

GCE



Chief Examiner's Report History

Summer Series 2017



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in History for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCE HISTORY

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit AS 1 Historical Investigations and Interpretations

AS Unit 1 attracted an entry of 2,021 candidates, the majority of whom sat Option 5 (Germany 1919-1945). Although the standard varied widely, there were some outstanding scripts in each of the five options. Most candidates performed well on Question 1, while the quality of answers to Question 2(a) was significantly higher than in previous series. The widest variation in the standard of the responses was evident in Question 2(b). While this question produced some outstanding, and many very good, answers, it was clear that some candidates did not understand its requirements.

Option 1 England 1509-1558

This option had an entry of 43 candidates. The overall standard of the responses was good. Question 1(a) proved to be much more popular than Question 1(b).

Question 1(a) produced some good responses on the measures taken by the Duke of Northumberland to solve the economic and social problems England faced between 1550 and 1553. However, some weaker answers focused exclusively on Northumberland's efforts to deal with England's economic problems. Question 1(b) elicited a number of good responses on the impact of Mary I's attempts to restore Roman Catholicism in England between 1553 and 1558. A common flaw of weaker responses was to describe Mary I's attempts to restore Roman Catholicism with little or no reference to their impact.

The quality of the responses to Question 2(a), which required candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying the causes of the English Reformation, was generally good. Most answers showed a good awareness of the significance of the date, author, mode, motive, audience and tone of the source and were able to relate its content to the wording of the question. The best responses also identified valid limitations, as well as relevant contextual knowledge.

Question 2(b) required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the causes of the English Reformation they found more convincing. The answers exhibited a wide range of standard. The best responses revealed a very good understanding of the ways in which the past had been interpreted in the two extracts. They also presented a very good analysis of the different interpretations, selecting key points of evidence from the extracts.

The best responses also displayed a very good understanding of the historical context, using relevant contextual knowledge to support their arguments. Top answers identified which of the two interpretations they found more convincing and provided very good evidence in support of their judgement by supporting and challenging the interpretations. Weaker responses exhibited a range of flaws. Some candidates misunderstood the purpose of the question, producing a traditional essay on the causes of the English Reformation with limited or no reference to the two interpretations. Another shortcoming was the inclusion in some answers of knowledge which was not directly related to the arguments contained in the interpretations.

Option 2 England 1603-1649

A total of 76 candidates were entered for this option. Most candidates coped well with the paper, although there were nonetheless considerable variations in the quality of their responses. Some candidates failed to finish their response to Question 2(b).

The standard of answers to Question 1(a) on the reasons for the breakdown in the relationship between Charles I and Parliament in the period 1625-1629 was consistently high. Most responses were well informed, analysing the role of Charles I's religious, financial and foreign policies in bringing about the collapse of his relationship with Parliament. Weaker answers often ignored the role of the Duke of Buckingham or digressed by including material that fell outside the scope of the question. Although some responses to Question 1(b) on the reasons for the execution of Charles I in January 1649 were outstanding, this question was, as a rule, not answered as well as Question 1(a). While the best responses provided a balanced, coherent analysis of the actions taken by Parliament, the Army, the Levellers and Charles I himself, weaker answers tended to omit the role of one or more of these factors or lapse into a narrative account.

The quality of responses to Question 2(a), which asked candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying attitudes towards religion in the reign of James I, was very impressive. Most answers evaluated both the content and provenance of the source effectively and provided valid limitations. It was also heartening to see that most responses included strong contextual knowledge in their evaluation. Weaker responses exhibited a range of common flaws. Some digressed by including material that had no connection to the content of the source, while others dealt superficially with the significance of audience and motive.

Question 2(b) required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the success of James I's religious policies in the period 1603-1625 they found more convincing. The standard of the responses was, in general, good and there were some very fine answers. The best responses revealed a very good understanding of the ways in which the past had been interpreted in the two extracts. They also presented a very good analysis of the different interpretations, selecting key points of evidence from the extracts. The best responses also displayed a very good understanding of the historical context, using relevant contextual knowledge to support their arguments. Top level answers identified which of the two interpretations they found more convincing and provided very good evidence in support of their judgement by supporting and challenging the interpretations. A majority of candidates argued that Interpretation A was more convincing than Interpretation B, largely on account of its more balanced and positive assessment of James I's religious policies. Interpretation B tended to be criticised for its dismissive and largely critical tone. It was pleasing to note that a large number of candidates were able to provide good contextual knowledge to support their evaluation of both interpretations. However, a few candidates neglected one of the interpretations.

