

GCSE Examiners' Report

History

GCSE

Summer 2025

© WJEC CBAC Ltd. 2025



Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner WJEC

Contents

	Page
Executive summary	5
Unit 1: Studies in Depth – Wales and the wider perspective	6
Unit 2: Studies in Depth – History with a European/world focus	9
Unit 3: Thematic Studies from a broad historical perspective	12
Unit 4: Working as an historian	16
Supporting you – useful contacts and links	18

Executive Summary

AO1 remains a strength in Units 1 and 2, particularly in popular topics such as *Depression, War and Recovery*, and *The USA: A Nation of Contrasts*. Most candidates demonstrated secure recall and communication of key events and features. In Unit 2, however, many responses lacked the balance and depth needed to reach higher bands, with over-reliance on source content, particularly in Q4. In Q7 Unit 3, most candidates addressed all three historical periods, but many showed imbalance or failed to include relevant Welsh context, limiting marks. Unit 4 responses were generally well structured, with clear communication and use of historical sources.

AO2 performance was mixed. In Unit 2 Q5, most candidates produced two-sided responses, typically achieving Band 2, while some reached Band 3 through partial analysis; well-substantiated judgements were needed for Band 4. In Unit 1, Q3 responses often lacked focus on significance, particularly in *Depression, War and Recovery*. In Q4, some candidates identified a single link rather than exploring connections between all three features. Those who examined links between all three, supporting their points with contextual knowledge reached the highest Band. Unit 3 showed improvement in Q2, with many candidates accurately identifying similarities and differences linked to the source. In Q5, attempts to explain were noted, and in Q6, most addressed significance to some extent; however, in both questions, the quality of contextual support remained the key factor in achieving higher bands. For Q7, limited or imbalanced coverage of the three periods meant few candidates achieved Band 4, with omission of a period capping responses at Band 2. In Unit 4, Part (a) responses should include a clear focused conclusion.

AO3 outcomes varied. In Unit 1 and 2, Q1, most candidates extracted source content appropriately, although some struggled with the analysis of visual sources. In Unit 1 Q2, few fully addressed both source and attribution alongside contextual knowledge. For Unit 2 Q3 while many candidates offered basic judgments on the purpose of the source, few developed these ideas or addressed intended audience and context in sufficient depth to access Band 3 for AO3. For Q4, many candidates engaged with source content and attempted to evaluate utility, often reaching Band 2. However, evaluations were sometimes mechanistic, imbalanced, or lacked sufficient discussion of attribution and audience. In Unit 3 Q2, many candidates accurately linked similarities and differences to sources, though some responses lacked precision. In Unit 4, understanding attribution was essential for higher marks, yet some responses remained generic.

AO4 remains the most challenging assessment objective. In Unit 1 Q5, most candidates engaged with the given interpretation and attempted to offer an alternative. However, some responses reflected limited understanding of historical interpretation, with a few candidates questioning the validity of the author's view due to their lack of direct experience of the events. These responses would benefit from clearer modelling of how interpretations are formed. In Unit 4 Part (b), candidates should identify the two interpretations, explain why they differ, and support their points using the source material. They must consider how factors like the historian's perspective, context, and available sources shape these interpretations.

Key areas for improvement:

- AO1: Stronger integration of specific and relevant Welsh context is still needed in Unit 3.
- AO2: More consistent use of comparative and conceptual language to strengthen analysis.
- AO3: Clearer distinction between inference and paraphrasing with more precise contextual integration would enhance source evaluation.
- AO4: Improved understanding of how interpretations are shaped by authorship, context, and available sources would support more evaluative responses.

