



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2021

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in
History (4HI1 2B)

PAPER 2: Investigation and Breadth Studies

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This paper was sat by a very small number of candidates.

General comments

An analysis of this year's performance suggests that candidates would benefit from further consideration of the following:

Section A

- Ensuring that in question (a) two features are being addressed. This can easily be achieved by candidates using terms such as 'one feature...' 'another feature...' or simply started another paragraph.
- Understanding that to score highest marks in question (b), candidates must do more than show support and lack of it. Once that exercise has been done, candidates need to reach an overall judgement on the extent of the support.
- Understanding that in question (c), if top marks are to be achieved, the response must reach a conclusion on the extent to which the interpretation is valid and the line of reasoning is logically structured and fully supported.

Section B

- The part (a) question requires a comparison between the two periods given, rather than a description of the situation in the later period.
- In part (b) to reach the highest level, candidates must not only provide details of the changes but explain how those causes led to the stated outcome.
- It is essential that candidates understand that in part (c) a judgement is required. When a question asks, 'How far?' change occurred, it is not asking for a description of change; instead, it requires candidates to consider the degree and extent of change.

Section A: Investigations

Candidates were required to answer on one of five options:

A1 The origins and course of the First World War, 1905–18

A2 Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905–24

A3 The USA, 1918–41

A4 The Vietnam Conflict, 1945–75

A5 East Germany, 1958–90

B6 The changing nature of warfare and international conflict, 1919–2011

B7 The Middle East: conflict, crisis and change, 1917–2012

In each option candidates were required to answer three sub-questions.

Question (a) addressed AO1 and required candidates to describe features of one of two alternatives given.

Question (b) addressed AO1 and AO2 and required candidates to consider the degree of support offered by Source A to the evidence in Source B.

Question (c) addressed AO3 and AO4 and required candidates to analyse and evaluate a historical interpretation using the two sources provided, a recent extract and their contextual knowledge.

The majority of candidates answered questions on the First World War. Only a handful chose other options and it is not possible to draw general conclusions from such a small selection of responses. There were no answers on East Germany.

A1 The origins and course of the First World War, 1905–18

Most candidates chose to answer question (a) on Passchendaele and demonstrated excellent knowledge of the conditions in which the battle was fought, the strategy behind the battle and the heavy price paid for limited gains. Candidates who chose to answer on the naval race often provided accurate detail on the relative strengths of the two navies and the improved technology exemplified in the building of Dreadnoughts. However, a minority of candidates answered not on the naval race, but on the use of the two navies during the war. Such responses could not receive reward.

Question (b) was well-answered, with the vast majority of candidates noting agreement between the sources on, for example, the difficult nature of the terrain and the strong resistance offered by the Turks, whilst at the same time showing that there was not support in relation to the preparedness of the Turks or the inexperience of the Allied troops. However, very few candidates considered the extent of support and whether there was predominantly support in Source A or predominantly lack of it.

Question (c) produced a wide variety of responses. There were a number of excellent responses which drew upon the candidates' knowledge, the extract and the sources to produce arguments for and against the interpretation and then provided criteria by which an overall judgement could be made. Other responses explained arguments for and against the interpretation but failed to reach an overall conclusion and so received less reward. A minority of candidates based their answers solely on what the information provided and failed to use their own knowledge. Other less well-rewarded responses failed to address both sides of the argument and sought solely to prove the validity of the interpretation given.

SECTION B: Breadth Studies in Change

B1 America: from new nation to divided union, 1783–1877

B2 Changes in medicine, c1848–c1948

B3 Japan in transformation, 1853–1945

B4 China: conflict, crisis and change, 1900–89

B5 The changing role of international organisations: the League and the UN, 1919–c2011

B6 The changing nature of warfare and international conflict, 1919–2011

B7 The Middle East: conflict, crisis and change, 1917–2012

In each option candidates were required to answer three sub-questions.

Question (a) addressed AO1 and AO2 and required candidates to demonstrate an understanding of similarity or difference in two separate time periods.

Question (b) addressed AO1 and AO2 and required candidates to demonstrate an understanding of causation.

Question (c) addressed AO1 and AO2 and required candidates to reach a judgement on the degree, nature or causes of change.

Almost all candidates answered questions on Medicine, with a small number choosing the Middle East option. There were no answers on America, Japan, China or International organisations.

B2 Changes in medicine, c1848–c1948

This question saw a wide range of responses.

In question (a) most candidates understood that there was a change in thinking by 1875, with the Theory of the Four Humours discredited and an increasing rejection of the miasma theory in favour of the idea the germs caused disease. Where highest marks were scored was when a direct comparison was made, rather than just explaining the thinking in 1875 and specific information, such as the work of Snow or Pasteur, was provided.

Question (b) saw some excellent responses with considerable knowledge demonstrated on the development of penicillin and the introduction of the National Health Service. Other candidates also knew about the development of plastic surgery and an increasing understanding of the psychological impact of warfare. However, not all candidates explained how the developments they were describing led to change and so did not reach the top level.

There was an equal split between the two options in question (c). Part c (i) was less well-answered with some candidates providing details of developments which took place before or after the given time period. There were also examples of responses where candidates knew the information but did not address the issue of ‘how far?’ surgery changed. C (ii) saw better responses with impressive knowledge shown of the role of nurses and volunteers during the wars and the increasing number of women attending medical school.

B7 The Middle East: conflict, crisis and change, 1917–2012

Responses were generally weak in this option. Few candidates knew about the role of Arafat and knowledge of the causes of the Gaza War. Two candidates wrote well on the significance of the Balfour Declaration, but others lacked the knowledge to respond effectively on the part (c) questions.