



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE (NEW)
HISTORY
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2019

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HISTORY

General Certificate of Education (New)

Summer 2019

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

UNIT 1: THE PERIOD STUDIES

General Comments

In 2019, examiners noted an improvement in the quality of responses to Section B questions and a decline in the number of scripts that predominantly listed notes on factors and developments relevant to the topic studied. This improvement was reflected in the increased mean mark for Unit 1 this year. Despite the improvement noted above, a significant number of scripts do not offer the full coverage required by the date range in the question set, and many candidates appear to be revising topics rather selectively; this a dangerous game to play when preparing for an examination. Questions are set randomly, and so question-spotting is strongly discouraged.

Examiners noted that many scripts revealed a mechanical approach to describing developments over the period set with mini judgements at the end of each paragraph in place of an overall, conclusive judgement on the key concept in the question set. It was also noted that causation questions often prompted merely a list of causes with few attempts to evaluate the relative importance of a particular cause.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Unit 1.1: Government, rebellion and society in Wales and England c.1485–1603

1 065 candidates were entered for this option. The most popular question in Section A was Question 1 (528 candidates); however, both this question and Question 2 (514 candidates) had very similar outcomes in terms of candidate attainment. Section B, was a little more split in terms of the number of candidates who attempted the questions. Question 4 was significantly more popular (724 candidates) than Question 3 (306 candidates), the latter of which, candidates appeared to find marginally more manageable.

Some candidates seemed unable to distinguish between the key concept and the key issue, which is a concern and others seemed unaware of the date limit imposed on the question. This latter issue led, in several cases, to candidates offering an in-depth coverage of events unconnected to the question. Others offered a chronological approach to the question, and very often these responses did not offer as much engagement with the question as those responses that utilised a more thematic approach.

Unit 1.2: Government, revolution and society in Wales and England c.1603–1715

79 candidates were entered for this option. The most popular question in Section A was Question 1 (59 candidates); however, both this question and Question 2 (19 candidates) had similar outcomes in terms of candidate attainment. Section B, was also unevenly split in terms of the number of candidates who attempted the questions. Question 3 was more popular (49 candidates) than Question 3 (29 candidates), but both had similar outcomes in terms of candidate attainment.

Some candidates seemed unable to distinguish between the key concept and the key issue, which is a concern and others seemed unaware of the date limit imposed on the question. This latter issue led, in several cases, to candidates offering an in-depth coverage of events unconnected to the question. Others offered a chronological approach to the question, and very often these responses did not offer as much engagement with the question as those responses that utilised a more thematic approach.

Unit 1.3: Politics, protest and reform in Wales and England c.1780–1880

688 candidates were entered for this option. The most popular question in Section A was Question 2 (364 candidates) and was managed marginally more successfully by candidates than Question 1 (309 candidates). Section B, was a little more split in terms of the number of candidates who attempted the questions. Question 3 was more popular (388 candidates) than Question 4 (283 candidates), and again candidates tended to find this more popular question a little more manageable.

Unit 1.4: Politics, people and progress in Wales and England c.1880–1980

508 candidates were entered for this option. By far the most popular question in Section A was Question 1 (408 candidates); however, both this question and Question 2 (92 candidates) had very similar outcomes in terms of candidate attainment. Section B, was also unevenly split in terms of the number of candidates who attempted the questions. Question 4 was significantly more popular (403 candidates) than Question 3 (98 candidates); however, candidates appear to have managed both questions equally well.

For Question 1, candidates needed to identify the “social challenges”, while for Question 2, they needed to address developments that had “an impact on people’s lives”. Had candidates spent some time reflecting on the key aspects of the questions, they would have been able to provide far more focused answers. Instead, too many saw a term with which they were familiar and launched into a pre-prepared response with assertions and mini judgements that did not go far enough in explaining their answers. Given that this is a period study, period coverage is expected; however, it seems that there is a lack of knowledge about events after 1951. Candidates who ignore this period do so at their own peril as it is possible—and permissible—that both Section A questions in a given examination paper may focus exclusively on events after 1951.

Unit 1.5: Political and religious change in Europe c.1500–1598

83 candidates were entered for this option. The most popular question in Section A was Question 1 (57 candidates); however, candidates appear to have found this a little less manageable than Question 2 (22 candidates). Section B, was also unevenly split in terms of the number of candidates who attempted the questions. Question 3 was significantly more popular (58) than Question 4 (21), but on this occasion, candidates found the more popular question a little more manageable.

