

Principal Examiner Feedback

May 2008

GCE

GCE O-Level History (7263) Syllabus C

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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 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 25 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 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 popular with questions answered by generally weaker candidates. A handful of students answered question 7 although weak on second part.

Section B

This section was not popular with the exception of questions 9, 12 and 14. There were generally sound answers to 9(a), (b), (c) and (d). Parts (a) and (c) were quite well answered for Q12 although few gave developed responses for part (b).

Section C

A very popular section.

17. Generally well answered especially part (d), both sections.
18. Excellent answers to all three sections especially (b)
19. Most popular question and generally well answered, although some candidates did not always focus on unemployment for (b)
20. No answers
21. Quite popular although some candidates confused Europe and Asia for (b) and (c)
22. Some excellent, precise and thorough essays on Kennedy - well answered.
23. A few weak responses on Castro which focused only on the Cuban Missiles Crisis.
24. No answers.

Section D

25. Another popular section especially questions 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29.
26. Quite popular and well answered, especially parts (a) and (b)
27. Popular. Candidates, surprisingly, were stronger on (a) and (b) rather than (c). Some excellent answers although more balance needed in evaluations for (c)
28. Sound inferences and cross referencing although evaluations were not always balanced. Lack of focus on appeasement in answers to (d)
29. Generally weak and disappointing answers to all three sections.
30. No answers.
31. Few takers.
32. No answers.

Statistics

Grade	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw boundary mark	100	62	50	38	33	25	0
% Candidates		47.8	66.7	80.1	85.6	94.0	100

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