of the Great Fire ~~are also~~ were also painted in later centuries, by people who weren't actually there, which limits their accuracy.

Source 9 from a website lists the damage done to London. This is fairly reliable, as you can use maps to check what was in the town before and after the fire, along with ~~the~~ whatever architectural remains of buildings are left.

Diary accounts - such as the extract from Samuel Pepys's diary - can also show the impact on London, but it's from one man's point of view, and the impact he feels it had on his life may be different to ~~the~~ someone else's experience.

Extracts from books - such as the one ~~shown~~ ^{shown} in Source E "The Great Fire of London" by Walter Bell - are also helpful, and will have been thoroughly researched before being produced, but ~~were not~~ were written several years after the event took place, which may limit its reliability a bit.

Historians could use monastic records to check the impact, as although

records to check the impact, as although they were mainly religious, they ~~did~~ contain information on land, farming and accounts. They would show how much money was being made, how much land was lost, and how much farming levels had decreased.

You could also look at trading accounts to see how trade was effected by the fire, and how much money London lost because of it, and how it was impacted economically.

You could look at maps of London before and after the fire to ~~draw~~ determine what buildings were there before, and which ones are still standing in original form. Architectural remains would also show you how badly some of the buildings were effected.

Drawings and paintings before 1666 (such as Source F) are not helpful, as they are unrelated to the great fire, and do not show the damage it caused.

caused.

Tapesheres could also be used to get an idea of the scale and impact of the fire, but these would be subjective, and not give great detail into the impact of the fire financially and economically of the fire.



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Examiner Comments

A good response.



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Examiner Tip

Allocate adequate time to answer this question effectively. Make use of relevant sources (not all of them) and combine with your own knowledge of likely sources and the context in which they might be used.

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