Some candidates tended to list, or describe in detail, rather than address the key concept. In Section B, there was a tendency to focus on the general issues of the question rather than the specific evaluation and judgement as demanded by the question.

Unit 1.6: Europe in the age of absolutism and revolution c.1682–1815

14 candidates were entered for this option. The most popular question in Section A was Question 1 (13 candidates); however, both this question and Question 2 (1 candidate) had very similar outcomes in terms of candidate attainment. Section B, was also unevenly split in terms of the number of candidates who attempted the questions.

Question 4 was significantly more popular (13 candidates) than Question 3 (1 candidate); however attainment here was different, with Question 4 appearing to be a little more manageable to those who attempted it.

For the most part responses showed that the questions had been understood. Those who chose Question 4 needed to balance up the problems with the benefits and avoid a lopsided response. Period coverage remains an issue for responses in the lower mark bands.

Unit 1.7: Revolution and new ideas in Europe c.1780–1881

60 candidates were entered for this option. The both questions were equally popular (29 candidates apiece) and both had very similar outcomes in terms of candidate attainment. Section B, was more split in terms of the number of candidates who attempted the questions. Question 3 was significantly more popular (44 candidates) than Question 4 (15 candidates), the latter of which, candidates appeared to find marginally less manageable.

Most answers at best resulted in a series of mini judgements that were related to the key concept, but which did not engage fully with the precise question. Many responses went no further than a generalised list of developments that took the form of a range of mainly unsupported assertions. By and large, where meaningful debate was required, general discussion was offered.

Unit 1.8: Europe in an age of conflict and cooperation c.1890–1991

526 candidates were entered for this option. The most popular question in Section A was Question 2 (369 candidates); however, both this question and Question 4 (145 candidates) had very similar outcomes in terms of candidate attainment. Section B, was more evenly split in terms of the number of candidates who attempted the questions. Question 3 was more popular (282 candidates) than Question 4 (228 candidates), and it was the more popular question that candidates found a little more manageable.

Too often, candidates are avoiding addressing the set issue in favour of trawling through events drawn from the period and, as such, the judgements reached frequently had no bearing on the question set and were often unsubstantiated. While the quality of the factual information drawn upon for Question 3 was largely good, this was not the case for Question 4, where it seems that candidates played Russian roulette on the topics they should revise. Many candidates appear to have floundered when the topics they had selected for revision were not used in this particular examination paper.

Summary of key points

- The best responses engage with the exact key concept in the question set, analyse the issues and evaluate its importance before coming to a substantiated judgement.
- Examiners in the period study are looking for period coverage of the date range given, a debate on the key concept in the question and an appropriate and balanced judgement that emerges from the argument made in the essay.
- A conclusion that summarises the argument and reaches a judgement based on that argument carries far more weight than a series of judgements tacked mechanically onto the back of each paragraph.

HISTORY

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UNIT 2: THE DEPTH STUDIES (PART ONE)

General Comments

Some of the overall improvements that were witnessed in Unit 2 last year have been maintained in this round of examinations, and it is pleasing to note that many centres have taken on board the guidance shared by the principal examiners through last year's professional development sessions.

Overall, in both Question 1 and Question 2, a greater contextual awareness is emerging, but while there is more date-specific contextual awareness in relation to the origin of the sources in Question 1, this is often not matched in relation to the context of the overall enquiry. In Question 2, there was greater contextual awareness in relation to the material used by historians in order to reach their interpretations. However, there is still a need for Centres to encourage candidates to show awareness that historical interpretations are provisional and are subject to change.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Unit 2.1: The mid-Tudor crisis in Wales and England c.1529–1570—problems, threats and challenges c.1529–1553

151 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. All candidates responded to Question 1, but only 149 responded to Question 2. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—a little more manageable than Question 2's requirement of analysis and evaluation of the provided historians' views.

Nevertheless, for Question 1, candidates seem content to rely on a source-by-source evaluation, which tends to inhibit a holistic approach to understanding the sources in their wider context and appreciating their contribution to change over a period of time.

Unit 2.2: Royalty, rebellion and republic c.1625–1660—the pressure on the monarchy and the drift to civil war c.1625–1642

185 candidates were entered for this option, and all 179 of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—a little more manageable than Question 2's requirement of analysis and evaluation of the provided historians' views.