Option 3 Britain in the Age of Reform 1830–1880

This option attracted an entry of 56 candidates. There were many excellent responses to Question 1. Although answers to Question 2(a) and Question 2(b) varied considerably in quality, there were some excellent responses to both questions.

Question 1(a) on the influence of the Utilitarians and Evangelicals on the reform programme of Grey and Melbourne between 1833 and 1840 elicited some outstanding answers. The best responses examined the work of key figures in the field of reform, such as Jeremy Bentham, Edwin Chadwick and William Wilberforce, while also analysing government legislation with maturity and conviction, particularly the landmark bills on the ending of slavery in the British Empire and the reform of the Poor Law. Question 1(b) on how the

Conservative government of Benjamin Disraeli addressed the economic and social problems of Britain between 1874 and 1880 also produced many impressive answers. Most answers deployed a good range of knowledge of the government's legislative programme in the areas in question, particularly relating to public health, housing and consumer protection. However, fewer responses touched on the landmark trade union reform the Conservatives put on the statute book.

Question 2(a), which required candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying the failure of the Chartists, produced many good, though few excellent, answers. While most responses handled the content, mode, author, date, motive, audience and tone competently and also provided at least one valid limitation, more relevant contextual knowledge might have been employed.

Question 2(b) required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the reasons for the failure of the Chartists they found more convincing. The standard of the answers was generally good and there were a number of excellent responses. The best answers revealed a very good understanding of the ways in which the past had been interpreted in the two extracts. They also presented a very good analysis of the different interpretations, selecting key points of evidence from the extracts. The best responses also displayed a very good understanding of the historical context, using relevant contextual knowledge to support their arguments. Top level answers identified which of the two interpretations they found more convincing and provided very good evidence in support of their judgement by supporting and challenging the interpretations. Those arguing in favour of Interpretation A had plenty to say about Lovett and O'Connor, but less attention was given to the likes of O'Brien and Owen. Many candidates argued quite persuasively that interpretation B was the more balanced source.

Option 4 Italy and Germany 1815-1871

This option had an entry of 72 candidates. The overall standard was good and there were some excellent responses to all of the questions. However, less good answers needed greater depths of analysis and supporting evidence.

Question 1(a) on the reasons for the growth of nationalist and liberal ideas in the German states in the period 1815-1848 provided some excellent responses which were wide-ranging and precise. Weaker answers tended to be too narrow in focus, sometimes even omitting either nationalism or liberalism. Question 1(b) on why Prussia defeated Austria in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 was generally well handled and produced some very good responses. Weaker answers focused mainly, or even exclusively, on Prussian strength at the expense of the weakness of the Austrian political and military leadership.

Question 2(a) required candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying the attitude of Napoleon III to the expansion of Piedmont in Northern Italy. The source was generally well evaluated in terms of its content, mode, author, date, motive, audience and tone. In addition, most responses identified at least one valid limitation. However, the quality of the contextual knowledge provided was variable and very few answers noted the significance of the date of the source, coming as it did only three weeks after Orsini's unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Napoleon III.

Question 2(b) required candidates to assess which interpretation of the causes of the unification of Italy they found more convincing. The best responses revealed a very good understanding of the ways in which the past had been interpreted in the two extracts. They also presented a very good analysis of the different interpretations, selecting key points of evidence from the extracts. The best responses also displayed a very good understanding of the historical context, using relevant contextual knowledge to support their arguments. Top level answers identified which of the two interpretations they found more convincing and provided very good evidence in support of their judgement by supporting and challenging

the interpretations. Weaker responses exhibited a range of flaws. Some quoted lengthy extracts from the interpretations rather than engaging in evaluation and analysis. Others lacked sufficient contextual knowledge to support or challenge the particular interpretation. Some candidates did not appear to be aware of the process by which the duchies were added to the new Italian kingdom after Napoleon III withdrew from the War of 1859.

Option 5 Germany 1919-1945

This option attracted an entry of 1,774 candidates. With such a large entry, there was inevitably a wide range of responses to all questions, ranging from outstanding to very poor. Question 1(a) proved to be much more popular than Question 1(b).

Question 1(a), which required candidates to analyse why the Nazis rose to power between the Wall Street Crash of October 1929 and Hitler's appointment as Chancellor on 30 January 1933, produced some excellent responses. Weaker answers were apt to focus heavily on pre-1929 material or produce a chronological narrative of the actions of Germany's chancellors from Müller onwards, placing too much emphasis on political intrigue. Question 1(b) asked candidates to analyse the consequences of the war for the German people in the period 1939-1945. Although only a minority of candidates attempted this question, the standard of responses was generally quite good.

Question 2(a) asked candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying the aims of Nazi economic policies in the period 1933-1936. This question elicited a considerable number of outstanding responses which systematically assessed the utility of the source by examining its content, date, author, mode, motive, audience, tone and limitations, as well as selecting appropriate contextual knowledge to support the evaluation. Weaker responses exhibited several common flaws. Some described the content of the source but did not relate it to the question. Others referred to the features of the source such as its author or mode but failed to assess whether they represented strengths or weaknesses, while a number of answers did not include contextual knowledge in their response.

Question 2(b) required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the aims of Nazi economic policies in Germany in the period 1933-1939 they found more convincing. The standard of the answers ranged from outstanding to very poor. The best responses revealed a very good understanding of the ways in which the past had been interpreted in the two extracts. They also presented a very good analysis of the different interpretations, selecting key points of evidence from the extracts. The best responses also displayed a very good understanding of the historical context, using relevant contextual knowledge to support their arguments. Top level answers identified which of the two interpretations they found more convincing and provided very good evidence in support of their judgement by supporting and challenging the interpretations. Weaker responses exhibited a range of flaws. Some summarised the two interpretations and made an unsubstantiated judgement about which one was more convincing. No attempt was made to support or challenge the interpretations with appropriate contextual knowledge to arrive at a judgement. Other answers based their judgement largely or even exclusively on evidence from the two extracts as opposed to their own contextual knowledge. Another shortcoming was the inclusion in some answers of knowledge which was not directly related to the arguments contained in the interpretations. A number of candidates produced a traditional essay on whether Nazi economic policies were successful in the period 1933-1939 with limited or no reference to the two interpretations.

Assessment Unit AS 2 Historical Conflict and Change

AS Unit 2 attracted an entry of 2,034 candidates. The overall standard was good and there were some excellent responses in every option. However, as noted in previous reports, candidates should be aware that the quality of their written communication is assessed in all questions. While common abbreviations which appear in textbooks are acceptable, it is inappropriate for candidates to use abbreviations such as 'CC' (Catholic Church), 'OC' (O'Connell) and 'LNB' (Louis Napoleon Bonaparte).

Option 1 Spain and Europe 1556-1598

This option had an entry of 42 candidates. All three questions were attempted, with Question 3 proving the most, and Question 1 the least, popular. Most responses to both the 8 and 22 mark questions were of a satisfactory or good standard.

Most of the answers to Question 1(i) displayed a good awareness of the economic difficulties facing Philip II in 1556, although some digressed into a discussion of his economic policies after 1556. Part (ii), which required an assessment of whether Spain had a strong economy in the period 1556-1598, produced many good responses. Weaker answers often lacked a clear focus on the question.

There were some good responses to Question 2(i) on Philip II's relationship with the Papacy. Part (ii), which asked candidates to debate whether Philip II's religious policy in Spain between 1556 and 1598 enjoyed more successes than failures, was generally well answered. While the best responses were well informed and had a clear focus on the proposition, weaker answers were apt to provide a generalised narrative of Philip II's religious policy during this period.

Question 3(i), on why Philip II's policy towards Portugal between 1579 and 1583 was successful, elicited some very good responses. Part (ii), which required candidates to debate whether the decline of France was the most important reason for the outbreak of war between England and Spain in 1585, produced some very good answers. Weaker responses often lapsed into a narrative account of Anglo-Spanish relations between 1556 and 1598.

Option 2 The Ascendancy of France in Europe 1660–1714

A total of 41 candidates sat this option. Responses were quite evenly spread across the three questions. The overall standard of the answers was high and there were relatively few weak responses.

Question 1(i), which required an explanation of the results of the War of Devolution of 1667-1668, produced some excellent responses which provided a detailed analysis of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle and noted the long-term consequences of the war for Franco-Dutch relations. Part (ii), which asked candidates to assess the extent to which the actions of Louis XIV were to blame for the outbreak of the Nine Years' War, was, as a rule, well answered. The best answers took into account the cumulative effect of the perceived aggressive foreign policy of Louis XIV during the twenty years before the outbreak of the Nine Years' War.

There were many good answers to Question 2(i) on the reasons for Louis XIV's acceptance of Carlos II's will. The best responses provided a succinct analysis of both the will and the alternative Second Partition Treaty, as well as the overall implications of any decision by Louis XIV in relation to his dynastic rivalry with the Austrian Habsburgs. Part (ii) required candidates to debate the proposition that Louis XIV's recognition of James II's son as the true king of England was the most important cause of the War of the Spanish Succession. Some answers could have dealt with the proposition in a more substantive manner, particularly in relation to how Louis XIV's action galvanised public and parliamentary support for William III. However, most candidates dealt competently with the other factors behind the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession.

Most candidates dealt confidently with Question 3(i) on the consequences of the Battle of Blenheim. The standard of the answers to Part (ii), which required candidates to debate whether the terms of the peace treaties at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession benefited England more than any other country, was generally excellent. There was a general appreciation that, while England made substantial gains from these peace treaties, they also brought about changes to the European balance of power, for example in respect of the varying fortunes of Holland and Brandenburg-Prussia.

Option 3 Ireland 1823–1867

This option attracted an entry of 226 candidates. The responses exhibited a wide range of standard. Generally speaking, the quality of the answers to the 22 mark questions, especially Question 1(ii) and Question 3(ii), was better than those to the 8 mark questions.

Answers to Question 1(i) on the effects of the Lichfield House Compact for the Whigs were of variable quality. Good responses appreciated the benefits and drawbacks which the Lichfield House Compact brought for the Whigs, while weaker answers tended to neglect one of the two themes, such as the Whigs' electoral setbacks in 1837 and 1841. Part (ii), which asked candidates to debate whether the political career of Daniel O'Connell in the period 1823-1845 was characterised by 'small victories but big disappointments', generally produced good quality responses, with candidates dealing with the three key phases of O'Connell's career: emancipation, Lichfield House and repeal. Good responses focused closely on the proposition, while less good answers either neglected one of the key themes or paid insufficient attention to the wording of the question.

There were some good answers to Question 2(i) on the problems facing Irish agriculture in the period 1824-1845. However, some responses did not refer to the failure of successive governments to intervene. Part (ii), which required candidates to assess the importance of the economic, social and political effects of the Famine on Ireland in the period up to 1867, produced some quite good responses. Weaker answers tended to neglect one of the three themes, or omit key aspects of them, such as the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 or the long-term political role of the Irish-American lobby as a result of Famine immigration.

The quality of the responses to Question 3(i), which focused on the reasons for the outbreak of the Fenian Rising, was variable. Part (ii), which asked candidates to debate how far a lack of international support was responsible for the failure of the Fenian Rising, produced many good answers, but also a considerable number which struggled to deal with the proposition in a convincing manner. However, even weaker responses usually produced a good range of factors and were particularly strong on the opposition of the Catholic Church.

Option 4 France 1815-1870

A total of 80 candidates sat this option. All questions on the paper were attempted, with the responses exhibiting quite a wide range in standard. There were some excellent answers to all of the questions but relatively few candidates were able to maintain a high level throughout the paper.

There were some very good answers to Question 1(i) on the aims of the Charter of Liberties. Weaker responses often listed some of the clauses of the Charter but did not focus on their aims. There were some excellent answers to Part (ii), which asked candidates to debate whether Charles X rather than Louis XVIII was responsible for the Bourbons' failure to keep their throne. Less good responses often referred to Louis XVIII's comparative moderation but did not provide sufficient evidence to support their argument.

Question 2(i) on the development of the French economy between 1830 and 1848 produced some sound responses, which, however, often failed to mention the government's belated and ill-fated stimulation of railway building. The best answers to Part (ii), which required candidates to assess the extent to which Louis Philippe's relationship with the press was

responsible for his downfall in 1848, elicited some very good knowledge of press criticism of the king, but weaker responses often failed to do justice to the proposition, focusing mainly or exclusively on the other factors which contributed to his demise.

There were some good answers to Question 3(i), which required an explanation of why some groups were dissatisfied with the Second Republic. However, some responses failed to distinguish clearly between those who supported and those who were wary of the National Workshops.

