

Examiners' Report January 2007

GCE O Level

GCE O Level History (7263)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information please call our Customer Services on 0870 240 9800, or visit our website at www.edexcel.org.uk.

January 2007

Publications Code U0018830

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Edexcel Ltd 2007

O'LEVEL HISTORY 7263 - EXAMINER'S REPORT

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.

Most candidates offer 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 reliability of Extract A. It is useful because of its contents - in other words it gives the views of McCarthy, himself, who believed that communism was spreading in the USA. However, it is unreliable because McCarthy exaggerated the extent of communism in order to encourage the Red Scare and win further support for his own campaign.

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 is often description and evaluation/causation (Q17). 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 were 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 popular with questions answered by weaker candidates. Candidates scored on parts (a) and (b) of Q1 and displayed sound knowledge for (d) but were weak on reliability, part (c). Few answers of any quality to questions 2, 4 and 6. Some reasonable responses to 3, 5 and 7, although answers often started before 1970s for part (a) of Q7. Q8 was answered in the main from general knowledge on AIDS.

Section B

This section was not popular with the exception of Q9, 11 and 12. For question 9(a) candidates often failed to achieved full marks due to close use of Extract A. Part (b) disappointed due to lack of real cross-referencing an a failure to use Extract A content. Part (c) highlighted lack of evaluation skills with candidates generally summarising what they could see. Part (d) was often answered at great length with considerable unnecessary factual detail. Candidates often possessed a great deal of knowledge of India between 1919 and 1939, but little concept of question focus.

Part (a) of Q11 was very well answered. Most candidates could identify Sun's 'Three Principles' and gave detailed comments on at least two of the three. Part (b) presented a strong contrast to (a) in that only a small number of candidates could display knowledge of the May 4th Movement and only one or two saw the significance of 1919. Part (c) was answered in great detail, often with superfluous knowledge. Those who failed to score a maximum of 10 marks usually failed to deal with the years 1921 to 1925 and began their answer with the death of Sun Yat Sen.

Q12 proved popular with candidates generally scoring well. Part (a) was answered in great detail. Some candidates insisted on starting in 1936 and working their way through the Second World War before recounting the relevant material. Part (b) was usually answered at some length, but often the changes to peoples' lives were submerged within much detail concerning Mao's social and economic policies. Part (c) disappointed. Most candidates insisted on describing the results of the Great Leap Forward rather than discussing the reasons for its introduction.

Section C

A very popular section with, as usual, questions 18, 19 and 23 attracting many takers and was well answered. There were few or no responses to Q20.

Part (a) of Q17 was usually well answered. Part (b) was less well answered with few providing accurate cross referencing. Candidates were better than normal on reliability in (c) as they appreciated that McCarthy's methods did not lend themselves to reliability concerning communist numbers. Part (d) produced wide variety in quality, from the very weak to extremely impressive responses which exhibited very detailed knowledge of the topic.

Q18 was easily the best answered on the paper. Maximum credit was often earned for parts (a) and (b), although some wrote too much detail about the causes of the Wall Street Crash. Few, however, scored well on (c) due to lack of knowledge of what Hoover actually did and the usual inaccurate image of his efforts.

As usual Roosevelt, Q19, was the most popular question with candidates again generally scoring well. Marks for (a) were high although some failed to focus on how Roosevelt attempted to resolve the problem of unemployment. Part (b) was well answered and by its nature produced a better question focus. The best candidates produced well developed reasons. The last part was less well answered with many unaware of the limitations of the New Deal's success in solving unemployment and the significance of the Second World War.

A handful of candidates answered Q21 and performed reasonably on parts (a) and (c) but part (b), on life in Cuba 1959-1979, was not well answered. Q22 was quite popular but narrow definitions of 'the Great Society' often restricted candidates to 2 marks for (a). The description of policies in (b) gained strong credit for at least half those attempting this question. However, candidates performed best on (c), displaying sound knowledge of the obstacles which faced Johnson.

Q23 also proved to be a popular one. Some excellent responses were seen, with only a relatively small minority failing to achieve a reasonable overall mark. For part (a) some wrote at length about the Vietnam War without focusing on US involvement. Part (b) was usually well focused and strongly answered. The final section also scored well, although some omitted any mention of Laos and Cambodia or the resumption of the bombing of the North.

There were few answers to Q24 and only one of any merit. Candidates tended to give generalised responses especially to Watergate and Clinton.

Section D

Only questions 26 and 27 attracted significant numbers. There were only a handful of responses to questions 30 and 31.

Candidates generally scored well on 25(a) and (b) but less well on the evaluation for (c). Part (d) was quite well done with regard to women, due largely to the assistance given by the sources, but the young were less well done or overlooked completely.

Q26 was quite popular but not as well answered as anticipated due to poor question focus. For (a) many wasted time by beginning with Mussolini's birth and childhood before 1918. For part (b) there was a widespread failure to focus on the question set and clearly identify domestic problems. Part (c) was quite well answered in relation to 'how successful' but not on 'in solving these problems'.

For Q27 most scored well on (a) but descriptions of Stalin's industrial modernisation in (b) were less well done and (c) often described collective farms rather than discussing the level of success of collectivisation policies.

There was only a handful of responses to 28, with (b), the judgement question, often just repeating (a) and 29, with stronger responses to (a) rather than (b) and (c).

GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	59	48	37	32	25

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467
Fax 01623 450481

Email publications@linneydirect.com

Order Code UO 018830 January 2007

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at www.edexcel.org.uk/ask or on 0870 240 9800

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH