

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE
Pakistan Studies(4PA0_01)
History & Heritage

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General comments

The standard of work presented this year by candidates demonstrated an improvement in quality in what was the first year of International GCSE compared with last year's O level with a pleasing increase in the entry figure of some 20% compared to May 2010.

All candidates answered the required three questions with only a few rubric errors. It is pleasing to note that the majority of candidates had been very well prepared for the examination, even though the style of the question and answer booklet was different this year. The highest scoring candidates were the ones who answered questions 3, 4 and 7. They generally produced a good level of accurate and relevant detail with a very pleasing attempt at explanation in their answers. There seemed to be fewer irrelevancies this year and there were some genuine attempts to answer the questions as set. However it was noticeable that many candidates tended to concentrate too heavily on the first two questions with the result that they failed to devote sufficient time to their third and final answer. Centres should encourage candidates to spend roughly equal amounts of time on each question.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

This was a popular question but candidates struggled to score highly. The question focussed on the spread of Islam in India and few were able to relate this to the work of Muhammad Bin Qasim and Mahmud of Ghazni. The problem was compounded when those that correctly identified these individuals, described their work rather than focus on the reasons for the spread of Islam. The second part referred to the role of Sifis and Timur. There were a number of candidates who wrote all they knew about individuals of the seventeenth century which were clearly irrelevant to the question.

Question 2

This question on the reasons for the British involvement in the Indian sub-continent relating to the battles of Buxar, Plassey, the Regulating and India Acts and the Permanent Settlement brought some good answers and many candidates scored well with clearly stated knowledge. However, the battles of Plassey and Buxar dominated answers at some length and tended to be descriptions of each rather than explanations of their historical importance.

Question 3

This question was probably the most popular and highest scoring one. Most candidates knew much about the reasons why the Indian population objected to British rule in part A were able to explain these well, although there was a sizeable minority of candidates who struggled to explain their answers. Part B on the reasons why the Indians failed to gain independence in 1857 was less well answered since most candidates were unable to explain their answers. It has to be said that the answers to this question were often very long and many candidates wrote too much, if there is such a thing. Although many candidates scored heavily, not all answers were to the point and sufficiently concise. As a result, candidates spent far too long on the question and left themselves with little time to do justice to the second or third question. A shorter and pithier response on this question would have brought much the same mark for these candidates. However, marks were generally high for most candidates showing that they knew their facts on this topic.

Question 4

This was also a popular question that dealt with legislation after 1914 and its relationship with Hindu-Muslim relationships. Again most candidates knew their facts on this topic and also wrote extensively on it and generally scored very highly. The candidates were able to explain the importance of the Lucknow Pact in the development of Hindu-Muslim relationships but after that there was largely an extensive description of the terms of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms and lesser detail on the Simon Commission which was less well known. Thus once again many candidates wrote too much and as such ran out of time on their third answer. Again Centres must ensure that candidates are appropriately prepared for the examination and learn to answer the question set as focussed and concisely as possible in order to avoid the above problem.

Question 5

This was quite a popular question that required candidates describe and explain the achievements of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Most candidates failed to explain his achievements and tended to describe all they knew about him, whilst others seemed to have difficulty in recalling many detailed facts about him. This tended to be a disappointing question which examiners had expected candidates to perform well on.

Question 6

This was not a popular question and was attempted by those candidates who had found the choice of other questions clearly difficult and was often the final one of three to be answered. Most candidates were attracted by the arrest, trial and execution of Bhutto with little knowledge shown of the other topics in the question and as a result scored poorly on this one. Answers at best were descriptive with little attempt to explain their importance but were largely sketchy and generalised responses.

Question 7

This question was popular to some candidates and there were a few good answers on Zia's domestic policies. However, answers tended to be largely descriptive and heavily weighted towards his *islamisation* policies with descriptions of the events that led up to his death rather than reasons why he was assassinated.

Question 8

This was not a popular question that required candidates to explain how successful Pakistan's relationship has been with China. Answers often tend to be a narrative of events in chronological order and this year was no exception. However, it is fair to say that in the midst of lots of description there were some genuine attempts to explain successes and failures and these candidates achieved just reward for their efforts.

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