HISTORY

GCSE

Summer 2025

UNIT 1: STUDIES IN DEPTH – WALES AND THE WIDER PERSPECTIVE

Overview of the Unit

- The unit offers a choice of four Studies in Depth, each exploring a Welsh perspective within a broader historical context:
 - 1A. The Elizabethan Age, 1558–1603,
 - 1B. Radicalism and Protest, 1810–1848
 - 1C. Depression, War and Recovery, 1930–1951
 - 1D. Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951–1979
- The majority of candidates are examined on the Depression, War and Recovery option. The Elizabethan Age is the second most chosen, while only a small number of candidates opt for the Radicalism and Austerity options.
- In Question 1, candidates are required to analyse the content of Sources A and B only. No own knowledge should be included, as this question assesses AO3 exclusively.
- Candidates must explain the validity of the source in Question 2. This should be done in relation to its content, authorship, date, audience, and purpose, with evidence of detailed use of the attribution required to achieve the highest marks. In order to reach Band 3 marks for AO3, candidates must include accurate understanding of the strengths and limitations of the source in relation to the question's focus, which must include discussion of the source's attribution/ authorship.
- In Question 3, candidates must explain the significance of an issue, supporting their explanation with appropriate historical context. Primary focus should be on analysing significance, as the question is weighted more heavily towards AO2 than AO1.
- Question 4 requires candidates to choose three features from a list of four and explain the connections between each of the selected features. Primary focus should be on explaining the connections, as this question is weighted very heavily towards AO2 rather than AO1.
- Question 5 assesses candidates' ability to analyse historical interpretations. They should evaluate the extent to which they agree with the given interpretation by analysing its content and attribution. Key factors include the author, nature, date, purpose, and intended audience of the interpretation. Candidates must also propose alternative interpretations. Responses should avoid generic comments and instead provide specific, detailed analysis of the authorship and perspective.
- A number of candidates did not attempt Questions 3 and 4, particularly in the Depression, War and Recovery option. While a number of candidates achieved high AO1 marks, they lacked focus on and underperformed in AO2 on this option in particular.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 Most candidates handled this question well, demonstrating a sound understanding of the sources and achieving Band 2 marks. Candidates should ensure their points are concise and avoid using additional pages unnecessarily, as this may impact the time available for higher-mark questions. Encouragingly, very few candidates included own knowledge, correctly focusing on source extraction. However, as in previous years, some candidates struggled with the analysis of visual sources, resulting in imbalanced responses and limiting their ability to achieve full marks.
- Q.2 Most candidates were able to explain the validity of the source, discussing its content and demonstrating background knowledge of the issues presented. While many responses showed a good understanding of the source's strengths and some valid consideration of its weaknesses, few candidates fully addressed both the source and its attribution in conjunction with appropriate contextual knowledge to reach a well-supported judgement.
- Q.3 A significant number of candidates did not attempt this question. In the Depression, War and Recovery option, many who did respond showed detailed knowledge but failed to focus on the significance of the events discussed, resulting in Band 2 marks for AO2. A stronger emphasis on significance was needed. Some candidates misunderstood the question, discussing policies during the Depression rather than the policy of appeasement. In the Elizabethan option, more candidates successfully focused on AO2, addressing the significance of Parliament, though AO1 marks were generally lower, suggesting less knowledge of the topic. Candidates who provided a full explanation of at least three relevant issues and focused clearly on their significance achieved the highest marks across all options.
- Q.4 As in previous years, most candidates attempted to explain the links between the chosen features, as required. However, some focused on identifying a single link rather than exploring connections between all three features. On the Depression, War and Recovery paper, many responses linked all topics to the Depression or factors of it, which limited progression beyond Band 2 for AO2. Candidates who explained connections between all three chosen features accessed Band 3 and Band 4 marks. High-scoring responses clearly identified links, supported by precise factual knowledge and appropriate historical context. Many candidates still focused too heavily on sharing knowledge of their chosen features rather than explaining the connections. Candidates should approach this question with a clear focus on explaining the links, as marks are heavily weighted towards AO2.
- Q.5 Strong responses were seen across all options. Most candidates discussed the given interpretation with reference to its authorship and offered an alternative interpretation. They explained the interpretation using its content and wider contextual knowledge. A small number of candidates did not complete their answer, and some responses appeared rushed, indicating that timing remains an issue for some. A worrying number of candidates attempted to challenge the validity of the source's authorship by arguing that the author could not form an interpretation of the issue because they were not present during the events in question. AO4 was addressed with varying success, but many candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of the key feature, achieving Band 3 or Band 4 marks for AO1.

Handwriting and Accessibility

The handwriting of several candidates continues to be untidy and difficult to read. An increasing number of candidates also write in very small script. Where handwriting is notably difficult to follow, it may be worth investigating whether the candidate is eligible to use a word processor for their studies and examinations and encouraging them to make use of that technology if appropriate.

HISTORY

GCSE

Summer 2025

UNIT 2: STUDIES IN DEPTH – HISTORY WITH A EUROPEAN / WORLD FOCUS

Overview of the Unit

- The unit offers a choice of four Studies in Depth – each considering history in a European or wider world context. Centres choose one Study in Depth from the following:
2A. Russia in Transition, 1905-1924
2B. The USA: A Nation of Contrasts, 1910-1929
2C. Germany in Transition, 1919-1939
2D. Changes in South Africa, 1948-1994
- The vast majority of candidates are examined on The USA: A Nation of Contrasts, 1910-1929 and Germany in Transition, 1919-1939 with a small cohort entered for Russia in Transition, 1905-1924 and Changes in South Africa, 1948-1994
- In Question 1 candidates are required to analyse an historical source and demonstrate their own knowledge of the period by describing its key features in context.
- In Question 2 candidates are required to demonstrate their own knowledge and understanding of a key feature.
- In Question 3 candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding through analysing and evaluating an historical source in order to explain its purpose.
- In Question 4 candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in order to provide a judgement about the usefulness of two sources to an historian, having analysed and evaluated the content and authorship of each source before reaching a judgement.
- In Question 5 candidates are required to use their own knowledge to debate an issue, looking at both sides of the argument, and provide a reasoned judgement upon the set question.
- The handwriting of several candidates continues to be untidy and difficult to read. An increasing number of candidates also write in very small script. Where handwriting is notably difficult to follow, it may be worth investigating whether the candidate is eligible to use a word processor for their studies and examinations and encouraging them to make use of that technology if appropriate.
- Most candidates were able to finish all questions in the time provided. Where they did not, it may be worthwhile offering some additional timing support to such candidates. A lengthy response to a low-tariff question is not a good use of time.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 Most candidates successfully analysed the source within the correct historical context and identified several valid points from the source, thus accessing Band 2 full marks for AO3. Many lower ability candidates were able to utilise the source through its content only which allowed them to access Band 1. Some candidates on the USA paper did not quite grasp that the picture was showing the problems within farming juxtaposed with the growth of industry. Even on the Germany paper where the picture of the soldiers taking the oath of loyalty might be perceived as more accessible, a minority of candidates were not always able to show accurate analysis for Band 2 AO3.

Unfortunately, a minority of candidates did not provide any reference to the source and, as such, were unable to be credited any AO3 marks. For AO1, many candidates accessed marks in Band 1, bringing in their own relevant knowledge related to the question set. Responses on the Russia and South Africa papers tended to be weaker. Some candidates demonstrated impressive knowledge and were awarded full marks. Overall, however, this was a relatively well-answered question that used both the source and candidates' own knowledge.