Nevertheless, for Question 1, candidates seem content to rely on a source-by-source evaluation, which tends to inhibit a holistic approach to understanding the sources in their wider context and appreciating their contribution to change over a period of time.

Unit 2.3: Reform and protest in Wales and England c.1783–1848—radicalism and the fight for parliamentary reform c.1783–1832

231 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 228 candidates responded to Question 1, but only 227 responded to Question 2. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—a little more manageable than Question 2's requirement of analysis and evaluation of the provided historians' views.

In this option, the examiners noted that there was some improvement in the identification of the specific content of the sources in Question 1, which is commended, and it is hoped that this will be further developed in future sessions.

Unit 2.4: Politics and society in Wales and England c.1900–1939—politics, society and the war: Wales and England c.1900–1918

67 candidates were entered for this option; however, it appears that only 66 candidates sat the examination, answering both sections as required. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than Question 2's requirement of analysis and evaluation of the provided historians' views.

For question 1, only a few candidates looked at all three sources collectively, with most candidates adopting a source by source approach. Collectively, the sources illustrated the development of the campaign for women's suffrage; from gaining sympathy, through growing militancy, to co-operation during the war. It was this latter stage that allowed the Government to grant women the vote without being accused of giving in to the campaign. For Question 1, better-performing candidates addressed the actual set enquiry and placed the source in context, explaining why the author was influenced by events in the period. However, many candidates provided only general historical context, mostly a narrative of what the Suffragettes were doing before 1914. For Question 2, responses were hampered by a lack of knowledge about the wider historical debate. In most cases candidates did not know how and, specifically, *why* views about the decline of the Liberal Party had changed over time.

Unit 2.5: Religious reformation in Europe c.1500–1567—the outbreak and spread of the Reformation in Germany c.1500–1531

59 candidates were entered for option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 58 candidates responded to Question 1, but only 57 responded to Question 2. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—a little more manageable than Question 2's requirement of analysis and evaluation of the provided historians' views.

In responses to Question 1, there a great deal of formulaic source evaluation: of usefulness; reliability; purpose; and tone, which were not made relevant to either the context of the three sources or the value to the historian of the sources. For Question 2, analysis of the attributions tended to be variations on source analysis, for example, which source was more reliable or valid, rather than getting to the issue of how these historians had arrived at their views and why they had arrived at different conclusions.

Unit 2.6: France in revolution c.1774–1815—France: causes and course of revolution c.1774–1792

173 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 170 candidates responded to Question 1, but only 169 responded to Question 2. There was very little discernible difference between how candidates found the level of difficulty of each question, with very similar outcomes for both Question 1 (the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented) and Question 2 (the analysis and evaluation of the provided historians' views).

The majority of candidates showed how the sources were of value to an historian. There was some evidence of mechanistic approaches, although there was also plenty of general, and accurate, historical context evident. The interpretation question remains a little problematic, but most acquitted themselves satisfactorily.

Unit 2.7: The crisis of the American republic c.1840–1877—sectional differences and the road to civil war c.1840–1861

146 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 142 candidates responded to Question 1, but only 141 responded to Question 2. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than Question 2's requirement of analysis and evaluation of the provided historians' views.

In this option, the examiners noted that there was some improvement in the identification of the specific content of the sources in Question 1, which is commended, and it is hoped that this will be further developed in future sessions.

Unit 2.8: Germany: democracy to dictatorship c.1918–1945—Weimar and its challenges c.1918–1933

1 783 candidates were entered for this option; however, it appears that a number of those candidates opted not to sit the examination. Of those who did, nearly all responded to both sections as required. 1 697 candidates responded to Question 1, but only 1 691 responded to Question 2. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than Question 2's requirement of analysis and evaluation of the provided historians' views.

In Question 1, many candidates drifted into a discussion of utility and failed to reach a reasoned judgement on the value of a source to an historian studying the nominated issue. Many candidates still assert that a source is valuable to an historian by virtue of its content; however, this is not a reasoned judgement on the set question but a source summary. Candidates are advised that appropriate context is date specific and cannot consider what may develop in the future or what has already occurred. For Question 2, while candidates had little difficulty identifying the two interpretations provided, the authorship comments were mechanistic and offered little focus on the wider historical context. Further, too many candidates failed to provide an alternative interpretation and when they did, a significant proportion of them drifted away from the set question.

Summary of key points

- Candidates need to relate their contextual awareness to developments and themes within each Depth Study and in relation to all three sources.
- There needs to be less mechanistic source evaluation, and candidates must avoid basing their response solely upon the information contained in the sources and their respective provenances.
- Candidates need to focus their attention on what factors influence historians in the formation of their judgements.
- Candidates need to avoid resorting to the so called *synthesis* view as another possible interpretation of the set enquiry. This is, in reality, merely a blended version of the two interpretations contained within the extracts. Candidates need to clearly identify and develop other possible interpretations.
- Schools of thought and schools of thinking—where they are identified—must to be linked to how and why interpretations are formed, and why and how historical interpretations are subject to change.

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UNIT 3: THE BREADTH STUDIES

General Comments

The majority of candidates are aware that Breadth Study essays are designed to encourage fuller chronological coverage of the concepts set in the question, but the quality of the responses varies considerably. The papers were accessible to candidates, and many candidates provided detailed knowledge of the themes but without focussing on the more holistic demands of the Breadth Study, this was particularly evident in the Section B questions in which period coverage was an issue.

There were fewer examples of listing and narrative responses, but the weaker candidates continue to rely on knowledge-based recall of the events rather than analysing, evaluating and debating the issues to make a judgement.

It is becoming evident that many centres are providing their candidates with a framework to elicit “debate” by discussing a number of factors in a series of paragraphs each followed by a mini judgement on the evaluative phrase set in the exercise. This has tended towards producing responses in which the key phrase is endlessly repeated to minimal evaluative effect.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Unit 3.1: Wales: resistance, conquest and rebellion c.1240–1415

4 candidates were entered for this option, and all of them responded to two questions as required. There were 4 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 3 responses to optional Question 1, and 1 response to optional Question 2. Of these, candidates found Question 1 and Question 3 equally manageable, with Question 2 a little less so.

Overall, there was a lack of awareness of—or at least a reluctance to discuss—the pace of change over the period, with candidates adopting a chronological rather than a thematic approach to answering the questions.

Unit 3.2: Poverty, protest and rebellion in Wales and England c.1485–1603

89 candidates were entered for this option and all of them responded to two questions as required. There were 89 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 63 responses to optional Question 1 and 26 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 2 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed by Question 2 and then, immediately behind, Question 1.

Overall, there was a lack of awareness of—or at least a reluctance to discuss—the pace of change over the period with candidates adopting a chronological rather than a thematic approach to answering the questions.

Unit 3.3: Reformation and discovery: Europe c.1492–1610

12 candidates were entered for this option and all of them responded to two questions as required. There were 12 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 5 responses to optional Question 1 and 7 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 2 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed closely by Question 1. Candidates did not, however, perform quite as strongly for Question 3.

Few of the candidates were able to cover the full period in any of the questions set. The range of issues discussed in responses was often also limited, sometimes just to the issue in the questions themselves.

Unit 3.4: Royalty, revolution and restoration in Wales and England c.1603–1715

24 candidates were entered for this option; however, it appears that not all of these sat the examination. Of those that did, all of them answered two questions as required. There were 23 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 16 responses to optional Question 1, and 7 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 1 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed a little way behind by Question 3 and then Question 2.

Overall, there was a lack of awareness of—or at least a reluctance to discuss—the pace of change over the period with candidates adopting a chronological rather than a thematic approach to answering the questions.

Unit 3.5: France: *Ancien Régime* to Napoleon c.1715–1815

70 candidates were entered for this option; however, it appears that not all of these sat the examination. Of those that did, all of them answered two questions as required. There were 69 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 25 responses to optional Question 1 and 44 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 2 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed by Question 3 and, closely after that, Question 1.

Both questions in Section A were accessible and were, by and large, well answered. Candidates whose responses ended up in the lower bands need to remember that period coverage is an important factor. Question 3 caused some candidates a problem as they misinterpreted it: instead of focussing on the Catholic Church and whether or not it had been affected by the greatest changes during the period, they sought to offer other important changes such as war, which affected society.

Unit 3.6: Parliamentary reform and protest in Wales and England c.1780–1885

149 candidates were entered for this option; however, it appears that not all of these sat the examination. Of those that did, all of them answered two questions as required. There were 148 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 111 responses to optional Question 1 and 37 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 2 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed very closely by Question 3 and then Question 1.