There was a wide range of standard in the responses to Question 3(ii), which asked candidates to debate the proposition that Napoleon III's domestic policy was a failure when measured against his aims. Generally speaking, answers to this question would have been strengthened by the provision of more detailed supporting evidence. A few responses discussed Napoleon III's foreign rather than domestic policy.

Option 5 Russia 1914–1941

This option attracted an entry of 1288 candidates and was the most popular option on the paper. The vast majority of candidates answered Question 1 and 2, while there only a small number of answers to Question 3. The quality of the responses was generally high.

Question 1(i) on how Tsar Nicholas II's mistakes during the First World War led to his downfall in the Revolution of February 1917 was, as a rule, answered well. However, some responses digressed into the general problems of the war instead of focusing entirely on the Tsar's mistakes. Part (ii) required candidates to debate whether the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky was the most important reason for the success of the Bolsheviks in the Revolution of October 1917. Generally speaking, the proposition was not handled well, although most answers dealt competently with the other factors which contributed the Revolution of October 1917.

There were many good responses to Question 2(i) on how the Bolsheviks' strengths led to their victory in the Russian Civil War. Weaker answers displayed several common flaws. Some were too narrow in focus, concentrating exclusively on the roles of Lenin and Trotsky in the Civil War, while others produced an often lengthy discussion of the weaknesses of the Whites which was outside the scope of the question. Answers to Part (ii), which asked candidates to debate whether the New Economic Policy was the only successful economic policy introduced by the Bolsheviks between 1917 and 1924, exhibited a wide range of standard. Although there were some excellent responses, a substantial number ignored the issue of success, offering instead a narrative outline of the Bolsheviks' three economic policies. A significant minority of answers displayed little knowledge of State Capitalism.

Question 3(i) on the impact of Stalin's policy of collectivisation on the Soviet Union up to 1941 was generally answered well. The most common shortcoming of responses to this question was to discuss collectivisation but neglect its impact on the Soviet Union. Part (ii), which required candidates to debate the proposition that Stalin's use of the arts and the media was the most important means by which he maintained control of the Soviet Union up to 1941, produced answers of variable quality. While the proposition was not handled well, other factors which helped Stalin to maintain control of the Soviet Union, such as his cult of personality and use of terror, were very well developed.

Option 6 Italy's Quest for Great Power Status 1871-1943

This option had an entry of 357 candidates. Question 3 proved to be by far the most popular question and was, in general, answered very well. The responses to Question 1 and 2 exhibited a wide range of standard.

Answers to Question 1(i) on why Italy joined the Triple Alliance in 1882 ranged from excellent to poor. The best answers focused closely on the question, identifying and explaining a broad range of factors. Weaker responses either tended to be too narrow in focus or discussed Italian foreign policy in general terms with little reference to the Triple Alliance. Part (ii), which required candidates to debate the extent to which Giolitti was successful in his attempts to overcome the internal divisions in Italy up 1914, produced some excellent answers which engaged well with the proposition. Weaker responses often displayed a sound knowledge of Giolitti's reforms but were unable to relate their knowledge to the issue raised in the question, while others neglected to assess both sides of the question, focusing exclusively on either success or failure.

Question 2(i) on the economic problems facing Italy between 1919 and 1922 produced some very good answers. While the best responses identified a range of specific problems, supported by detailed explanations, weaker answers were too general. A few answers focused on the war years instead of the period 1919-1922. Part (ii), which asked candidates to assess whether Mussolini's reaction to the Matteotti crisis was the most important factor in his consolidation of power in Italy by 1926, elicited some very good responses which dealt well with both the proposition and the other factors. Weaker responses were often well informed about the other factors which contributed to Mussolini's consolidation of power but paid insufficient attention to the proposition.

A significant number of the answers to Question 3(i) provided a very good explanation of the aims of Mussolini's foreign policy from 1922 to 1929. Weaker responses tended to be too broad, while some digressed into an explanation of Mussolini's foreign policy aims in the 1930s. Part (ii), which required candidates to debate whether the weaknesses of the Italian military were the main reason for the Italian defeat in the Second World War, was, as a rule, handled well and there were some excellent answers. However, some responses digressed into a detailed discussion of Abyssinia and the Spanish Civil War, both of which were outside the scope of the question.

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