- Q.2 Overall, nearly all candidates were able to attempt this question; the majority accessed Band 2 by partially describing the issue at hand. Across the options, most candidates developed at least one issue. On the USA paper some candidates began with an opening paragraph outlining the causes of immigration – this will have lost them valuable time, and consequently marks. As predicted on the Germany paper, there were quite a few references to the consolidation of power in 1933. On the South Africa paper, candidates tended to describe what apartheid was, instead of focusing on the ending of apartheid. However, many candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge and Band 3 answers were not uncommon with some candidates demonstrating very detailed knowledge which was well developed.
- Q.3 Nearly all candidates attempted this question, although very few managed to reach Band 3 for either assessment objective. Many candidates partially analysed the source and reached a judgement on purpose, i.e. 'to get young Germans to support Hitler' on the Germany paper, or 'to gain support for prohibition' on the USA paper, but very few developed this further with developed reasons for their production. Those candidates who accessed Band 3 on AO3 identified the target audience of the source and gave a more developed explanation as to its purpose. For AO1, many demonstrated some knowledge of the historical context on the topics. Although most responses indicated an accurate understanding of the historical context in relation to the source, they also lacked balance and/or detail to achieve Band 3. On the USA paper some candidates tended focus too heavily on the problems associated with the implementation of prohibition, rather than why prohibition was introduced. On the South Africa paper, very few candidates had good contextual knowledge about the 'Freedom Charter'. Overall, to gain higher marks candidates need more specific historical context and more developed explanations of the purpose of the source, focusing on the intended audience and the circumstances of the source's existence.
- Q.4 Overall, many candidates accessed Band 2 for AO3 as they successfully engaged with the content of both sources whilst attempting an evaluating the utility of the attributions; many were able to analyse the usefulness of the newspaper article and the picture on the USA paper, and the relative utility of Mein Kampf and the political cartoon on the Germany paper, although some candidates did not realise it was referencing the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Few candidates accessed Band 3 as they did not fully engage with the attribution and audience, and then did not arrive at a substantiated judgment. Some candidates accessed Band 2 by discussing the utility of the sources in a mechanistic way; they made some valid comments as to the utility of the sources but did not make the substantiated judgements that were seen in Band 3 responses. Nearly all candidates offered a judgement on which source was most useful, but in many cases justifications for their choice were often weak. Sometimes there was an imbalance in the evaluation of the sources, with not enough attention given to both sources. Marks gained for AO1 continues to be somewhat disappointing overall with few candidates bringing in enough of their own knowledge beyond the content of each source; thus, many candidates failed to achieve beyond Band 1. It is recommended that candidates provide two clear and detailed factors that support the content and the provenance of the sources. This will enable them to achieve higher marks for AO1.

Across all the optional papers, some candidates offered detailed knowledge of the key feature in the question, but many others did not develop their understanding of the relevant context at AO1. On the South Africa paper for example, candidates tended to focus on the role of Nelson Mandela, instead of the changes to the apartheid system under Botha and de Klerk. Overall, candidates must demonstrate greater understanding of the historical context of the sources and offer a more developed explanation of the authorship to progress further up the mark bands.

- Q.5 Most candidates showed some contextual knowledge to support the key feature in the question, but some of the weaker candidates did not develop a response that directly answered the question set e.g. on the USA paper some candidates mentioned mass production but then proceeded to discuss the economic collapse. On the South Africa paper a significant number of candidates could not explain the impact of the education policies, while on the Russia paper the counter argument tended to be weaker. This resulted in imbalanced and/or weak judgments being applied, with basic or partial analysis of the key issue. Many candidates, however, demonstrated some very impressive knowledge and were awarded with full marks in AO1. Most candidates produced a two-sided response thus accessing Band 2 for AO2, many however, were able to access Band 3 through a partial analysis of a range of factors. Some went on to reach a well substantiated judgement, which is essential to achieve Band 4 in AO2. In a small minority of cases, the essay question was not attempted at all which may suggest some candidates would benefit from better time management skills. With reference to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG), candidates generally scored well, if and when they had written enough relevant information.

HISTORY

GCSE

Summer 2025

UNIT 3: THEMATIC STUDIES FROM A BROAD HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Overview of the Unit

- Unit 3 offers four thematic options: Changes in Crime and Punishment, c.1500 to the present day; Changes in Health and Medicine, c.1340 to the present day; The Development of Warfare, c.1250 to the present day; and Changes in Patterns of Migration, c.1500 to the present day.
- The majority of candidates are assessed on the Crime and Punishment and Health and Medicine options, while a smaller number are entered for the Warfare and Migration topics.
- Each option requires candidates to engage with key second-order historical concepts, including continuity, change, cause, consequence, significance, similarity, and difference.
- This year, there have been many strong responses, with a significant number of candidates demonstrating clear knowledge and understanding of patterns of change and continuity over time.
- The three assessment objectives assessed in this unit are:
 - AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied.
 - AO2: Explain and analyse historical events and periods using second-order concepts.
 - AO3: Analyse, evaluate and use sources (contemporary to the period) to make substantiated judgements.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 This question was generally well-answered. Most candidates were able to recall all or most of the required information, and very few failed to respond to all four parts of the question. However, some candidates lost marks due to a lack of specificity in their answers. Responses were sometimes too general — for example, referring to “the King” rather than “King Charles I” or “influenza” rather than “Spanish Flu” — which limited the accuracy and precision needed for full credit.
- Q.2 This question asks candidates to identify one similarity and one difference between two sources. There was a noticeable improvement this year, with evidence that many centres had focused on the recommended exam technique. As a result, most candidates were able to provide one clearly defined similarity and one clearly defined difference, accurately linking each to the relevant source. This approach led to the most successful responses.