Unit 3.7: Social change and reform in Wales and England c.1890–1990

253 candidates were entered for this option; however not all of them answered two questions as required. There were 252 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 170 responses to optional Question 1 and 83 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 2 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed very closely by Question 3 and Question 1, for which, outcomes indicate there was an equal level of facility.

Centres need to consider the period from 1890 to 1990 as a period of social change and reform. Things were different in 1990 than they were in 1890 and candidates need an outline of what the changes were, what caused them and what their impact was. Too many centres are clearly teaching about the Liberal reforms, war, and Labour reforms, and not addressing the period as a whole. This hampers responses in general, especially when discussing issues after 1951, the inter-war years or the post-1906 period, which is largely ignored. When candidates do attempt post-1945 questions they fare well, mostly because they have good outline knowledge of changes in society and have clearly enjoyed looking at issues such as equal rights for all.

Unit 3.8: The American century c.1890–1990

1 529 candidates were entered for this option; however, it appears that not all of these sat the examination and of those that did, not all of them answered two questions as required. There were 1 516 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 931 responses to optional Question 1 and 583 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 2 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed closely by Question 3 and then Question 1.

The examiners noted that in this option, candidates need a better understanding of the workings of the US government, for example, they need to be able to correctly identify the components of the federal government.

Unit 3.9: Changing leadership and society in Germany c.1871–1989

48 candidates were entered for this option and all of them responded to two questions as required. There were 48 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 43 responses to optional Question 1 and 5 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 3 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed closely by Question 1 and then Question 2.

Most of the responses to the questions in Section A tended to take the form of a generalised discussion with some vague links to the question set. Judgements were limited and often followed the unloading of everything candidates knew about the period rather than the parts that were relevant to the set questions. In Section B, candidates' knowledge seemed more secure on the key issue; however, that was not always the case for the wider period. This meant that breadth coverage was not especially broad in many cases.

Unit 3.10: Changing leadership and society in Russia c.1881–1989

55 candidates were entered for this option and all of them responded to two questions as required. There were 55 responses to the compulsory Question 3, with 44 responses to optional Question 1 and 11 responses to optional Question 2. Of these, Question 2 was managed most successfully by the candidature, followed closely by Question 3 and immediately behind that, Question 1.

Most of the responses in Section A took the form of a generalised discussion, which included a series of mini judgements that did not really push towards a precise and meaningful debate on the set question. In Section B, candidates tended to try and subvert the question by reeling out a list of challenges that Russian leaders faced; however, this could not score well as they needed to debate the efficacy of Russian leaders in dealing with those challenges. While, there was some attempt to deal with breadth, this led some candidates to unload class notes and lose focus on the question.

Summary of key points

- Candidates are advised to remember the difference between Section A and Section B. Questions in Section A are devised to challenge candidates to deal with an issue within a shorter timeframe, the dates of which have been selected for a reason.
- In all questions, candidates need to ensure that they offer period coverage. This does not necessarily mean naming an event right at the beginning, one in the middle and one at the very end, but ensuring that the majority of the period stated in the question has been dealt with by the response.
- By doing the above, candidates should be able to identify change over the set period, focusing on, for example, how attitudes or the socio-economic situation evolved and how this affected the issue raised by the question.
- Candidates must remember that that the questions are designed to foster debate. There is no single “correct” answer, and the most successful responses consider, weigh and then make a judgement on a range of factors.
- The set question must be the focus of the response, even if candidates disagree with the contention of the question. Candidates are free to challenge the question and arrive at an entirely different view to the one proposed. However, they cannot merely subvert the question into one that they have revised. If they think that the statement or idea in the question is wrong, then they will have to explain why and justify that explanation.

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UNIT 4: THE DEPTH STUDIES (PART TWO)

General Comments

For Question 1, most candidates were able to discuss the three sources in turn before offering an overall judgement on their value to an historian studying a particular enquiry. Fully evaluative responses successfully addressed the issue of “value to an historian” throughout the response, concentrating on “value” rather than “utility”. Better-performing candidates were able to analyse and evaluate the sources for their value to an historian by considering each source in the context of its origin and in the context of the question set. It is only by doing this that candidates are able to gain the higher bands within the mark scheme as they are providing specific context rather than general context.

