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# **GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**GCE  
HISTORY  
AS/Advanced**

**SUMMER 2023**

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**HISTORY**  
**General Certificate of Education**  
**Summer 2023**  
**Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**  
**UNIT 1 – PERIOD STUDIES**

**General Comments**

For the most part the papers were accessible and the requirements for their successful completion were clear and unambiguous. However, there were individual questions that some candidates either misread or misunderstood. That said, we must admit to the possibility that some candidates tailored their responses to questions they either expected or wished had been set. In these circumstances, the responses tended to explore areas of study that were at odds with the questions set in the examination papers.

Candidates must display a greater awareness of the difference between an *Evaluate* and a *To what extent* question. Candidates are also urged to take account of the dates as they apply to individual questions. Some candidates seemed to ignore them which resulted in responses going beyond either the start or end date.

Higher-achieving candidates discussed or evaluated effectively, and they presented their responses in a clear, structured format. Unfortunately, a number of candidates are wedded to the belief that more content is the way to secure a better band and mark, and there was evidence of narrative and offloading of class notes. Indeed, there remains a tendency to drift off the point and lose focus during the course of the response.

Candidates at the higher end of the mark range identified and focused on the key issue presented in the question, argued with considerable persuasion, and invariably reached a balanced conclusion. Unfortunately, some concluding judgements were repetitive rather than focused and informative. Consequently, it is worth noting that a conclusion by way of a summative judgment is essential at the end of a response just as a clear indication at the outset of what the question is demanding and/or expecting. Candidates might consider a brief period of reflection before commencing their answer so that they can consider the best way to construct their responses.

Candidates are reminded of the need to try and ensure that there is proper coverage in Section B responses. Occasionally candidates do not ensure that their answers are sufficiently broad to meet the criteria demanded by the question. Some candidates offered too much depth in those areas where they felt particularly confident in their knowledge. Knowledge and judgements are key strands in any answer as is the ability to evaluate and analyse. The skill is in successfully integrating all four strands so as to provide a holistic response.

## Comments on individual questions/sections

### Option 1: Government, rebellion and society in Wales and England c.1485–1603

Many candidates misread or misunderstood Question 1. It required them to offer an appraisal of the Acts of Union and to assess their impact on the relationship between Wales and England. The question did not invite candidates to discuss other factors at the expense, exclusion, or indeed the minimisation of the impact of the Acts of Union on the relationship between Wales and England. Some failed to focus on the key word *impact* and they either simply described events or listed causes. The approach was somewhat similar to Question 2, as many candidates did not appear to understand, let alone demonstrate an ability to debate, the changing relationship between Elizabeth and her Parliaments. There was a heavy reliance on description, although several candidates instead opted to discuss an array of other tenuously related factors such as the Queen's relationship with the Privy Council and William Cecil.

In Section B, for Question 3, some candidates provided a sound appraisal of Tudor governments' handling of protests and rebellions, measuring the strengths and limitations of the approaches. However, too many opted to describe the rebellions in chronological order. Similarly, in Question 4, while many candidates provided an analysis of the dissolution of the monasteries that determined its significance as a change in religion, many others simply listed the changes in religion during the set period.

### Option 2: Government, revolution and society in Wales and England c.1603–1715

The majority of candidates provided a competent list of the reasons why the Civil War broke out for their response to Question 1. Some focused on the word *responsible*, and many offered an appraisal of the actions of Charles I's opponents. However, the majority concentrated on Charles I, which led to some unbalanced responses. For Question 2 meanwhile, candidates tended to describe rather than analyse the Revolutionary Settlement. This meant that they were less able to measure its successes and limitations and/or failures in solving political conflicts. Many also seemingly ignored the date range set out in the question.

In Section B, there were many competent responses, although in Question 3, some candidates appeared to misread the question and concentrated on Charles I rather than his son Charles II. Question 4 was the more popular choice here, and most candidates dealt well with the premise of the question. The majority were willing to debate the dispute over finance and thereby determine its significance as a cause of tension between Crown and Parliament.

### Option 3: Politics, protest and reform in Wales and England, c.1780–1880

Section A provided a broad range of responses. In Question 1, apart from the few higher-scoring candidates, many simply did not respond to the phrase "change of direction", instead being content to discuss and evaluate the reforms of the liberal Tories more generally. Question 2 was addressed with a little more focus, and most candidates were confident enough to discuss the Whig Reforms and assess their impact in dealing with social and economic problems. However, many candidates, for whatever reason, strayed into politics and focused on political reform.

There were many good responses to Section B, and many candidates, in their response to Question 3, were happy to discuss the causes of popular protest.