However, a number of candidates continue to lose marks for various reasons:

- Most candidates were able to point out the similarities and differences in the sources. There were still some candidates who wrote too much.
- Some go into unnecessary depth by describing the content of the sources in detail before identifying the similarity and difference, which is not required.
- Some candidates focus on describing the sources rather than directly identifying the similarities and differences between them.

- A number rely too heavily on their own knowledge rather than using evidence from the sources, despite the question specifically requiring source-based comparison.
- Some responses fail to clearly name or identify the sources being used, which weakens the clarity and structure of their answers.
- Others simply paraphrase the wording of the question, for example: “Sources B and C are different because they show changes in how enforcement of law and order has changed over time, without offering a specific comparison.

Q.3 This question requires a descriptive response and was generally answered well. As in 2024, most candidates demonstrated sufficient knowledge to reach Band 2. Very few failed to gain any marks. However, relatively few candidates achieved Band 3, largely because their answers lacked the detailed description required by the higher band descriptors.

In Crime and Punishment, many candidates achieved Band 2 by identifying heresy and referring to Mary I, with stronger Band 3 responses including named individuals or showing broader understanding by mentioning other monarchs. In Health and Medicine, most reached Band 2 by describing the theory of the four humours, but few attained Band 3 as they lacked depth or references to key figures such as Hippocrates or Galen. In Warfare, many candidates achieved Band 1 or 2 by showing basic awareness of press gangs, though some responses lost focus by describing recruitment during the First World War which meant answers lacked relevance and specific detail on the correct time period. In Migration, most candidates reached Band 2 by citing the Potato Famine, but answers often lacked detailed explanation or shifted towards immigration rather than emigration, limiting access to higher bands.

Q.4 This question requires a descriptive answer. As in 2024, most candidates demonstrated sufficient knowledge to achieve Band 2. Very few candidates failed to gain any marks. However, relatively few reached Band 3, largely because they did not fully describe the issue in the level of detail required by the band descriptors. However, the quality of responses was more varied across the four thematic studies.

In Crime and Punishment, most candidates achieved Band 1 or Band 2 by identifying community service as an alternative to prison. However, many answers lacked specific details such as the date of introduction or typical punishment hours, limiting progression to Band 3. In Health and Medicine, most candidates reached Band 2 by describing aspects of Marie Curie’s work, though inaccuracies were common—such as the mistaken belief that she invented the X-ray. Few responses contained the detailed and accurate knowledge needed for Band 3, like her discoveries of radium and polonium or her mobile X-ray units during the First World War. In Warfare, many candidates achieved Band 1 or 2 by showing basic understanding of nuclear weapons development post-1945. Stronger Band 3 responses included detailed points on the hydrogen bomb, Cold War arms race, and nuclear testing. Some candidates focused on the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which fell outside the question’s timeframe and limited marks. In Migration, most candidates scored Band 2 by referencing the Windrush generation. Those reaching Band 3 provided broader context, citing Brexit or the Rivers of Blood speech. Some responses lost focus by discussing emigration, such as the £10 passage scheme to Australia, which was not relevant and limited their marks.

- Q.5 To reach Band 2 for AO1 and Band 3 for AO2, candidates were expected to provide specific references to the set Welsh historical site enquiry, rather than relying on general knowledge or broad explanations. While many candidates attempted to explain rather than simply describe, a large number still failed to develop their answers around the question of why in sufficient detail. Instead, many responses remained descriptive, lacking clear reasoning or analysis, which limited most to Band 1 or low Band 2. Although some candidates did reach Band 2 for AO1 and Band 3 for AO2, very few achieved Band 4, primarily due to a lack of detailed historical context and fully developed explanations that addressed the question's focus.