For Section B, most candidates could provide answers that went beyond narrative. The more focus on the key concepts in the question the better. However, a significant number do not go further than offering assertive mini judgements, meaning a vague reference to the key concept without trying to explain why it is they are supporting a particular argument.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Unit 4.1: The mid-Tudor crisis in Wales and England c.1529–1570—challenges facing Mary and Elizabeth c.1553–1570

113 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 108 candidates responded to the compulsory Question 1, with 99 candidates responding to optional Question 2 and 10 candidates responding to optional Question 3. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than the essay questions. Of those latter questions, the responses to Question 3 had marginally lower outcomes than those for Question 2.

In this section, for Question 1, too many candidates repeat the phrase “this source is of value to an historian because...” without ever really engaging with the question and arriving at a substantiated judgement. It is mechanical and demonstrates a reluctance to fully engage with the set question.

Unit 4.2: Royalty, rebellion and republic c.1625–1660—Commonwealth and Protectorate c. 1642–1660

121 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 117 candidates responded to the compulsory Question 1, with 83 candidates responding to optional Question 2 and 33 candidates responding to optional Question 3. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than the essay questions. Of those latter questions, the responses to Question 3 had marginally lower outcomes than those for Question 2.

In this section, for Question 1, too many candidates repeat the phrase “this source is of value to an historian because...” without ever really engaging with the question and arriving at a substantiated judgement. It is mechanical and demonstrates a reluctance to fully engage with the set question.

Unit 4.3: Reform and protest in Wales and England c.1783–1848—protest and campaigns for social reform c.1832–1848

189 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 185 candidates responded to the compulsory Question 1, with 124 candidates responding to optional Question 2 and 60 candidates responding to optional Question 3. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than the essay questions. However, Question 3 was very close behind, with Question 2 attaining moderately lower outcomes.

In this option, it was clear that some improvements have been made in the identification of the specific context of the sources used in Question 1, which is pleasing to observe. However, centres are encouraged to continue to hone their candidates’ essay-writing skills.

Unit 4.4: Politics and society in Wales and England c.1900–1939—economic and social challenges in Wales and England c.1918–1939

69 candidates were entered for this option, all of them responded to both sections of the examination paper as required. All answered the compulsory first question, while 43 candidates opted to respond to Question 2 and 26 candidates responded to Question 3. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than the essay questions. However, Question 3 was very close behind, with Question 2 attaining moderately lower outcomes.

The specific question set as Question 1 was about the effects of war on the people of Wales and England, and this clearly needed more attention rather than the blanket “*the sources show us this*” approach. Candidates who focused on the set enquiry did well because they were addressing the question and providing specific context that explained why the authors of the sources said what they did at the time. A time of reflection would have allowed candidates in Question 2 to identify “what the challenges” facing the government of the period from 1918 to 1931 were, rather than discussing events in the period and merely stating that they were a challenge. Many candidates’ knowledge of the period from 1918 to 1931 proved vague. Nevertheless, it was better on “political developments” for Question 3, as many candidates were able to focus on the key concept and provide some good responses.

Unit 4.5: Religious reformation in Europe c.1500–1567—the spread of Protestantism and counter-Reformation c.1531–1564

37 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 36 candidates responded to the compulsory Question 1, with 7 candidates responding to optional Question 2 and 29 candidates responding to optional Question 3. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than the essay questions. However, Question 3 was very close behind, with Question 2 attaining marginally lower outcomes.

In responses to Question 1, there was a great deal of unfocused source evaluation that was not linked to the value to an historian studying this particular enquiry, and often, this analysis was very negative. With the essay questions, a significant number of the candidates drew from part (a) of the Depth Study rather than focusing on the period in the question set when exemplifying their arguments.

Unit 4.6: France in Revolution c.1774–1815—France: republic and Napoleon c.1792–1815

128 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 124 candidates responded to the compulsory Question 1, with 76 candidates responding to optional Question 2 and 49 candidates responding to optional Question 3. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—more manageable than the essay questions. However, Question 3 was very close behind, with Question 2 attaining moderately lower outcomes.

Candidates were able to access the sources, and for the most part produced good responses. It is important that specific context of the sources is dealt with in addition to their general context. The essay question showed a number of candidates fully engaging with the question and offering a meaningful discussion that reached a balanced judgment for which they were duly rewarded.

Unit 4.7: The crisis of the American republic c.1840–1877—civil war and reconstruction c.1861–1877

128 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. 126 candidates responded to the compulsory Question 1, with 106 candidates responding to optional Question 2 and 20 candidates responding to optional Question 3. It appears that candidates found the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented—as required by Question 1—slightly more manageable than the essay questions. However, Question 3 was very close behind, with Question 2 attaining moderately lower outcomes.

In this option, it was clear that some improvements have been made in the identification of the specific context of the sources used in Question 1, which is pleasing to observe. However, centres are encouraged to continue to hone their candidates' essay-writing skills.

Unit 4.8: Germany: democracy to dictatorship c.1918–1945—Nazi Germany c.1933–1945

1 446 candidates were entered for this option, and nearly all of those who sat the examination responded to both sections as required. All candidates responded to the compulsory Question 1, with 1 178 candidates responding to optional Question 2 and 267 candidates responding to optional Question 3. In this section alone did the candidates enjoy more success with one of the essay questions than they did with the assessment of the value to an historian of the three sources presented (as required by Question 1). The facility level of Question 3 was highest, with Question 1 very close behind, and Question 2 slightly behind that.

As at AS Level, there is still too much summarising of the sources in the source-based question, with emphasis on strengths and limitations rather than on value to an historian in pursuit of answers to the set enquiry. In the essay questions, there was too much drift from the set question in favour of generalised discussion with only tangential links to the key issues raised.

Summary of key points

- Focus on the Actual Set Enquiry (ASE) in Question 1: it is not a question of “value to an historian” in general but a question of “value to an historian in a particular enquiry”.
- Concentrate on the actual context of the source—consider what was influencing the author to say or write what s/he said or wrote at that particular time.
- Refrain from making mechanistic source evaluation comments, for example, “the source has no value because it is biased”. An historian would know whether or not a source was biased and, more often than not, that bias contributes to the source’s value.
- Concentrate on the key concept in the question in Section B essays and provide period coverage as indicated in those questions.

HISTORY

General Certificate of Education (New)

Summer 2019

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

UNIT 5: THE NON-EXAMINED ASSESSMENT (NEA)

General Comments

This is the final year of the original three-year cycle for coursework submissions for this iteration of the GCE History course. Throughout the first half of 2019, centres have been submitting their revised titles for the 2020–2022 cycle of the NEA which will be assessed for the first time in the spring and summer of 2020.

If you have not yet submitted your centre's revised NEA title, please ensure that you have done so by the end of December this year. Full instructions regarding this—including an explanation of the differences that need to be introduced to titles to ensure that they are significantly different from the 2017–2019 cycle—can be found on the GCE History pages of the WJEC website.

By and large, candidates perform well in this unit; however there are some ongoing concerns. The most notable of these is the candidates' use of primary and contemporary sources. Too many candidates continue to use non-primary or non-contemporary source material in their responses. Historians' works are useful as extracts to supplement the response, but they are not to be used in isolation. The task has been developed to test candidates' abilities to deal with source material that is contemporaneous to the events being discussed; to analyse and evaluate this source material within its historical context and to use it to illustrate how and why aspects of the past have been interpreted in different ways.

Summary of key points

- Candidates must remember that the **maximum** word count for this activity is **4 000 words**, excluding the words used in the sources, extracts (where used) and in-text citations (where used). If candidates exceed this limit their response does not meet the criterion of being “concise” as outlined in Band 6 of Assessment Objective 1 in the GCE History specification.
- Candidates are expected to analyse and evaluate a range of material that is primary or contemporary to the period being discussed. In order to make the task manageable, this is advised as being between six and eight primary or contemporary sources. Fewer than six is not regarded as offering sufficient range.
- Candidates may refer to extracts from historians' works, but these are not acceptable as—and must not be credited as being—appropriate source material.
- Candidates may use footnotes or endnotes to list the sources used, or to provide the original-language versions of sources that they may have themselves translated. These additional notes do not count towards the final word count. However, if a candidate is

using footnotes and/or endnotes to develop their argument and thus avoid the restrictions of the word count, then that material must be ignored and cannot be credited.

- A bibliography is required, although we do not prescribe a particular type. While some candidates may find adhering to the guidelines of a particular standard, such as the Chicago Manual of Style or MLA useful, candidates are not required to follow any such particular style guide. All we request is that individual candidates' references and bibliographies are clear, uniform and that they enable the moderator to check the veracity of the source presented. The GCE History specification has additional advice on this issue.
- Centres are reminded that if more than one teacher is responsible for assessing the NEA, then the centre needs to provide evidence that there has been a process of internal moderation. If one teacher has marked all of the work, this evidence is not required.



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