

Principal Examiner Feedback

May 2008

GCE

GCE O-Level History (7262) Syllabus B

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General Comments

The examination seemed to work well for those candidates who had prepared thoroughly. As in previous years, it was noticeable that most candidates preferred the questions in Section A and generally scored better.

Most candidates did not offer at least one of the documentary questions. For those that did there is evidence of a slight improvement, many are still not comfortable with evidence skills. Sub-question (a) will always be concerned with comprehension of and, perhaps, also some inference, from a source. Candidates are being asked to say what they can tell from a source. Developed statements will be awarded with the maximum 3 marks. Question (b) may well ask candidates to cross-reference the two sources, again for a maximum of 3 marks. They must show evidence of direct comparison between the two sources and explain similarities and/or differences.

Question (c) will often ask about the reliability or usefulness of a source. These questions will attract four marks. In answering these questions, candidates will be expected to make use both of the information given about the source and also the information given in the source. For example in question 20 candidates were asked to evaluate the utility of Extract B. It is useful because of its contents - it provides evidence of reactions in Britain to Munich agreement. However less useful because reflects the views of that newspaper which may exaggerate reactions.

Questions (d) will always require candidates to make use only of their own knowledge in answering a question which relates directly to the subject matter of the sources. It will always be the highest weighted question at 10 marks. The focus will generally be a mixture of description and evaluation. Some candidates give detailed descriptions but ignore or give superficial evaluations.

In terms of the essay questions candidates can improve in several areas. There will always be an element of evaluation in every question. Candidates need to focus on this aspect and avoid pure description. Too many candidates lack precise information, especially about chronology, and do not always address the main theme of the question.

Finally, in general terms, comments on examination technique. A number of candidates failed to answer five questions due to timing and/or lack of breadth of revision. Some show inconsistency in their choice of questions and occasionally opted for topics for which they had little knowledge and understanding. Again, more comprehensive preparation and revision is essential. A few showed a serious imbalance in the length of their answers. The first two essays well developed and the next three far too brief. Remember successful candidates produce five consistently written answers. The quality of the last answer can be crucial in determining the grade achieved by the candidate.

Section A

Once again Section A proved far more popular than Section B.

1. Very popular with strong answers to parts (a) and surprisingly (c). Detailed descriptions for (b) which did not always focus on the partitions themselves.
2. Not as well answered. Generally lacking in detail and development on the three popular choices - Louis XVI, philosophes and American War of Independence
3. Not many answers and generally weak and vague
4. Popular but in part (a) too much detail on aims of Congress and too little on terms. Some excellent balanced evaluations for (c).
5. Again popular. Very good on (a) and (c) but generally too brief on (b)
6. Well answered in all 3 sections although not always balanced between domestic and foreign for (b)
7. Very strong answers to all 3 sections.
8. Some very good definitions for (a) and well developed answers for (b) and (c)
9. Problems were not always identified for (a) and often lack of evaluation in (c).
10. Generally the refuge of students looking for a last question. Some balanced evaluations for (c) but few tackled second part of (d) question.
11. Some very well developed explanations and evaluations although others lacked balanced between domestic and foreign.
12. Very few answers which were weak and generalised.

Section B

This section was less popular than Section A.

13. Some strong answers to all three sections.
14. No answers.
15. No answers.
16. A few generalised responses.
17. Quite popular and well answered, especially parts (a) and (b)
18. Popular. Candidates, surprisingly, were stronger on (a) and (b) rather than (c).
19. Some excellent answers although more balance needed in evaluations for (c)
20. Sound inferences and cross referencing although evaluations were not always balanced. Lack of focus on appeasement in answers to (d)
21. Generally weak and disappointing answers to all three sections.
22. No answers.
23. Few takers.
24. No answers.

Statistics

Grade	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw boundary mark	100	60	49	38	33	25	0
% Candidates		41.8	55.1	67.3	71.4	78.6	100

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