

Examiners' Report
January 2012

GCSE History 5HB03 3D

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Introduction

This was the fifth opportunity candidates had to sit this Schools History Project Source Enquiry paper on the work of the historian. It was handled in the main much more confidently and effectively. Few candidates were unable to produce answers that were not worthy of at least some credit and some were able to achieve the highest levels of questions 1-4. Fewer were able to achieve Level 4 in response to question 5 but there were signs of distinct improvement here over earlier series. There were fewer problems with time management than previously but it still is an issue for some candidates where responses to questions 4 and 5 show signs of undue haste or in the case of question 5 sometimes not answered at all. There is some evidence that a few candidates leave out or rush an earlier question to ensure they attempt question 5. The latter does focus on the question carrying the highest number of marks. However a more effective approach would be to allocate enough time for each question. However it is encouraging to see signs of real progress by candidates who seem to have benefited from the experience of and lessons learnt from earlier papers. Candidates seem to cope more with question 5 if the enquiry is more recent.

Question 1

Generally speaking this question was answered well by candidates, most managing to make inferences and reaching Level 3. Most inferences focused on the government's attempts to reassure parents that plans were in place to protect their children and that they would be cared for properly, that the government wished to protect children from danger, that they cared about their education for the future good of the country and that evacuation plans were extensive and complex and the task hard to carry out.

One candidate expanded on cities and factories being bombed. Many commented on the fact that they wanted to ensure a certain degree of normality for the children by sending teachers with them. Most students achieved at least 5 points for mostly two valid and supported inferences.

A sizeable number of candidates, however, continue to make statements taken directly from the source and then back it up by quoting from the section which they have copied. An example of this might be: "I can infer from Source A that the government wants to keep children safe because it says it 'has made plans to move schoolchildren to safer places' ". Candidates need to be aware that making an inference means making a judgement based on the implications of what is stated in the source.

1 Study Source A.

What can you learn from Source A about the Government's aims in 1939?

(6)

We can learn from this source that the evacuation was well thought^{out} and the fact that governments aims were to make sure all children were safe and happy. "homes where the children will be most ~~happy~~^{welcome}" We can infer from this quote that the government made sure all the hosts who would be taking care of the children actually wanted them there. 'but you can be sure that they will be looked after.' this suggests the fact that many parents doubted the truth behind the Government's aims, so therefore the Government then had to publish this leaflet to reassure all the parents. We can also infer that the government thought or put a great deal into planning where the children should go. made plans to move children to safer places from areas that are less likely to be targeted by bombs. This suggests the government were thinking about sending children away long before they announced the evacuation. Overall we can learn from this source that the Government's aims were to evacuate all children into safe loving homes, with great planning and a lot of care.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response is a good Level 3 as it has several inferences with effective use of the source in support.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Make sure at least two inferences are made and supported.
Avoid only paraphrasing the source

Question 2

Most candidates were able to achieve at least a Level 1 either extracting some valid comments about the caring lady, the orderly queuing children or by simply stating that women were wanted. The best Level 3 candidates found a range of aspects of the poster to comment on, often with subtlety.

There were comments on the wording:

“The artist also gets his message across by using strong words on the poster. Evidence from the source to support this are the words “Wanted” and “Your”. These words address the reader directly and they have very strong meanings. The artist has done this because it will catch the eye of the reader and make them feel important.”

On the imagery:

“All the women appear to be smiling and look happy which gives the impression that the artist wants to perceive them as kind women who care about their local community.”

There were also lots of references to the bright colours of the poster and some candidates recognised the importance of the woman in a red dress in the centre of the poster, giving a sense of the importance and authority of women, and the prominence of the friendly dog playing with the boy slightly in front and beneath her, which conveys a friendly and calm atmosphere. Another subtle and interesting comment that candidates made was that the poster was an opportunity to demonstrate how women might contribute to the war effort.

However, some candidates missed the actual message of the poster, which is to recruit women to the evacuation service, and saw it as reinforcement for Source A as an attempt to convince parents of the organised and caring nature of the evacuation process. Others were confused by what the picture conveyed and saw it as showing a disorganised mob of children with too few women to manage them and that it was this that supported the need to recruit more women volunteers. Rarely did candidates mention the civil defence and the National Service.

A large number of candidates concentrated on one aspect of the poster, commonly its pictorial aspects. The highest grades went to those candidates who could explain this aspect accurately, but combine it with an understanding of other aspects such as the impact of the colours and wording. Candidates would be advised to study visual sources carefully and accurately and to consider a range of aspects for the higher marks.

How does the artist get the message across in this poster? Explain your answer, using Source B.

(8)

From Source B, a government poster, published in 1939 I can infer that the message of this poster is positive as bright colours are used in the illustration such as blues and reds. The illustration shows a group of children waiting to be evacuated and several women are either looking after the children or and one woman offering a van driver a refreshment. This gives the message that women also have an important job to play in the war as it is encouraging them to help with the evacuation service. All the women appear to be smiling and look happy which gives the impression that the artist wants to perceive them as kind women who care about their local community. I can also infer that the author ~~has~~^{has} used the people interesting in the poster as an example of a strong and happy local community; ~~this is supported by~~ run by women, this is supported by the lady washing the boys' shoulder with a smile to show she is caring and the other women assisting children down from a van. In conclusion, the overall message the author is trying to create is to encourage women to join together to help with the evacuation service by perceiving the women as kind and caring, which are the skills that are needed for this certain job.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A balanced answer that was able to reach Level 3 for its understanding of how the message was put across.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Focus here on the message and how it is presented as well as its content. Here words used, fonts chosen and images used are all important.

Question 3

Some candidates simply selected details from the sources but without any linkage to the question focus. Some simply stated what each source said in their own words providing a level 1 answer. The majority of candidates were able to reach Level 2 on this question. Although there have been improvements in candidates' cross-referencing skills, overwhelmingly the biggest problem was a failure to move beyond matching the sources. A fair number of candidates were able to match on both content and reliability and to do this thoroughly and in detail, but they did not take their good work one step further onto making a judgement about the extent of support that the sources offered based on the kinds of sources that these were. Where candidates did do this, they showed high levels of reasoning and could be very perceptive in their judgements:

On the other hand, Source C is a personal account by Vera Lynn, a popular singer during the war, so not everybody's experience would have been the same. Then again, Source A and Source B are not accurate of what happened at all, personal or otherwise, so do not give any information on what actually happened, only what the government intended would happen.

Therefore I conclude that, after analysing the content and nature of each source, the sources A, B and C do not support the view very far as there is not sufficient evidence that the evacuation was well organised.

Preparation for this question needs to concentrate on encouraging candidates to develop the ability to make a judgement on how accurate a general historical judgement is, based on an accurate consideration of what sources say and how reliable they can be judged to be.

How far do Sources A, B and C support the view that evacuation was well organised?
Explain your answer, using these sources.

(10)

Source B, a government poster and Source A, a government both support the view that evacuation was well organised. Source A perceives the evacuation to be a very calm process which matches the illustration in Source B of the relaxed and cheerful evacuation. The information in Source A shows a fairly brief plan with not a lot of detail on how the actual evacuation would be carried out, just simple overview of how the children will be looked after. Source C, from 'We'll meet again' by Vera Lynn published in 1984 strongly disagrees with the view with words like 'muddle and confusion' and describes the beginning of the journey as 'without proper planning'. Source A and B were both produced by the government which means their perception of the evacuation would have to be very good in order to encourage parents that their children would be looked after and be safe. Both of these documents were most probably produced before the evacuation took place so their message would be what the evacuation will be like not what it was like as it hadn't actually happened yet.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response just reaches L3 and does attempt to cross-reference using both content and nature.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Avoid describing each source in turn and not cross-referencing. Content and nature can be used. Using both together is better.

Question 4

Although a number of candidates judged the use of the sources on content alone or less commonly just on reliability, large numbers were able to consider the sources on both. Many candidates, however, failed to develop their judgement of the sources' reliability. This was less of a problem with D where candidates were commonly able to recognise its usefulness as a personal testimony, to consider the impact on its value of it coming from an adult recollecting events some years after his experiences as a child, and to recognise its limitations for a general view of the evacuation experience because it came from one individual. Some candidates considered it to be a diary despite the statement on the paper describing it as: "From the memories of Ted Cummings in the 1960s".

For Source E many candidates assessment of its reliability stopped with the statement that a photograph could be staged and for fewer that photographs cannot lie. Those that moved on from this did consider the fact that magazines in the War could have been subjected to censorship and so only photographs giving a positive view of evacuation would have been printed. A few considered the role of John Topham as a photographer of ordinary people and a possibly significant documentary photographer who would have wished to have presented the truth. Students could also prove quite perceptive of the nature and reliability of E, the fact that it was published in a magazine and may even be censored or published to promote the government's evacuation scheme.