In Crime and Punishment, most candidates achieved Band 2 for AO1 by providing specific examples. Band 2 and 3 responses often included reasons such as ineffective policing and the nature of areas like 'China' facilitating crime, but many remained descriptive, restricting their marks. Few provided the detailed reasoning needed for Band 4. In Health and Medicine, answers mostly gave general descriptions of public health improvements without Cardiff-specific examples, resulting in most candidates remaining below Band 3. In Warfare, responses tended to describe changes rather than explain the reasons for the changes, limiting candidates from reaching Bands 3 or 4. For Migration, many candidates scored Band 2 or 3 by discussing Michael D. Jones and cultural or religious motivations for migration to Patagonia, but fewer reached Band 4 due to a lack of multiple reasons and detailed support.

- Q.6 There were few candidates who failed to access at least Band 1 for AO1. For AO2 most candidates also made some attempt to analyse the significance of the set issue but, as with Question 5, it was the quality of contextual support that differentiated lower band responses from the fuller analysis that is required for Bands 3 and 4.

In Crime and Punishment, most candidates showed understanding of Robert Peel's role in developing the Metropolitan Police, with many achieving Band 2 or 3. However, limited detail and range of reasons prevented most from reaching Band 4, which requires thorough and well-supported explanations. On the Health and Medicine option this was the least attempted question. Many candidates wrote about other figures like Fleming or Lister rather than focusing on Chadwick. When Chadwick was addressed, responses tended to be descriptive and lacked depth, resulting in few Band 3 or 4 marks. In Warfare, many answers discussed general naval developments or other military topics rather than focusing, specifically on the Tudor navy. Those who did well identified key Tudor monarchs—Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I—and explained their naval contributions, but many responses remained descriptive, limiting Band 3 or 4 achievement. In Migration, candidates often lacked detail on the Puritans' significance to the United States, with some focusing instead on the Founding Fathers. Most failed to clearly link Puritan influence to key contributions like education and institution founding, and the majority did not reach Band 2 for AO1 due to insufficient specific examples.

- Q.7 It was clear that most candidates understood the requirement to cover all three historical periods, but there was often an imbalance in coverage. This year, pupils tended to focus more heavily on the medieval and early modern periods, with many responses lacking the detailed focus required for the modern period. While some candidates did include Welsh examples across all three periods, a significant number did not offer specific Welsh context, which limited AO1 marks to Band 2 (2 marks). To reach higher marks for AO1, candidates need to ensure they include clear and relevant Welsh examples from across the time periods. Although some responses demonstrated a good understanding of variation and change over time, relatively few achieved Band 4 for AO2, often due to the lack of balance across all three eras.

Candidates who did not address all three time periods were capped at Band 2 for AO2. However, in contrast to previous years, timing appeared to be less of an issue, with more candidates managing to complete their responses more effectively. For SPaG, the majority of candidates achieved 3 or 4 marks, demonstrating generally accurate spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

In Crime and Punishment, many candidates achieved Band 2 or 3, though AO2 marks were often restricted by a descriptive focus on types of crime rather than an analysis of causes; those who addressed factors such as heresy, population growth, technological developments, and terrorism across all three time periods were more likely to reach higher bands. Welsh context was commonly included and, when well-integrated, supported Band 3 or 4 in AO1. In Health and Medicine, most candidates showed strong AO1 knowledge—particularly on the NHS, Betsi Cadwaladr, and Aneurin Bevan—but few reached Band 4 in AO2, often due to limited evaluation over time and insufficient detail on how changes affected patient care; Welsh examples were frequent in the modern period but rarer in the medieval, narrowing the scope of AO1 evidence. In Warfare, candidates often handled medieval religious causes like the Crusades effectively, but weaker coverage of the industrial period hindered AO2 progression; those who analysed continuity and change across time periods were more successful, though few provided Welsh context across all three periods, capping AO1 marks for many at Band 3. In Migration, higher band responses offered thoughtful analysis of immigration’s positive impact using well-chosen examples, but many focused instead on immigrant experiences rather than outcomes, limiting AO2 to Band 1 or 2; however, Welsh context—especially references to Italian immigrants and the South Wales ice cream trade—was widespread and helped support AO1 marks.

