

Examiners' Report

GCE O Level History (7263)

June 2006

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HISTORY 7263

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 Sections C and D and generally scored better on these Sections.

Most candidates offered at least one of the documentary questions and, although 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 such as 1(b). 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 17 candidates were asked to evaluate the utility of Extract A. It is of use because of its contents - in other words it explains the traditional role of women in the USA in the 1960s. It is also useful because of its provenance, being written by a leading supporter of women's rights. However, it is also limited because of its provenance - Betty Frieden may well have exaggerated in order to win support for her cause.

Question (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 is often description and evaluation (question 17). In the latter case, candidates should attempt to give more or less equal weight to the two parts of the question.

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

This section was not as popular as last year with questions answered by weaker candidates. Candidates scored on parts (a) and (b) of question 1 and displayed sound knowledge for (d) but were weak on utility, part (c). Few answers of any quality to questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8. A number of responses to question 7, although knowledge was often vague and imprecise for parts (b) and (c).

Section B

This section was not as popular as expected with the exception of questions 10 and 14, both on China. There were generally sound answers to (a), (b) and (c) although candidates let themselves down with generalised answers to (d), especially the reasons for the Israeli victory.

Question 10 was generally well answered although a number of candidates struggled with part (b) on the 'Double Tenth'. A few generally disappointing answers to 11 with (b) often confined to Pearl Harbor and little knowledge or understanding of events in the Pacific for part (c). Question 12 was not as popular as anticipated with (b) being the best answered section. Again surprisingly few attempts at 13. The most answered questions were on the Balfour Declaration, Jewish immigration, the bombing of King David and the British withdrawal.

Question 14 was popular and generally well answered, especially parts (b) and (c) although some included political and social policies in part (a). There were few answers to 15 and 16.

Section C

A very popular section with, as usual, questions 18, 19 and 20 attracting many takers and well answered. There were few or no responses to question 21 and 23.

Question 17, the starred question, performed very well on (a), (b) and (c) but there were mainly generalised answers to (d). Questions 18 and 19 were popular and high scoring. Candidates wrote at length for all three parts of question 18, revealing in depth knowledge about the causes and effects of Prohibition as well as the key features of the 'Roaring Twenties'. Many candidates achieved almost full marks on parts (a) and (b) of question 19 but were less secure on part (c).

Question 20 proved more popular than expected and brought often excellent responses to all three parts, although a few strayed to the Cuban Missile Crisis for part (c). Question 21, on Martin Luther King, brought generally sound answers to both parts. Question 24 was not as popular with candidates more confident on (a) and (c) rather than part (b).

Section D

Another very popular section, especially questions 26, 27, 28 and 29. There were only a handful of responses to questions 30 and 31.

Question 25 was generally the refuge of those seeking a fifth question. They picked up marks with their source skills but could offer little or no knowledge for (d).

Question 26 was the most popular question in this section and the best answered especially on War Communism and the NEP. Answers to question 27 were surprisingly weak with candidates often lacking an in-depth knowledge of the development of the Nazi Party before 1929. On the other hand, many answers to question 28 showed

detailed knowledge of Mussolini's rise to power and domestic policies with some excellent, balanced evaluations for part (c).

A number of candidates attempted question 29 with reasonable answers to (a) and (b), but often weak explanations of German defeat for (c). There were few noteworthy answers to 30 and 31 although a surprising number answered the questions on the EEC with some confidence.

HISTORY 7263, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	62	50	38	33	24

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