The lesson to be learnt here seems to be that candidates need to consider both content and reliability for the highest marks, and that they need to move beyond glib generalisations about types of sources to a more measured consideration of the value of a particular source for a specific historical investigation, a consideration of what the source has to offer and the care that needs to be taken in using and interpreting it.

Question 5

Only a few candidates were able to reach the higher levels for this question. Those who reached Level 4 were a comparative rarity. A few candidates misunderstood the question and considered the historical issue, whether evacuation was a success or not, rather than consider the sources needed to make an assessment. This led them to consider whether the sources on the paper supported the proposition or not. It was unlikely that these kinds of responses achieved much above Level 1.

The bulk of answers, however, listed possible sources for an investigation into the evacuation's success or not. The aspect of the question which combined with this lifted candidates into Level 3 was often neglected, a consideration of the difficulties of finding evidence. Where this was answered the most common problems identified were the fact that witnesses were likely to be deceased and that the government would have suppressed the evidence. More subtle answers recognised that the children who were evacuated were more likely to be alive than the adults of the host families and that if the evacuation was a muddled affair, then the government was more likely to have lost or not kept records than to have wilfully suppressed them. As might be expected of candidates who were not familiar with the topic of evacuation, the possible sources given were generalised. Diaries, newspaper reports, photographs and interviews were very prominent. More adventurous suggestions included court records for cases of abuse or of crimes committed by evacuees. Some candidates suggested local government records and train records for the transportation of evacuees. Some suggested that many sources could be cross-referenced from different parts of the country to get a more accurate and realistic picture. The suggestion of census records was quite common. An occasional candidate even recognised that there was no census in 1941.

The lessons for this question seem to be:

- that for the higher grades candidates need to consider the shortcomings and difficulties of interpreting sources, rather than just list them, and that they should do this for every type of source that they mention and not just write in general terms;
- that candidates need to be aware of the kinds of sources that are available for historical issues and problems at different times, and that they need to be aware of the skills of interpretation that historians will bring to these sources;
- that it may pay for candidates to learn about the way that certain sources are produced. Photographs are commonly used on this paper and yet a surprising number of candidates thought that camera technology had not advanced sufficiently by the 1940s to produce an instant image. However, it was gratifying that many candidates did understand how advertising worked, and did consider a whole range of visual imagery, lettering, the use of colour, the message conveyed by the use of certain words, as well as the meanings conveyed by pictures which were deliberately and formally designed, and this was shown in question 2.

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

This source suggests that evacuation was not a success.

Explain the difficulties in finding evidence to support this and suggest other research the historian could do to check this claim about how successful evacuation was.

(16)

~~It would be difficult to find evidence, primarily, because ~~any~~ ~~evacuees~~ it happened~~

Firstly, it would be difficult to find any first-hand evidence, because any evacuees would be dead, or very old. They may have forgotten certain things, or 'chosen' to forget. They may also have difficulties talking about really bad experiences.⁺

Also, diaries of the poorer children would be nearly nonexistent. They may have had poor writing skills, and maybe not enough money even for diaries and writing equipment.

Photographs would've probably been staged, or ~~X~~ selected to be 'pro-evacuation'. Also, cameras were expensive so working class children certainly wouldn't have one. This means most photographs would be from the Government, and so would only show the better side of evacuation.

Newspapers could be helpful, as some of them were against the evacuation, but sometimes things

would've been exaggerated or made up to make a story more interesting.

To find more evidence, a historian could search for diaries of poor families and richer children. These would give the persons views, and would probably be quite honest, as they did not expect it to be read. Also, diaries would vary, as they came from different places, and so would help give a good overall view of how these sorts of people were treated.

Newspaper articles would be fairly good, as the journalist might've visited a number of homes; but it may also be exaggerated to make a better story. However, the overall view an evacuation would be shown in newspapers.

The census could be of help, as it could show if any areas or houses got cramped, and how old the children were, and if siblings got separated. It would also show if children were working. However, it may have been typed or misread, and so couldn't be relied on too strongly.

Any books/biographies written would be useful, as they would have a lot of information. Also, a ~~big~~ book may have more than one account, and

so would give a wider view.

Overall, I think it would be fairly difficult to say for certain if the evacuations were good or bad. It was a very big event and was a long time ago. I think the best ways to research more would be to conduct interviews and read books on the subject, both by evacuees, and by non-evacuees.

+ Any last family parents would be dead, but the children may still be alive. Despite perhaps having a less biased view, they may also have forgotten things.



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Examiner Comments

A balance argument dealing with problems and possible solutions achieved Level 4 but not the top end.



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Examiner Tip

Need to indicate difficulties and realistic solutions that would help overcome them.

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