UNIT 4: WORKING AS AN HISTORIAN

Overview of the Unit

The overall quality of work remained consistent with previous years.

- Most centres chose the NEA exercises produced by the board. Most of the work was handwritten, however there was an increase in the number of word-processed pieces.
- Overall, work was of a reasonable and sensible length. Centres that adhered to the recommended time limit for the 'write up' succeeded in producing more focussed and relevant answers.
- There was an increase in the number of centres where additional samples had to be requested. Centres are reminded that if a candidate who has not completed both parts of the NEA assignment is selected for the sample, it should be replaced by an alternative folder of a candidate who has completed both tasks.

Tasks

Comments on tasks/questions relating to candidate performance/meeting assessment criteria

Part (a)

Overall, part (a) was executed well:

- Candidates effectively discussed the usefulness and reliability of their chosen sources.
- Many candidates successfully produced coherent pieces of prose, seamlessly integrating source evaluation into their answers.

However, some aspects of candidates' responses in part (a) require improvement:

- Responses were often led by source content rather than critically using them to support their answers.
- Candidates should address the question set by critically analysing sources, such as *illustrating the impact segregation in America during the 50s and 60s through examples such as education, employment, health, and transport supported by relevant sources*.
- A clear conclusion that directly addresses the question is essential. In some instances, Band 4 was awarded for AO2 where there was no conclusion, or the conclusion did not address the question.
- Candidates should clearly indicate how a source is useful or reliable for their argument.
- There was some leniency in awarding AO3 marks, especially at the top band.
- Band 4 was awarded in some cases despite the work not meeting the criteria.
- Candidates should be encouraged to independently select a range of sources from the pack and use the sources in support of discussion.
- Overly lengthy responses detracted from the focus on source evaluation. Candidates should adhere to the suggested 1,200-word limit and select relevant knowledge.

Part (b)

Some centres demonstrated inconsistent marking practices, particularly in awarding at AO4 at higher bands. The emphasis in the General Report, centre reports, and CPD sessions consistently underscores that part (b) should not be exclusively perceived as a source evaluation exercise.

Successful responses:

- Begin with candidates identifying the two given interpretations from a historian's viewpoint before examining sources that might have influenced those interpretations.
- Consider why interpretations differ and make a well-reasoned judgement.
- Provide depth, detail, and relevance to achieve higher bands.
- Overall, there was a tendency towards generosity in awarding AO2 and particularly AO4 marks.

For further guidance and support please refer to the guidance for teaching Unit 4 on the GCSE history pages of the website or contact the GCSE team.

Task marking

Comments on approaches to internal marking

- The majority of centres used the marking checklist produced by the Board. This is recommended as it is a useful tool in establishing consistency within centres and between centres.
- Annotation, on scripts and marking checklists were inconsistent. Even markers at the same centre followed different practices. Annotation should be directed at the moderator, indicating on the script where the assessment objectives have been met and adding a summative comment, linked to the marking scheme, either on the script or in the space provided on the checklist.
- It is worth stressing the importance of keeping to the submission deadline date. Candidates' work should be enclosed in plain manila folders rather than loose sheets or paper-clipped bundles to avoid misplacement.
- The sample should include the H1 form signed by the teacher, the H2 forms signed by candidates and a copy of the NEA exercise. Accuracy in entering candidates' details and marks on the H1, H2 and IAMIS supports moderation process.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4278

Email: GCSEHistory@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [GCSE History \(wjec.co.uk\)](https://www.wjec.co.uk/gcse-history)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | WJEC](#)

CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

WJEC Qualifications

As Wales' largest awarding body, WJEC supports its education community by providing trusted bilingual qualifications, specialist support, and reliable assessment to schools and colleges across the country. This allows our learners to reach their full potential.

With more than 70 years' experience, we are also amongst the leading providers in both England and Northern Ireland.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk