

THE NEW POOR
LAW OF 1834
COURSEWORK
ASSIGNMENTS

GCSE HISTORY COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Teacher Information

Introduction:

These assignments comprise sources, questions and mark schemes which will enable your pupils to fulfil the coursework requirements in history for Edexcel Foundation specifications for first examination in summer 2003. You may use these assignments as they stand. They have been designed to assess the full range of grades targeted by the syllabus (Grades G-A*). Assistance may be given in class to aid the comprehension of the sources.

You may also adapt these assignments if wished by:

- providing additional or replacement sources
- providing additional or replacement questions.

However, if you wish to make changes you should submit these to the Edexcel Foundation for approval to ensure that revised sources or questions give candidates appropriate opportunity to meet the targets specified at the appropriate level.

Management of the assignment:

The assignment has been designed to accommodate some flexibility of classroom practice. The following points should be borne in mind:

- Although all the questions *may* be tackled as part of a single task, this is not necessary. The timing of individual questions within an assignment may be staggered over a period of time and integrated into the programme of study.
- Candidates may use the sources provided in the pack as part of their preparation for Assignment 1 but this is not a requirement.
- Your candidates should draw upon their contextual knowledge when using the sources for Assignment 2. The historical content listed below should be familiar to candidates before they attempt to answer the questions.

The New Poor Law of 1834

This assignment should arise from a teaching programme designed to occupy approximately half a term. Before candidates begin this assignment they should have knowledge of:

- Variations in poor law relief before 1834
- Demands for reform; the role of Chadwick
- The impact of the Poor Law Amendment Act
- Reactions to the Poor Law Amendment Act

Introduction

In the period from 1832 a new government decided to reform the poor laws. The existing system of poor relief was seen as too expensive: many also thought that it encouraged idleness among the poor. A Royal Commission was set up to investigate the problem. A new Poor Law Act was passed in 1834. From the start some welcomed the new poor law because it reduced the cost of poor relief: others bitterly attacked it especially in the industrial North.

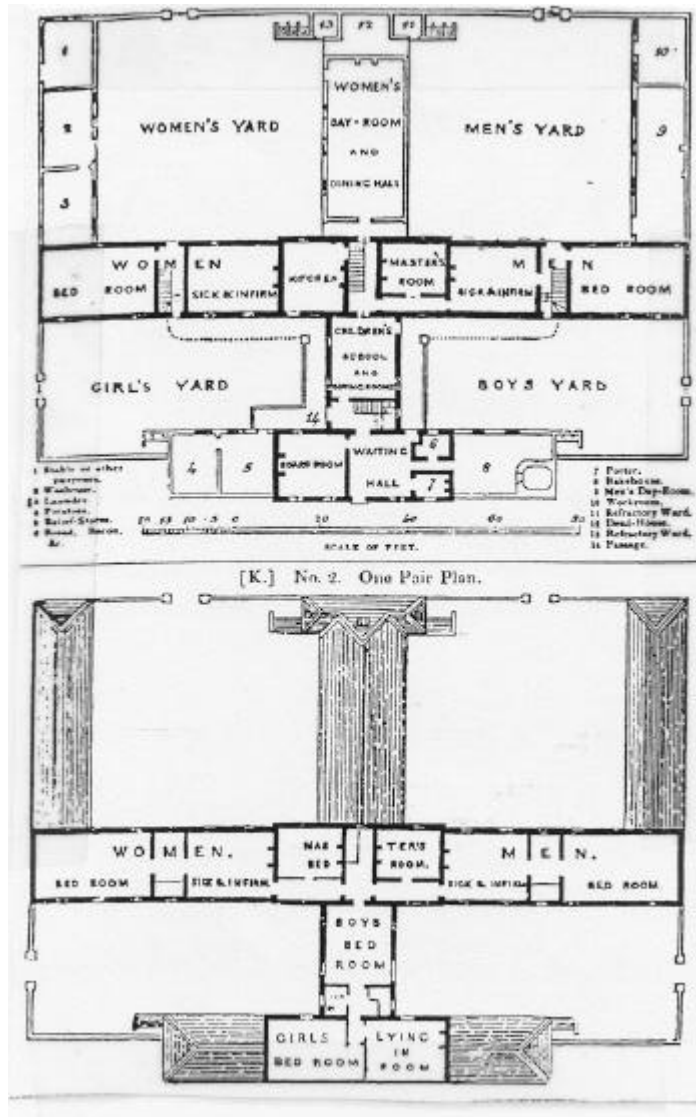
In this assignment you will investigate conditions in the new poor law workhouses and the controversies that surrounded them in the period before 1850.

SOURCE A: From the Report of the Royal Commission into the Poor Laws, 1834

By the workhouse system is meant having all relief through the workhouse, making this workhouse an uninviting place, preventing any of its inmates from going out or receiving visitors without written permission, disallowing them beer and tobacco.

The chief measures which we recommend are: First, all relief of any kind to able bodied persons or to their families, other than in well-regulated workhouses, shall be unlawful and shall cease. At least four classes are necessary: (1) The aged and really impotent; (2) The children; (3) The able-bodied females; (4) The able-bodied males. We trust that the last two groups will be the least numerous. It would be better if the groups are kept in separate buildings rather than under the same roof.

SOURCE B: A plan for a workhouse to house two hundred people drawn up by the Poor Law Commissioners in the 1830s



SOURCE C: A diet suggested in the Poor Law Commissioners' Report of 1836

Breakfast – 6 oz bread and 1 ½ oz cheese

Dinners – Sundays 5 oz meat and ½ lb potatoes

Tuesdays and Thursdays ditto

Other days 1½ pints soup

Supper – days on which there was meat for dinner, 6 oz bread and 1½ pints broth;
other days, 6 oz bread and 2 oz cheese

SOURCE D: An example of a workhouse timetable and a punishment list from the late 1830s.

TIMETABLE	
6.00 am	Rise, wash, dress, rollcall
6.30 am	Prayers, Breakfast (eaten in silence)
7.15 am	Exercise in the yards
8.00 am	Work
11.00 am	Prayers, Bible reading, hymns
12 noon	Lunch (eaten in silence)
12.30 pm	Exercise in yards
2.00 pm	Work for adults; school for children
4.00 pm	Prayers, religious instruction
5.00 pm	Hymn singing: giving thanks to God
6.00 pm	Supper (eaten in silence)
6.30 pm	Religious service
9.00 pm	Bed

Name	Offence	Punishment
Twenty-nine women at the mill	Neglecting and refusing to work	Dinner and supper milk stopped
Owen Trainor	Stealing onions	Flogged
James Acheson	Going to town without permission	Six hours in lock-up

SOURCE E: Richard Oastler, a Yorkshire writer and speaker about social issues, expressing his opinion about the New Poor Law in the late 1830s

If I am ever confined in one of those hellish Poor Law Bastilles, and my wife torn from me, because I am poor, I will burn the whole pile down to the ground.

Liberty is the right of every Englishman, however poor. What is the principle of the New Poor Law: that man shall give up his liberty to save his life! That before he shall eat a piece of bread he shall go into prison.

SOURCE F: From the annual report of the Poor Law Guardians of Highworth and Swindon (Wiltshire) 1837.

The Board of Guardians is very satisfied with the working of the Poor Law Amendment Act. The savings to the rate payers in this last twelve months is more than 54% compared with the average cost over the three years before the Act was passed. This saving has been made without harming the really deserving poor. The labouring poor have become more industrious. This new law has brought a great moral improvement to this class of people.

SOURCE G: A drawing of the attack of the Stockport Workhouse in 1842. The rioters are handing out bread.



SOURCE H: From a history textbook published in the 1980s

Financially the New Poor Law was a success. In 1831 nearly £7 million had been spent on the poor rates. In 1851 this sum had fallen to below £5 million, in spite of the rise of 29% in the population. The number of paupers had also fallen.

SOURCE I: From evidence given by a pauper to a Parliamentary Enquiry on the workhouse at Andover (Hampshire), 1846

We looked out for fresh bones, and then we used to be like a pack of dogs fighting over them. Sometimes I had one that was stale and stunk, and I even ate that, because I was hungry. You see we only had bread and gruel for breakfast, and as there was no bread allowed on meat days for dinner, we saved our bread from breakfast, and because a pint and a half of gruel is not much for a mans breakfast, we ate the stale and stinking meat. I once saw a pauper take up a horse's leg and take the hair off it, and eat the flesh. The leg was not cooked.

SOURCE J: Written by Dr L T Nayle, a visitor to the Andover Workhouse in the early 1840s

I consider this house for industry, cleanliness, and good order cannot be bettered, with the healthy appearance of men, women and children.

SOURCE K: A drawing of Oliver Twist asking for more which appeared in the novel.



Assignment One: Assessment Objective 1

1. Describe how poor law relief was provided before the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. (15)
2. What were the main changes introduced by the new poor law of 1834? (15)
3. In what different ways did people react to the changes brought about by the new poor law? (20)

(Total: 50 marks)

Assignment Two: Assessment Objectives 2 and 3

1. Study Source A.
What can you learn from this source about the aims of the Royal Commission? (6)

2. Study Sources A, B, C and D
Do Sources B, C and D suggest that the Commissioners' aim shown in Source A of making the workhouse 'an uninviting place' was successful? Explain your answer. (8)

3. Study Sources E, F, G and H
Use the evidence of these sources, and your own knowledge, to explain why there was so much controversy over the workhouse system in the 1830s and 1840s. (12)

4. Study Sources I, J, and K
How useful are these sources in helping you understand how bad conditions were in workhouses in the late 1830s and 1840s? (10)

5. Study all the sources
'The New Poor Law failed to deal with the problem of poverty'. Use the sources, and your own knowledge, to explain whether you agree with this interpretation of the effects of the Poor Law Act of 1834 (14)

(Total: 50 marks)

Coursework Assignments Mark scheme

New Poor Law

Assignment One

1. *Describe how poor law relief was provided before the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834* (15)

Target: Description of key features \ recall of knowledge

Level 1: Simple statements offering some examples of how poor law relief was provided, supported by some knowledge eg not in workhouse. (1-5)

Level 2: Developed statements giving examples of how poor law relief was provided, supported by relevant knowledge, eg describes operation of Speenhamland system in practice. (6-10)

Level 3: Developed exposition of how poor law relief was provided supported by appropriately selected knowledge eg highlights a range of provision: inside & outside workhouse; provision for the aged; shows knowledge of different 'systems'. (11-15)

2. *What were the main changes introduced by the new poor law of 1834?* (15)

Target: Analysis of consequence/key features / recall of knowledge

Level 1: Simple statements giving changes supported by some knowledge, eg After 1834, more relief in workhouses; conditions made harsher. (1-5)

Level 2: Developed statements giving changes supported by relevant knowledge, eg New law ended outdoor relief for able-bodied; introduction of new poor law unions; gives examples of attempts to make conditions in workhouses harsh. (6-10)

Level 3: Developed analysis supported by appropriately selected knowledge, showing understanding of a range of changes, eg Introduction of centralised system; operation of less eligibility principle; compulsory introduction of poor law unions etc. (11-15)

3. *In what different ways did people react to the changes brought about by the new poor law?*

(20)

Target: Analysis of change and consequence/ recall of knowledge

- Level 1:** Simple statements giving reasons supported by some knowledge, eg people opposed harsh punishments; others welcomed lower poor rates. (1-5)
- Level 2:** Developed statements giving reasons supported by relevant knowledge, eg Landowners and tenants welcomed prospect of lower poor rates' many radicals & social reformers opposed harsh discipline and separation of families. May cite specific 'horrors' such as Andover. (6-10)
- Level 3:** Developed explanation supported by appropriately selected knowledge showing understanding of a range of reactions both for and against the new legislation, eg farmers appreciate both lower poor rates and a labour force now encouraged to seek work; humanitarians draw attention to harsh discipline, attacks on the poor and restriction of liberties. (11-15)
- Level 4:** Sustained argument supported by precisely selected knowledge showing inter-relationship of reasons for opposition and support for the Act, eg in discussing support, understand how need to reduce cost is linked to concern for more efficient administration and incentives for labourers to seek work; in discussing opposition, understands how poor law was seen by many radicals as an attack on working people by depriving them of liberty, by instituting an inappropriately harsh regime and also noting the unsuitability of the solution for many in the industrial north. (16-20)

Coursework Assignment Mark scheme

New Poor Law

Assignment Two Assessment Objectives 2 and 3

1. *What can you learn from this source about the aims of the Royal Commission?* (6)
- Target:** **Comprehension of, and inference from, source**
- Level 1:** Simple statement supported by some knowledge using information taken from source at face value, eg they wanted to stop giving relief outside the workhouse. (1-3)
- Level 2:** Developed statements supported by relevant knowledge making inferences from source, eg they intended to make poor relief harsher by restricting it for the able-bodied to workhouses and by making conditions there unpleasant. (4-6)
2. *Study Sources A, B, C and D. Do Sources B, C and D suggest that the Commissioners aim shown in Source A of making the workhouse ‘an uninviting place’ was successful? Explain your answer.* (8)
- Target:** **Cross-reference of sources to make a judgement**
- Level 1:** Simple statement supported by some knowledge matching details of content from sources at face-value, eg takes examples of punishment from Source D and separation from Source B. (1-3)
- Level 2:** Developed statements supported by relevant knowledge making comparisons between sources. As Level 1 and cross-refers explicitly to reach a judgement, eg shows the discipline and routine from Source D, regulations for diet from Source C, linked to separation from Source B to show ‘Commissioners’ success. (4-6)
- Level 3:** Developed explanation supported by selected knowledge. Cross refers confidently using evidence from all three sources to consider degree of success, eg using factors identified in Level 2, goes beyond the information contained in the sources to consider implications (eg of the diet outlined in Source C) and reaches a judgement which shows that the answer is not straightforwardly ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. (7-8)

3. Study Sources E, F, G and H. Use the evidence of these sources, and your own knowledge, to explain why there was so much controversy over the workhouse system in the 1830s and 1840s.

(12)

Target: Analysis of sources and use of knowledge to explain differing attitudes

Level 1: Simple statements giving reasons supported by sources or own knowledge, eg people opposed harsh punishments; others welcomed lower poor rates. (1-3)

Level 2: Developed statements giving reasons supported from sources and own knowledge, eg Landowners and tenants welcomed prospect of lower poor rates; Source H shows how costs reduced. Many radicals and social reformers (eg Oastler, Source E) opposed loss of liberty. Knowledge might concentrate on harsh discipline and separation of families. May cite specific “horrors” such as Andover. (4-6)

Level 3: Developed explanation using sources as evidence and supported by appropriately selected knowledge to show understanding of a range of reactions both for and against the new legislation, eg Source G shows inadequacy of system for dealing with problems of unemployment in industrial north; humanitarians draw attention to harsh discipline, attacks on the poor and restriction of liberties. Farmers appreciate both lower poor rates and a labour force now encouraged to seek work, as shown from Source F and other examples from own knowledge. (7-10)

Level 4: Sustained argument using the sources as evidence and supported by precisely selected knowledge showing inter-relationship of reasons for opposition and support for the Act, eg in discussing support (Source F), understands how need to reduce costs is linked to concern for more efficient administration and incentives for labourers to seek work; in discussing opposition (Source E), understands how poor law was seen by many radicals as an attack on working people by depriving them of liberty, by instituting an inappropriately harsh regime and also noting the unsuitability of the solution for many in the industrial north (Source G). (11-12)

4. *Study Sources I, J and K. How useful are these sources in helping you to understand how bad conditions were in workhouses in the late 1830s and 1840s?*

(10)

Target: Analysis of utility and interpretation of sources

Level 1: Simple statements supported by some knowledge based on content taking sources at face value eg Show harsh conditions and little to eat. (1-3)

Level 2: Developed statements supported by relevant knowledge evaluating sources for reliability based on the nature, origin and purpose of sources, eg Source K shows how paupers had too little to eat, this was from a novel and may be exaggerated harsh conditions and unhappy faces. Source J says paupers are healthy. (4-6)

Level 3: Developed explanation supported by selected knowledge and making positive use of nature, origin and purpose in considering usefulness, eg In considering Source K, notes that, although source is fictional, it was published at the time and uses understanding to consider how far Dickens's is an exaggerated or propagandist source. (7-10)

5. *Study all the sources. 'The New Poor Law failed to deal with the problem of poverty'*
Use the sources, and your own knowledge to explain whether you agree with this interpretation of the effects of the Poor Law Act of 1834 (14)

Target: Evaluation of interpretations/recall of knowledge

Level 1: Simple statement supported by some knowledge offering points in support of choice, using sources or own knowledge, eg conditions were made harsher for the poor or it saved ratepayers money. (1-3)

Level 2: Developed statements offering points in support of judgement, using sources and supported by relevant knowledge, eg describes the main changes to show a harsher climate of treatment or can indicate decline in numbers (4-6)

Level 3: Developed explanation giving a judgement about the view making confident use of the sources and supported by

appropriately selected knowledge, eg uses sources to show effects both to those who gained and those who suffered. Can make some comment on did not address the underlining causes of poverty as well.

(7-11)

Level 4: Sustained argument giving a reasoned choice using sources as evidence and supported by precisely selected knowledge which critically evaluates the accuracy of the representation eg As Level 3 and additionally considers the extent of exaggeration and, therefore, degree of accuracy. Eg can indicate areas where the Act was less than effective in dealing with the complex issue of poverty.

(12-14)