However, fewer were prepared, or inclined, to assess the significance of radical ideas and their contribution to causing protests. Question 4, meanwhile, threw up something of an oddity: while most candidates provided a reasonably full appraisal of Peel v. Disraeli, many candidates insisted on including Lord Liverpool in their responses, despite him being entirely irrelevant to the set question.

#### **Option 4: Politics, people and progress in Wales and England, c.1880–1980**

There were some differences in the approach to the two Section A questions in this paper. For Question 1, only the higher-scoring candidates demonstrated any attempt to focus on the key word *impact*, the rest content to provide a narrative history of social change in the period between 1951 and 1980 (with a handful electing to begin their responses in 1945 to include the Atlee-led Labour government). Question 2, however, provided a range of better responses, with most candidates providing a reasonably confident appraisal of the changing attitudes to Welsh language and culture in the 35 years after the end of the Second World War.

In Section B many candidates were able to trace the growth of the Labour Party in Question 3, but they were perhaps less inclined to assess its significance as a major political development. The most popular counterargument was the decline of the Liberal Party. In Question 4, meanwhile, the majority of candidates provided reasonably convincing arguments that suggested the most important changes during the specified period were indeed made by the Liberal governments of 1906 to 1914. The most popular counterargument focused on the reforms of the Labour Governments of the period from 1945 to 1951.

#### **Option 5: Political and religious change in Europe c.1500–1598**

Across Section A, there were issues with the candidates' responses to the questions. While many candidates were able to offer an appraisal of the extent to which France developed into an absolute monarchy, almost as many simply provided an historical narrative with emphasis on key events in Francis's reign. For Question 2, however, many candidates appeared to be unable to understand let alone evaluate the growing power of nation states in Europe, with the notion of *nation states* seemingly beyond the grasp of many.

On the whole, Section B was answered more effectively. In Question 3, most were able to provide a reasonably full appraisal of the reasons for the success of Ottoman expansion into Eastern Europe, although there were some descriptions of this expansion that did not evolve to include an assessment of its success or failure. For Question 4, most candidates provided a reasonable analysis of the Peace of Augsburg and its impact on religion in Europe. Nevertheless, the tendency was to over-concentrate on the other factors, which led to some unbalanced responses.

#### **Option 6: Europe in the age of absolutism and revolution c.1682–1815**

Both Question 1 and Question 2 offered sound, albeit few, responses. In the first question, candidates were able to assess the impact of Peter the Great's policies on Russia and, by and large, resisted the temptation to describe key features of Peter the Great's reign. In the second, there was a confident response to the question on Frederick the Great that clearly focused on the effectiveness of his domestic reforms.

In Section B, while there were some issues regarding a clear understanding of the term *structure of the ancien régime* in Question 3, candidates were able to provide a reasonably clear response that suggested that the ancien régime was responsible for the outbreak of the French Revolution.

There were some equally clear responses to Question 4, with candidates reasonably confident in their appraisal of the impact of conflict on Great Power relations in the specified period.

### **Option 7: Revolution and new ideas in Europe c.1780–1881**

Question 1's responses indicated that the majority of their authors believed nationalism was the main cause of revolution in Europe; however, while there were a few strong counter arguments, most were quite limited. For Question 2 the level of response was more consistent, with most candidates providing a reasonably clear appraisal of Napoleon III's domestic and foreign policies.

In Section B, Question 3 was the reverse of Question 1, with most candidates disagreeing with the contention in the question – that King Victor Emmanuel II made the most significant contribution to the unification of Italy, offering a range of cogent reasons why he was not. While these counterarguments were fuller, they sometimes led to responses that were imbalanced. Question 4, overall, was somewhat problematic for candidates, most of whom did not fully comprehend the significance of *prevention* in the context of the question. Most, but not quite all, were content to recite the reasons for German unification, with a few adding some discussion of the weaknesses of German nationalism.

### **Option 8: Europe in an age of conflict and cooperation c.1890–1991**

For Section A, most candidates were able to comprehend Question 1 and provided a thoughtful analysis of political extremism and its significance as a threat to the stability of the Weimar Republic. However, many candidates remained content to describe the weaknesses of Weimar Germany as a means to explain why it ended. In Question 2, the League of Nations came in for a fair deal of criticism and the consensus of opinion was that it did little to contribute to international co-operation. Unfortunately, this question seemed to appeal to those candidates who preferred a narrative response, and there was little real effort to engage with the command term of "how significant".

In Section B, most candidates were able to debate the contribution of collectivisation under Stalin to changing the lives of the Russian people in Question 3. The counterarguments were equally as effective particularly Lenin's policies and those of the Tsar. There was also a reasonably sound approach to Question 4, with many candidates providing a meaningful appraisal of the attempts to improve relations in Europe, mainly by means of measuring the strengths and limitations of the approaches taken in the context of the period specified.

### **Summary of key points**

- Candidates are strongly encouraged to consider the implications of the command terms more carefully and to be aware of the differences between, for example, *Evaluate* and *To what extent* questions.
- Candidates must also heed more notice of the date range indicated in the question, providing coverage of most of the period set.
- It seems that some candidates are still too keen to commence the examination and are not giving themselves sufficient thinking time to consider the implications of the questions and how they can most effectively respond to it.
- In History knowledge is important, however, it cannot exist in a vacuum. That knowledge must be used to answer the set question – evidence must be analysed and evaluated in order to support the formation of nuanced, supported judgements.

# HISTORY

## General Certificate of Education

Summer 2023

### Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

#### UNIT 2 – DEPTH STUDIES, PART ONE

##### General Comments

For Question 1, examiners want candidates to analyse and evaluate the sources in context to assess their value to an historian. Reference must be made to the precise origins of the source and its value in the context of the issue in the question set. The examiners also want to see an assessment of the strengths and limitations of the source as part of the debate on value. This process is not only about the content of the source but also its reliability, its purpose, its tone and language. A discussion of the influences upon the author of the source would be extremely helpful in assessing why the author is saying what he/she is saying in the source as well as how they are saying it. While some candidates provided exemplary responses, this summer, it was disappointing to see a considerable number of answers that said little about the strengths and limitations of the sources: a substantial number of candidates still want to describe what the source is saying without evaluating its value and context. Unfortunately, mechanical comments about bias are still seen and the examiners wish to emphasize, once again, that obviously biased sources are still of value to an historian. Despite this, it was pleasing to see more of an attempt by candidates to supply a collective judgement on the sources by highlighting similarities and differences between the sources as well as areas of consensus. Thank you for emphasizing this skill to your learners.

For Question 2, there was some improvement in answers this examination series with the wider historical debate featuring more prominently. However, in many responses this was restricted to an alternative interpretation randomly placed towards the end of the answer without much explanation. The examiners are looking for an awareness of the wider historical debate surrounding the issue in the question. These issues are all set out in the specification and any preparation for the examination should include study of the main developments in the historical debate with some understanding of why interpretations differ and how they have changed over time. Importantly, candidates are expected to deploy their contextual knowledge of the depth study to inform their discussion of the given interpretations. It was disappointing to see so many answers restricted to the material in the extracts and opportunities lost to gain credit for the deployment of proper contextual material. Discussions about how and why interpretations differ and change should not be based on speculation about an historian or an attempt to quantify how much research he/she might have conducted. Such attempts are unhelpful and add nothing to the debate.

## **Comments on individual questions/sections**

### **Option 1: The mid-Tudor crisis in Wales and England c.1529–1570**

#### **Part 1: Problems, threats and challenges c.1529–1553**

Although the specification explicitly mentions the fall of Thomas Cromwell and faction during the rule of Somerset and Northumberland, unfortunately, few candidates demonstrated the ability to contextualize the provided sources during their analysis and evaluation of them. However, when focusing on the provided interpretations in Question 2, candidates appeared to be more confident in discussing the extent to which Henry VIII planned the English Reformation.

### **Option 2: Royalty, rebellion and republic c.1625–1660**

#### **Part 1: The pressure on the monarchy and the drift to civil war c.1625–1642**

Most candidates contextualized the Grand Remonstrance in Source A and events in Ireland in Source B but were less successful in managing the attempted arrest of the Five members in Source C. There were some concerns regarding the use of the Julian calendar in Source B and the Gregorian calendar in Source C: examiners paid close attention to this in their analysis of the candidates' work, however, what emerged were many coherent responses that dealt with the events in Ireland and London and noted how pressured the period was becoming. An issue that did emerge here was some candidates' confusion over the respective roles of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, which may need some closer attention.

For Question 2, the wider historical debate about Charles I's attitudes and policies was usually identified with the religious policies associated with Laud widely blamed for the regime's unpopularity.

### **Option 3: Reform and protest in Wales and England c.1783–1848**

#### **Part 1: Radicalism and the fight for parliamentary reform c.1783–1832**

In answers to Question 1, the reaction of government to popular protest was usually contextualized appropriately by reference to Pitt's policies in Source A, the use of spies in Source B and the Six Acts in Source C.

The debate in Question 2 about the causes of working-class agitation was generally understood, with many candidates aware of the controversies about the extent of working-class consciousness and political radicalism.

### **Option 4: Politics and society in Wales and England c.1900–1939**

#### **Part 1: Politics, society and the war: Wales and England c.1900–1918**

For Question 1, candidates were able to show the context for source A – the Penrhyn strike and lockout, the formation of the Labour Party in Source B and the Tonypandy riots in Source C.

The wider historical debate in Question 2 – about the impact of the First World War – needed a suitable balance between positive and negative experiences as well as an appreciation of the different regional impacts.

### **Option 5: Religious reformation in Europe c.1500–1567**

#### **Part 1: The outbreak and spread of the reformation in Germany c.1500–1531**

Overall, candidates successfully identified the issue of Humanism in Source A, but many could not contextualize the work of Erasmus. Candidates were on surer ground in explaining the issue of indulgences in Source B, however, the exact sequence of Luther's meetings at Augsburg and Leipzig caused some confusion in discussions about Source C.

For the second question, the wider historical debate about the causes of the Peasants' War was generally well done but there were too many attempts at synthetic alternative interpretations.

### **Option 6: France in revolution c.1774–1815**

#### **Part 1: France: the causes and course of revolution c.1774–1792**

For Question 1, candidates were able to contextualize the extravagance of the royal family and place this within the concerns about the mounting government debt by the 1770s. Less successful were the attempts to place Source B in context; few knew much about the provincial assemblies and Hailes was too readily dismissed as a biased observer. Source C supplied plenty of scope to comment on the summoning of the Estates General and the process allowing every community to send a list of grievances.

Question 2 supplied an opportunity for candidates to deploy their knowledge of the work of the National Assembly and there were some good discussions of its perceived shortcomings.

### **Option 7: The crisis of the American Republic c.1840–1877**

#### **Part 1: Sectional differences and the road to civil war c.1840–1861**

The emphasis of Question 1 – on the impact of slavery on US politics in the period 1850–1857 – allowed candidates to focus on the problems caused by the war with Mexico, the attack on Sumner and the abolitionist campaign in the northern states. There were several opportunities to focus on the specific contexts of the Compromise in Source A, Bleeding Kansas in Source B, and the Scott case in Source C.

There were some good discussions seen in the responses to Question 2 about the historiography surrounding the causes of the civil war with some perceptive comments about the reasons why interpretations have changed and developed over time.

### **Option 8: Germany: Democracy and dictatorship c.1918–1945**

#### **Part 1: Weimar and its challenges c.1918–1933**

The context of Source A in Question 1 was sometimes misunderstood, with some candidates focusing on the Munich Putsch in 1923 instead of the circumstances of 1920. Analysis of Source B was more straightforward with most candidates able to contextualize the occupation of the Ruhr and hyperinflation. Source C afforded candidates the opportunity to discuss the aims and methods of Stresemann.

The responsibility of politicians for the rise of Hitler was the focal point of Question 2 and most candidates were able to supply an alternative interpretation, although work on how and why interpretations differ was less assured.

## Summary of key points

- While candidates are generally successful in discussing the wider context, more attention is needed on the specific context of the sources. This is date-specific, and the most successful responses focus on the exact, precise context of the given source.
- The strengths and limitations of the sources and their **value to an historian** should be the other main theme in the answer. This is not about the content of the source and what may or may not be missing: it should be meaningful comment about what is influencing the author of the source to say what they said at the time, and how they are saying it by reference to their language and tone.
- Although there was more of an attempt in 2023 to address the wider historical debate in Question 2, candidates should be encouraged to use their contextual knowledge and understanding of the depth study to discuss the interpretations in the given extracts. This approach is far more useful than speculative comments about an historian which have no factual basis.
- One trend, commented upon for several years now, has unfortunately continued in 2023. In answers to Question 2 some candidates are inventing synthetic interpretations based on an invented midpoint between the given extracts. Such attempts are rarely successful and should be discouraged. An alternative interpretation must be substantially different to the ones in the extracts to obtain credit.

# HISTORY

## General Certificate of Education

Summer 2023

### Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

#### UNIT 3 – BREADTH STUDIES

##### General Comments

This is the first year that the Unit 3 papers have returned to their usual format since the 2019 series – a choice between two questions covering smaller periods of one theme in Section A and a compulsory question on the other theme in Section B. However, unlike 2019, teachers and learners were informed in advance which theme would be in which section in this examination series. There is no evidence to suggest that candidates have suffered as a result of the return to the traditional format of this paper as the marks for Section A and Section B responses are broadly comparable.

There was much very impressive subject knowledge deployed across nearly all the options in this unit, often – but not always – in support of relevant analysis of the issues in the question set. The most highly rewarded responses were those that could evaluate the nuances between the issues being debated rather than just making simple comparative judgements.

However, concerns that were raised in the previous report on this unit still remain in evidence: there is a tendency for candidates to respond to these questions, either in Section A or Section B, by taking a leader-by-leader or government by government approach, which can often lead to narrative responses that do not fully analyse or evaluate the debate in the question. Not directly addressing the issue in the question, or fully covering the period required, is also an ongoing and unwanted trend among many candidates.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

###### Option 1: Wales: resistance, conquest and rebellion c.1240–1415

Though few scripts were seen, there was a lot of detailed and relevant knowledge of the period shown in the Section A questions; however, here, in this more focused section of the examination, several of the candidates failed to accurately address the date ranges within the questions, leaving out key events. This trend also bled into Section B – Question 3 – where coverage of the extended period, in several responses, indicated a weak grasp of the history across the full period.

###### Option 2: Poverty, protest and rebellion in Wales and England c.1485–1603

Much sound historical knowledge was deployed in this option. However, there tended to be rather a monarch-by-monarch approach across the paper (this was also evident in the approach adopted for the Tudor option in Unit 1).

While this chronological approach is a sound teaching method, it is unsuited to all types of questions, particularly in some of these where coverage of specific issues and date ranges are demanded. Instead, it would be preferable to see candidates fully engaging with the requirements of the specific questions. Further, somewhat unusually in this option, there was some misunderstanding of key terminology, for example “Catholic powers”.

### **Option 3: Reformation and discovery: Europe c.1492–1610**

Period coverage was an issue for the Section A questions attempted by the candidates in this option. Sometimes candidates missed a significant portion out, sometimes starting much earlier than the period in the question or carrying on later, indicating an uncertain grasp of some of the specifics. This trend was replicated in Section B, as its required coverage of 100 years’ history was, overall, lacking, with few attempts to tackle the beginning of the period, that is, the period prior to Luther’s initial revolt.

### **Option 4: Royalty, revolution and restoration in Wales and England, c.1603–1715**

Very few candidates were entered for this option; however, the prevalent concerns seen in the other options were also in evidence here. As elsewhere, candidates need to develop a more thematic approach, rather than relying on the chronology and an assumption that the issue evolved merely because time continued to elapse. This was especially the case with the Section B question in which the issue of the strength and stability of government throughout the period was never really engaged with.

### **Option 5: France: Ancien régime to Napoleon c. 1715–1815**

Question 2, on the monarchy’s financial problems, was an extremely popular Section A question, and overall, it was answered effectively. Responses to Question 1 (Louis XV’s challenges) tended to be stronger on foreign policy than issues with the parlements. However, as noted with many other options, coverage of the set period in Question 3 was a major issue: in this option, too few candidates made any mention of the period prior to the revolution.

### **Option 6: Parliamentary reform and protest in Wales and England, c.1780-1885**

While there was much detailed knowledge demonstrated in many responses, there were again issues with coverage. Unusually, this was especially the case in answers to both Section A questions, where either the first or second half of the period in the question were completely ignored. Conversely, there were some very perceptive answers to Question 3 where many candidates were aware of what trade unions did in this period and were able to gauge those unions’ success against a range of other protest movements.

### **Option 7: Social Change and reform in Wales and England c. 1890–1990**

In responses to both Question 1 and Question 2 there was a tendency to describe what each government did – chronologically – rather than debating the extent to which their actions were effective. Coverage of the period in the compulsory Section B question varied greatly between responses. A range of issues were discussed in Question 3; however, this was done with varying degrees of depth and confidence in the material.

### **Option 8: The American century c.1890–1990**

Responses to Question 1 often saw the later part of the period left out completely with focus just on the aftermath of the First World War.

In Question 2, there was a significant amount of confusion about which Cold War events took place in Asia, with a significant number of candidates writing about events in Europe and Latin America. Knowledge for Question 3 was better, and there were fewer apparent gaps in candidates' understanding. However, here, candidates tended to rely on throwing down as much knowledge about the events as they could muster, without effectively focusing on the significance of the various issues affecting civil rights for African Americans – as was required by the question.

### **Option 9: Changing leadership and society in Germany, c.1871–1989**

Please refer to Option 10: Changing leadership and society in Russia c.1881–1989

### **Option 10: Changing leadership and society in Russia c.1881–1989**

Despite the differing candidature, the handling of these last two options – on Germany and Russia – was virtually identical and encapsulated some of the issues raised earlier in this unit of the Examiners' Report on the summer series. Across both these options, there was a significant amount of knowledge shown by the candidates – some of it impressively detailed; however, the tendency to trawl, leader-by-leader, was ubiquitous in the scripts seen. This again led to narrative responses that did not effectively demonstrate analysis and evaluation. Finally, as with most of the other options, responses to Section B did not cover the period of time set. While it is important to stress that candidates are not expected to cover every year or decade of the period in the question, they are expected to demonstrate an understanding of relevant issues early on, relevant issues later on, and a few issues that are relevant in the intervening period.

### **Summary of key points**

- Candidates should ensure they are directly addressing the issues surrounding the debate in the question rather than writing what they can remember about the topic.
- As far as possible, responses in Section A and Section B on this unit need to cover more of the period of time specified in the question: there should not be gaps of, for example, five, ten, fifteen years when the question is asking about 15, 25, 35 years' history respectively.
- Analysing relevant issues rather than an unquestioned chronological approach is a much more effective response to many of these questions. Sometimes a chronological approach is justified, but it should not be the default response.
- Judgements throughout a response should evaluate issues clearly, balancing both strengths and limitations of an argument.

# HISTORY

## General Certificate of Education

Summer 2023

### Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

#### UNIT 4 – DEPTH STUDIES PART TWO

##### General Comments

For the source-based question, candidates are required to discuss the strengths and limitations of each source while also considering the specific and wider context in which they were produced. Further, they are expected to comment on the authorship and value to an historian studying the named event. While most candidates offered answers that dealt with parts of the task reasonably well, a noticeable number of them did not set the source material in their respective specific and wider contexts. Copying material from the sources is different from placing the sources within their context: candidates are expected to know what else was going on at the time of the sources' production, and to gauge the strengths and limitations, and the overall value of the sources (separately and cumulatively) to the historian studying the named issue. A number of candidates displayed remarkable depth of knowledge about the topic under consideration, however, in many cases this knowledge needed to be focused on the requirements of the question set. Some of the responses were, extremely long and this appeared to have an impact on the work presented for the essay question. While the time allotted to the sources is longer, this is mainly for the purpose of reading and annotating the sources, drawing links and contrasts and so forth. Once this is done, approximately 45 minutes is sufficient time to provide a full answer to these first questions.

The second stage of the paper – the essay – requires candidates' consideration of several key concepts, for example causation, consequence and continuity. They are expected to engage in a debate on one of the two specific questions set and reach a substantiated judgement on that question. In this series, many candidates did not address the key issue and instead sought to write all they knew about the topic under consideration. As such they did not attain higher bands. Effective answers provided relevant arguments and selected appropriate content to address the issue. Candidates are clearly well versed in the "facts" of the periods studied but often less skilful in adapting that knowledge to the requirements of the question set.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

###### **Option 1: The mid-Tudor crisis in Wales and England c.1529–1570**

###### **Part 2: Challenges facing Mary and Elizabeth c.1553–1570**

In the source-based question, context, both wider and specific was extremely limited. Strengths and weaknesses of the sources was fairly well done although Source C gave many candidates problems (even getting mixed up with the names). In Source B, few mentioned the Royal Prerogative and there was some misunderstanding of the source content and attributions (one candidate was convinced that a factory had been set up on Ynys Enlli).

Of the two essay questions, Question 2 was by far the most popular; however, there was a surprising lack of factual support in both essays. In the first essay question, candidates had very little knowledge on Paget and/or Gardener, but they were more assured when considering what argument could be put in place to counter the significance of their factional conflict as the most significant threat faced by Mary, for example the swing back to Catholicism, Wyatt, and even economic challenges. Question 3 was not a popular choice, and it was not done well overall. Knowledge was patchy and few considered counterarguments emerged.

**Option 2: Royalty, rebellion and republic c.1625–1660**  
**Part 2: Civil War, Commonwealth and Protectorate c.1642–1660**

Most candidates handled Question 1 efficiently, commenting on the strengths and limitations of the Sources A and B, with many also engaging with the wider and specific historical context of these two. Source C, however, was a different story. Very few candidates noted the Scottish Presbyterian connection and its relevance to the question set. Unfortunately, candidates preferred to comment on the value and “usefulness” for the historian in general rather than on the specific aspect noted in the question.

In the essays, Question 2 was rarely attempted, and when it was the responses tended to be undeveloped. This question was drawn almost verbatim from the specification, and centres are encouraged to seek help from WJEC if they are having difficulties resourcing it. For Question 3, a few candidates appeared confused as to what the question wanted and threw into the answer everything they knew about Cromwell. However, most attempted to offer a debate on whether Cromwell was to blame for the problems he faced between 1649 and 1658, and there were some excellent answers offering accurate and relevant knowledge.

**Option 3: Reform and protest in Wales and England c.1783–1848**  
**Part 2: Protests and campaigns for social reform c.1832–1848**

Overall, the sources were handled satisfactorily. Several responses drew rather too much from the sources and there was a clear absence of both wider and specific context. Few included details of what the Chartist wanted to gain in Source A, and in Source B knowledge of the tolls and turnpike trusts and the general social conditions which formed the background to the Rebecca Riots was limited.

Of the essays, Question 2 was the more popular, but not necessarily the most accomplished. All too often there was a large section provided on policies, but with little accompanying analysis of those policies’ successes in achieving their aims. Some points were outside the parameters of the question (for example, the Mines and Public Health Acts). For Question 3, most candidates saw it as an opportunity to provide coverage of all Peel’s policies without tailoring their responses to the requirements of the question set. Those who argued Peel did more harm than good usually endeavoured to provide balance, weighing up the benefits of Tamworth and his economic policies against the deep divisions emerging in the Tory/Conservative Party.

**Option 4: Politics and society in Wales and England c.1900–1939**  
**Part 1: Economic and social challenges in Wales and England c.1918–1939**

For the most part the sources in Question 1 were deployed quite effectively. Most candidates were aware of the wider context of the sources and there was some useful analysis, for example many candidates noted the misogynistic tone of Source C and reflected this accordingly in their responses.

In the essays, Question 2 was infrequently chosen, and those who chose it enjoyed differing degrees of success. The suffering and hardship evident in areas of traditional heavy industry were frequently cited, but the response of governments to this was handled less assuredly. Question 3, though much more popular, also offered a wide range of responses. Many candidates, it seems, knew about female suffrage, but there was little real knowledge shown about the changes experienced by women in their everyday lives, particularly after the war.

### **Option 5: Religious reformation in Europe c.1500–1567**

#### **Part 2: The spread of Protestantism and counter-reformation c.1531–1564**

Many candidates considered the three sources at face value rather than considering them in context or considering their strengths and weaknesses for an historian studying Calvin. Few candidates considered the motives for the creators of Sources A and B, and yet it is often the first thing they point out about Source C because it is by Calvin himself.

In the essays, for Question 2, there were two approaches taken by candidates – to consider the strengths and limitations of the impact of the Schmalkaldic League, or to balance the impact of the League against other factors influencing the Lutheran Reformation. Both approaches are equally valid, but the candidates who offered a more simplistic analysis (that is, this impact was important, this impact was not important) struggled to rise as far up the mark bands as those who took a more nuanced approach. For Question 3, a wide range of factors was considered besides the Council of Trent. A number of responses barely mentioned the Council, while others went into quite some detail about its work. Some responses limited themselves just to talking about the Council of Trent without considering alternatives at all. The best responses to this question were those that balanced the pros and cons of each response to the Protestant threat.

### **Option 6: France in revolution c.1774–1815**

#### **Part 2: France: Republic and Napoleon c.1792–1815**

In Question 1, sources were for the most part well evaluated and wider contexts were routinely noted. Identifying the specific contexts proved more of a challenge. There was evidence of over analysing the tone of a source to the exclusion of its strengths and limitations. Lower-scoring candidates continue to copy large portions of each source. In the essays, Question 2 was the least popular and, for the most part, it was not well answered. Responses tended to focus on a narrative of the Directory period rather than focusing on the wording of question set. For Question 3, some useful knowledge on Napoleon's rule was included, but it was not effectively deployed to answer the question, with responses frequently slipping into narrative accounts.

### **Option 7: The crisis of the American Republic c.1840–1877**

#### **Part 2: Civil War and Reconstruction c.1861–1877**

In general, responses to the sources were good, though candidates were much better at including references to wider as opposed to specific context in their answers. In Source B for example, too many were drawn into recounting Harriet Hernandez's testimony while failing to consider the implications of the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan in the context of reconstruction.

In the essays, Question 2 was the more popular. Here, the knowledge of the events of Gettysburg was frequently detailed – though occasionally slipped into narrative. Most candidates were able to see the battle in the context of alternative reasons for determining the outcome of the war, and, in general, the question was well answered.

In Question 3, too many responses simply focused on the emancipation proclamation. While they – frequently – showed remarkable depth of knowledge, this was often to the exclusion of other policies enacted by Lincoln which could be considered equally significant.

**Option 8: Germany: Democracy and dictatorship c.1918–1945**  
**Part 2: Nazi Germany c.1933–1945**

In the source-based question, few candidates addressed the reasons why Germany was defeated. In fact, factual knowledge was a little disappointing this year. Few seemed aware of the context of the war or of its timeline, the D-day landings barely got a mention in Source C, and a surprising number did not know about Rommel. Mentions of the wider and/or specific context of the war were rare.

While Question 2, was the most popular essay choice, few candidates explained what the Nazis' social aims were, instead describing the policies and evaluating success through the prism of those policies' popularity with the people. Many candidates insisted on bringing in workers and economic policy to the social policies – admittedly Volksgemeinschaft could encompass different economic and social classes living together – but very few made this connection. Many gave more attention to economic rather than social policies and there was a huge focus on Jewish policy rather than racial policy per se.

In Question 3, many candidates did not focus on economic policies about the curtailing of opposition but on economic policy to do with war deficit, financing and Speer. A substantial number failed to connect lack of opposition with Terror and/or propaganda but said it was the social policies that stopped opposition, which led to a long and detailed narrative of social policies.

**Summary of key points**

- Candidates must ensure that they provide an answer which reflects an understanding of both the specific and wider context of the event and source they are analysing and evaluating.
- They must ensure that both strengths and limitations of sources are considered – in addition to their value to an historian – for the specific purpose of the question set.
- Each candidate must strive to ensure their response to the essay question chosen is, in fact, a response to that question. Examination questions are not interchangeable and cannot be remoulded to fit a pre-learned argument or line of thought.
- While detailed knowledge is necessary, that knowledge on its own is not that useful. Knowledge that is analysed and evaluated and which is carefully deployed to answer a specific question is the knowledge that will attain the higher bands of the mark scheme.

## **HISTORY**

### **General Certificate of Education**

**Summer 2023**

### **Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**

## **UNIT 5 – NON-EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT**

### **General Comments**

Based on samples and reports received from moderators and work reviewed by the Principal Moderator, it is possible to say that the overall standard of the work this year was better than that seen in 2022. This was the first year of the new NEA cycle, and most centres chose questions from the WJEC suggested questions document, with a dominant focus on twentieth-century topics in evidence. We hope that the focus on the NEA in the 2022 Professional Learning programme, along with the updated NEA guidance (available via the GCE History pages on the WJEC website) has had a positive impact and will continue to do so.

Overall, the moderators' assessment of the NEAs was more closely aligned with the teachers' and there was less scaling of marks. That said, there appears to be some continuing misapplication of AO3 marks, with many centres over-rewarding their candidates for this assessment objective.

### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

The range and variety of topics presented by individual candidates continues to surprise and even enthral. Where there are particular interests that candidates wish to investigate, the individual assignments are a particularly good opportunity for them to develop this interest. One cautionary note is that suggested topics must fulfil some strict criteria: the debate must be credible and fully supported by a range of contemporary sources (allowances can be made for very early titles where contemporary sources are scarce but there are sources within a close parameter of the events – perhaps a century or so); and there must be an issue to investigate that has a number of different interpretations (three is the required minimum). Among the most interesting of the titles submitted were those on an early Chinese emperor, the Vikings, and medieval Wales.

### **Summary of key points**

- The issue which is causing colleagues on the moderation team the most concern is that relating to Artificial Intelligence. Work submitted by a candidate and declared as their own work must be their own work. Clear evidence emerged this summer that some of the work produced had been generated by AI. This was identified and the work re-marked accordingly.

- There continues to be evidence – as noted in 2022 and before – that a number of centres are providing guidance for candidates by which to structure their responses. This runs counter to the instruction that the NEA must be an individual piece of work.
- Some centres continue to overmark the work of their candidates, with too many candidates achieving Band 5 and Band 6 in AO3 when they had not fulfilled the criteria of those bands. To reach these, candidates must offer valid reasons as to how and why an issue had been interpreted in different ways and to discuss why different interpretations would be formed based on the evidence in the sources used.
- Despite the clear instruction that a minimum of six contemporary sources must be used in the completion of the NEA, some centres awarded candidates high marks when only five contemporary sources were used. Please note the instruction in the NEA guidance that **NEAs that do not include the minimum number of contemporary sources cannot be deemed to have deployed source materials appropriately and so cannot access Band 5 or above of AO2**. Sources need to be clearly identified and numbered sequentially, with an attribution below which indicates what the source is and when it was produced. Please refer to the [NEA centre support document](#) for more detail on this.
- In some centres, non-contemporary sources were accepted, and these must not be. The work of some candidates contained memoirs and interviews conducted many years after the events. Maps and graphs from contemporary textbooks were also included by some candidates.
- One again, as was noted in 2022, far too many moderated assignments lacked coherence, and sources were not integrated into the response. Too many followed a pattern (or template) which consisted of a brief overview with some reference to different historians, then a list of half a dozen sources followed by an evaluation and a reference to how it might have been of use to an historian before moving on to the next source without any coherent link. In many instances the only reference to the question appeared in a concluding paragraph.
- NEAs must be concise – fewer than 4001 words. It is required that a word count (minus the sources) be provided at the end of the exercise along with a bibliography. All NEA assignments need to be annotated by those assessing them at each centre. This does not need to be extensive but should be clearly and concisely deployed throughout the NEA.



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