

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in History (5HA04) Paper 01

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Publications Code UG041818

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General comments

Work from approximately 59,000 students, submitted by over 1200 centres, was moderated this summer. The most popular CA choices were CA5, CA6 and CA8. Many centres also did CA9 and CA10. Of the rest, CA1, CA2 and CA3 were chosen by some centres. As with 2014, CA7, CA12 and CA13 were undertaken by relatively few centres. Regardless of which CA was chosen, moderators were pleased to note that many centres had noted carefully the changes made to the Controlled Assessment by the reforms which have been designed to strengthen the specification. It was also clear to moderators that many centres had taken on-board the advice that was given in the 2014 Principal Moderator Report, and centre-specific E9 reports, where this could be applied to the amended specification. It was also evident that centres had taken advantage of subsequent training opportunities that had been provided by Edexcel.

The efforts made by centres to prepare students appropriately within the required high level of controlled conditions, and to apply accurately and consistently the generic mark scheme, were greatly appreciated by the moderating team. The work of many candidates demonstrated a genuine effort to engage with the demands of this unit, and suggested that when candidates 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 candidates clearly identified. Many centres had clearly internally moderated the work and made this very explicit on either candidates work or on spreadsheets. All of this assists immeasurably with the moderation process, and many moderators commented on the professionalism this attention to detail demonstrated.

However, despite the above, some problems still persist and arise 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 – most of these will be dealt with later in this report.

Now that the specification is linear it is vital that centres check that they are preparing the cohort of candidates for the correct Controlled Assessment task – in the past it was possible for centres to choose from two valid tasks – this is no longer the case. The task for this cohort of candidates was the 2013-15 task, yet some centres did the 2014-16 task. It is also now a requirement that the selection of Representation 3 comes from the Edexcel prepared Representation Bank, and is not selected by the centre from any other source (unless CA10L, CA14L or CA15L is selected, where a third Representation may come from somewhere other than the Representation Bank, but the centre must check through Ask the Expert for approval of their chosen third Representation). The appropriate Task and Representation Bank are both available via the Edexcel History website. It is

also clearly stated in the specification that the workbook/folder/portfolio of the second-ranked candidate in the sample must also be sent with the sample to the moderator. A number of centres did not meet this requirement, and this must be rectified when submitting next year.

Part A: Historical explanation

This task requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding of cause, consequence or change through explanation. The mark scheme is clear that if explanation is description and/or narrative of the content of the question, then marks in level 1 and 2 are the 'best' fit, whereas, if explanation is about the focus of the question then marks in level 3 and 4 are the 'best' fit. It should be noted that level 3 may well see a mixture of both.

Moderators noted that this task appears to have been clearly understood by teachers and students alike, and saw very accurate and consistent marking within, and across centres.

The approach which was evident in candidates achieving level 3 and level 4 marks was the use of 'point, evidence, explain'. If the question had a 'why' focus then the start of each paragraph would be a reason, and the evidence and explanation would follow as support. Many candidates also linked and prioritised, and while that is evidence of higher order skills and credit worthy in level 3 and 4, it is not a stated requirement for either of those levels. Nevertheless, candidates who had a clear explanation focus, selected their material well, and prioritised and linked, performed well.

Moderators noted that some centres allowed both a plan and notes to be used in the write up of this task. It is clearly stated in the specification that for this task students may only have access to a plan (max one side of A4). Moderators also observed that some plans were in fact detailed notes. A plan for this task is an outline – diagram form, note form – of the key points that make up the candidate answer. It should not look like the notes they can use in Task B, and Task C. It is vital that centres read their moderator report and address this issue for next year if noted.

Part B: Carry out a historical enquiry

Although there is a choice of two enquiries within the enquiry theme, most centres chose to prepare their students for one of the enquiries. However, there were some centres who clearly allowed their students to choose their enquiry question. Both approaches allowed students to produce enquiries that were interesting, well researched and produced personal judgements rather than just narrative and description. However, moderators noted that many centres overlooked the requirement that students are expected to use a range of sources (defined as 'at least five') in their enquiry. The specification is very clear that if 'at least 5' are not used, candidates are likely to achieve lower marks as this is characteristic of answers at Level 1. It should also be noted that a photograph on its own does not constitute a source of information.

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 – indeed moderators noted that often shorter, well structured and focused responses achieved marks at top L3 and L4
- A range of sources had been consulted and used, and noted within the answer when used

Where students performed the weakest the following features were evident:

- No notes or plans were present with the work
- The focus of the enquiry was described and/or narrated
- Limited use of sources of information (less than 5)
- No reference made in the answer to sources of information that were used

Teachers were also confident in distinguishing between description and narrative which is Level 2, analysis which focused on the question which is Level 3, and sustained analysis, evaluation and judgement which is Level 4. Moderators commented that it was particularly helpful where candidates' work was annotated at the point in the answer where the qualities of various levels had been displayed. For example phrases such as 'The effect of this was...', 'This was effective because...' were underlined. Also, many teachers put annotations in the margin such as 'L2 description', 'L3 analysis', 'L4 evaluation and judgement'. While it is not a requirement to write extensive summaries, moderators noted that these types of brief comments assisted significantly in the moderation process.

Many students submitted a prepared bibliography with numbered references and then in the body of the answer they put in brackets the number of the source they had used. This was by far the most common method used and for the purpose of this report is still recommended as a good example of best practice.

Overall, student responses were interesting, insightful and demonstrated some high level enquiry and research.

Part C: Analyse and evaluate representations of history

Many students used the criteria suggested within the mark scheme for this task however centres are still reminded that, while other valid criteria may be used, the focus should be on the overall representation. Students should be encouraged to think about which representation is 'best' and compare it with the others, based on the criteria, and then reach a judgement.

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 comprehensive. Indeed, they may judge that despite a representation being factually weak, it nevertheless portrays 'best' because compared to the others it portrays the past more effectively in relation to the focus of the question.

Candidates that successfully approached this task planned carefully the criteria they thought were the most appropriate, had supporting contextual knowledge, and compared the Representations. Many centres had clearly used some of the suggested planning sheets from the support booklets in order to prepare their students.

Administration

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

- Moderators require a copy of the third representation
- Highest/lowest scoring work should be included whether on the OPTEMS or not and the work of the second-ranked candidate in the sample should be included
- Marks should be the same on candidate 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)
- Student 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

Many centres continue to demonstrate effort, professionalism and dedication towards preparing their students for this unit of the specification.

It is also clear that many students continue to 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 beyond.

Centres should continue to pay careful attention to E9 moderator reports even if mark adjustments were not made.

To centres where adjustments have been recommended, it should be noted that the judgement of the initial moderator has been reviewed and confirmed by a second moderation of the work by either a team leader or the principal moderator.

Centres where teachers and/or students found a task difficult, or where mark adjustments have been recommended, should note that there is a great amount of support available on the Edexcel Website.

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>

