

Examiners' Report

IGCSE History Paper 4 (Coursework) (4380)

June 2005

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HISTORY 4380, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

Paper 4 (Coursework)

General Comments

The coursework presented for moderation in the first year of IGCSE History proved to be of an exceptionally high standard and teachers are to be congratulated on meeting the demands of the specification so successfully. Candidates invariably wrote at considerable length and with great confidence in their answers to both assignments.

Administration

Inevitably, there were a few mishaps in sampling this first year, often a result of the need to ensure that candidates were entered for the correct tier. Almost certainly these problems will be ironed out in subsequent sessions. Centres are also asked to make sure that copies of assignments are included with the sample, along with the work of the highest and lowest scoring candidates.

However, marking was rigorously carried out and annotation, in many cases, was exemplary. Teachers took great care to justify their marks and to show that internal standardisation had been carried out. All assignments were appropriate and assessed candidates' achievements effectively.

If anything, marking on the whole tended to be harsh. Teachers were too critical in identifying what candidates had not done, rather than crediting them for what they had achieved. This may have resulted from a tendency to rely too heavily on marks as opposed to using levels to reach a final assessment. Reliance on marks tends to result in candidates' work being under-assessed, particularly because history teachers are renowned for being 'mean' markers.

Teachers are advised that, when assessing work, they should first decide into which level each sub-question falls. They should then decide on the overall level and award a mark within the appropriate mark band, rather than totting up marks for each sub-questions. An assignment that is solidly Level 3 would therefore merit a mark at the upper end of the Level 3 mark band (19-27). This means of marking not only tends to reward candidates more effectively but it also results in speedier marking.

Candidates' performance

As already indicated, the standard of work presented for moderation was, in almost every instance, very high. Candidates had clearly been very well prepared for the demands of the assessment objectives, question styles and the content of the units studied. The only minor criticism that can be made is that some candidates exceeded, by some considerable margin, the word limit suggested in the specification.

Reasons for adjustment of marks

Very few marks were adjusted during moderation. The principal reason for adjustment was incorrect application of the levels of response in the mark scheme, particularly a tendency to award Levels 3 and 4 rather too easily. Centres in which marks were adjusted during moderation are advised to refer to the Teachers' Guide.

Assessment

It was apparent during moderation that almost all teachers are familiar with the levels of response in the mark schemes. However, for those who found the operation difficult, or who will be undertaking the marking of coursework for the first time in the future, a brief summary is appended.

Assessment Objective 1

- Level 1: Simple statements supported by some knowledge, ie candidates are able to write sentences describing details or aspects of the topic.
- Level 2: Developed statements supported by relevant knowledge, ie candidates can write paragraphs describing aspects of the topic that are relevant to the question.
- Level 3: Developed explanation or exposition supported by selected knowledge, ie candidates can organise materials into factors or effects and use this to write an explanation; making links between factors/events/people where appropriate.
- Level 4: Sustained argument supported by precisely selected knowledge, ie candidates can identify the most important factors/results in an opening paragraph and can then produce an argument supporting their choice.

Assessment Objective 2 and 3

NB In these objectives it is important that candidates do make specific reference to sources when they are being used in answers.

- Level 1: Simple statements using sources at face value supported by some own knowledge, ie candidates can take appropriate information from sources to answer a question.
- Level 2: Developed statements making inferences supported by relevant own knowledge, ie candidates can explain what a source 'suggests' and relate this to their own knowledge.
- Level 3: Developed explanation supported by selected own knowledge, ie candidates can use inferences and their own knowledge to produce an explanation an answer to the question.
- Level 4: Sustained argument supported by precisely selected knowledge, ie candidates can integrate sources and own knowledge into an answer which identifies the most important reasons in an opening paragraph and can then produce an argument supporting their choice.

HISTORY 4380, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Unit/Component	Maximum Mark(Raw)	% Contribution to Award
Paper 1F	50	75
Paper 2H	75	75
Paper 03	25	25
Paper 04	60	25

Option 2: 1F, 04

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Mark				65	51	37	23	9

Option 4: 2H, 04

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Mark	84	72	60	48	36	30		

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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