



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**HISTORY
GCSE**

SUMMER 2022

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COMPONENT 1 STUDIES IN DEPTH – BRITISH STUDIES IN DEPTH OPTIONS C100 A-D

General Comments

Overall, given the fact that this was the first examination series since 2019, candidate performance was as expected. Many candidates appeared to be well-prepared in terms of the techniques required to answer specific questions and some excellent responses were evidenced. There were still issues, however, with how candidates approach the question of how and why historical interpretations are formed and as is often the case, many candidates did not provide the historical context for their responses and thereby failed to gain marks for AO1.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 As in previous series, the majority of candidates were able to achieve high Band 1 or low Band 2 for extracting at least two pieces of relevant information from the source material, demonstrating the accessibility of the question. However, candidates are to be reminded that full marks are not awarded for merely paraphrasing or describing the source material. In order to achieve the fourth mark, candidates need to make an inference from the source material that is relevant to the question asked. For example, in the Elizabethan paper, candidates could have provided comments relating to how both sources show the seriousness of the Catholic threat, or how it was emanating from a variety of sources.

Q.2 As was the trend in 2019, it was pleasing to see many candidates making an appropriate judgement in their answers, as opposed to merely paraphrasing the source material. The question, therefore, proved accessible to most candidates across the four papers. However, there is still a tendency for candidates to make a judgement but not back it up with reference to the source material, which is an important requirement of the question.

It was also pleasing to see more candidates address the authorship of the source, which is key to understanding its 'strengths' or more probably, its 'weaknesses'. Candidates also need to consider the prospective audience and contextualise the response by providing a counterargument to what has been provided in the source.

Q.3 Overall, there continued to be an improvement in the quality of responses provided for this question. This is due to the fact that candidates are focusing more on the issue of 'significance' and are therefore attempting to provide an explanation as opposed to merely providing a narrative. However, there is still a tendency to 'top and tail' responses, with candidates referring to the significance of the issue at the start and end of the answer, as opposed to providing a consistent explanation. Answers of this kind will, in general, only be able to access low Band 2 for AO2.

In addition to this, candidates need to ensure they correctly identify the time period the question is referring to. It was very noticeable on the Conflict and Upheaval paper, that candidates were not addressing the short-term impact of the arrival of the Black Death and were providing long-term impacts which were not really relevant to the specific question asked.

- Q.4** Once again this question provided very much in the way of mixed quality responses. The majority of candidates were able to achieve Band 2 AO1 by demonstrating awareness of their chosen issues, but unfortunately there is still a tendency among candidates to merely describe the issues chosen and thereby treat them discretely. Good quality responses were ones where candidates regularly used terminology such as 'connected to', 'linked to' or 'led to', thereby accessing the higher Bands for AO2.

As was the case for Question 3, many candidates, particularly on the Conflict and Upheaval paper, did not correctly contextualise the issues in the appropriate time frame and thereby performance on that paper for this question was generally poor.

- Q.5** The majority of candidates were able to achieve at least Band 2 for both AOs by demonstrating understanding of the key feature for AO1 and by referring in general terms to the authorship for AO4. It was once again pleasing to see candidates attempt to provide a two-sided response, which is a key requirement of this question.

However, as stated in the 2019 report, there is still a tendency to provide very mechanical and often irrelevant comments when referring to authorship. It was disappointing to see candidates use terms such as the 'benefit of hindsight', which demonstrates a lack of understanding of how and why historical interpretations are formed. It is once again to be emphasised that candidates need to address the authorship, the title and date of the publication, its medium and more importantly, the prospective audience. There were also inaccurate comments on the validity of interpretations published on a website, which is of course not the case. It was also evident that more candidates had been versed in making references to the views of 'economic', 'social' or 'military' historians, but these were only successfully developed when candidates backed up their response with contextual support. It should also be remembered that historical interpretations do not necessarily need to be provided by historians.

Summary of key points

The majority of candidates were clearly able to complete all the questions in the time provided. Some candidates left questions unanswered, which is disappointing given the fact that marks can be gained for the skills elements in AOs 2-4. This needs to be impressed upon future candidates.

Candidates with good subject knowledge were able to gain marks for AO1, so the regular testing of historical knowledge is to be encouraged. There is also work to do on guiding candidates as to how they should approach the issue of dealing with how and why historical interpretations are formed. Sharing the generic mark schemes with candidates in order for them to better understand how they can gain marks for the specific skills, is also to be encouraged.

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COMPONENT 1 STUDIES IN DEPTH – NON-BRITISH STUDIES IN DEPTH OPTIONS C100 E-H

General Comments

The papers for the Non-British Studies in Depth generally performed at a comparable level to 2019, although there was discernible improvement in some areas. Once again however, work still needs to be done particularly in relation to Question 3 and slightly less so for Question 5, which both consider the issue of historical interpretations.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 This question was generally accessible to the vast majority of candidates across the four papers. However, it is once again to be stated that merely copying or paraphrasing the information provided with comments such as ‘Source A says/shows’ will not enable candidates to achieve two marks for AO3. For the second mark, candidates need to make an inference from the material.

Candidates’ responses across the four papers were rather mixed. Good levels of AO1 were evidenced for the Voyages of Discovery and USA papers, but it was very noticeable that many candidates had little or no idea about events in the Sudetenland on the Germany in Transition paper, with many referring to the Munich Putsch. This was disappointing given the fact that the topic is directly named in the specification.

Q.2 Candidate performance in this question continues to see an improvement, which is a pleasing feature. The majority were able to achieve at least Band 2 for AO3 by providing a judgement as to the purpose of the source. Once again, stronger candidates were able to access Band 3 by providing a good discussion of the authorship of the source and the very best ones, its prospective audience, which is the key to answering this question effectively.

However, as stated in the 2019 report, candidates are to be reminded that half the overall marks are awarded for AO1 and therefore they need to provide knowledge and understanding of the issue beyond what is provided in the source material. It is to be noted that some very good examples were evidenced across the four papers, particularly on the USA paper.

Q.3 As has previously been the case, this question is the one across the entire Component that is still not done satisfactorily, with the default mark tending to be 4 out of 10. As such, the main points from the 2019 report need to be restated. Candidates need to develop the AO1 aspect of the question by providing understanding of the key feature above and beyond what they have already been provided with in the two interpretations.

Candidates are also not addressing the issue of how and why interpretations are formed. Answers still tend to be limited to merely stating which one supports the view with token references to the authorship. This question should be treated in a similar fashion to Question 5 where candidates need to discuss the attribution in detail, considering the authorship, title and date of the interpretation, its medium and most pertinently, the audience.

- Q.4** The majority of candidates were again able to access the question by demonstrating understanding of the source material and by providing a relative judgement as to which of the sources is more useful to an historian studying whatever the key feature is. Candidates are again to be reminded, however, that they need to provide AO1 beyond what they have been provided with in the source material. They should be encouraged to provide a brief overview of the key feature so that they can be rewarded for AO1.

With regards to AO3, candidates still tend to make rather simplistic comments about the sources' relative usefulness. In assessing the usefulness of the sources, candidates should be encouraged to consider the issue in terms of the content, authorship and once again, the audience. The sources will provide certain perspectives on the key feature and these should be developed in candidates' discussion. In terms of providing a relative judgement, comments along the lines of 'the source...is more useful because it provides more information', are not sufficiently developed enough to achieve Band 4 for AO3. In addition to this, it once again must be impressed upon candidates that utility and reliability are not the same thing, so candidates who focus on the latter are not addressing the question at hand.

- Q.5** As was the case with Question 5 on the British Studies in Depth papers, the majority of candidates were able to achieve at least Band 2 for both AOs by demonstrating some understanding of the key feature for AO1 and by referring to the authorship for AO4. However, once again candidates in general failed to fully engage with the authorship, medium and audience and therefore failed to access Bands 3 to 4 for AO4. The same generalised comments were provided as were for the British papers and it was again disappointing to see references to 'primary' and 'secondary' sources and the 'benefit of hindsight'.

It should be noted however, that there were some very good responses, both in terms of AO1 and AO4, where candidates displayed excellent subject knowledge and attempted to engage with the process of how and why the interpretation was formed.

SPaG – Candidates generally achieved 3 to 4 out of 5.

Summary of key points

As with the British Studies in Depth, the majority of candidates were able to complete the questions in the time provided. The advice given relating to candidates failing to attempt questions remains the same, particularly since the preponderance of marks on these papers are for the skills elements.

Overall, whilst it is to be expected that candidates' subject knowledge will vary widely, centres certainly need to focus on AO4 and try to move candidates on from providing generalised comments on the attribution that preclude them from accessing Bands 3 to 4.

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COMPONENT 2 PERIOD STUDIES OPTIONS C100 1-4

General Comments

Overall candidate performance in these papers was varied. Due to the nature of the papers, which rely heavily on recall of knowledge, candidates who prepared well for the examinations, performed well, and those who did not recall knowledge of the periods struggled. Some candidates showed an excellent knowledge of the periods studied and were able to achieve high marks. Candidates who were able to reach Bands 3 and 4 were those who approached the questions with an analytical eye for changes across the period.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** This question requires candidates to display detailed and accurate knowledge of an issue set within the appropriate historical context.

This question was generally answered well, and most candidates were able to display at least some knowledge, thereby gaining at least 3 marks. The USA and USSR papers showed some particularly strong responses to this question. However, in the UK paper a significant number of candidates failed to attempt the question.

The strongest candidates were able to make a range of points showing very detailed knowledge and understanding.

- Q.2** This question requires students to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of an issue whilst analysing the extent and nature of change in order to arrive at a well-supported judgement.

Many candidates struggle with this question and the tendency is to provide a list of knowledge. Responses like that will not achieve high marks as they lack the analysis of change. Some candidates offered a “framing judgement” at the start of their response, and where those judgements were supported, candidates were able to achieve Band 2 or higher. However, in some cases a framing statement was not supported at all or was even contradicted by the supporting evidence provided.

The majority of responses that were able to achieve Band 3 were those which set the scene, analysed the extent and nature of change, and made a clear and well-supported judgement.

- Q.3** This question requires candidates to offer knowledge of three factors/developments while explaining and justifying their relative significance.

This question attracted the most detailed answers across all papers. The weakest responses did not consider all factors or did not reference how important or significant they were.

Many candidates were able to demonstrate lots of detailed knowledge and understanding of the factors in question but failed to consider their significance in a meaningful way. (Responses that simply state “option A is more important than option B, but not as important as option C” without any support are not discussing significance, but merely confirming the order that they have put the factors in).

Some of the best answers considered the impact or effect of the different factors in the short or long term. Candidates who were able to identify links between the factors whilst analysing their relative significance set in context were able to achieve full marks on this question. There were some excellent examples of this approach across all four papers.

- Q.4** This question requires candidates to offer detailed knowledge and understanding to construct a focused and reasoned explanation of an issue.

More candidates were able to display knowledge of the topics than were able to clearly explain their reasoning. Again, a list of details is not enough to achieve high marks on this question. The best answers were able to combine their knowledge with sound explanation of multiple points to reach Band 3. The majority of answers across the papers offered a partial explanation and were Band 2 responses.

There were some excellent responses to this question on the USA paper and candidates were able to clearly explain reasons behind the changing lives of young people. However, candidates on the Germany paper struggled to explain reasons behind the reunification of East and West Germany, despite clearly having some knowledge of some of the events that occurred.

- Q.5** This question requires candidates to address the named issue in the question, analyse its importance against other factors and their significance in order to arrive at a reasoned, well supported judgement.

Candidates generally understood the requirements of this question, however there was still a strong temptation for candidates to stray into a disjointed, two-sided debate with little, if any, analysis and evaluation. It is likely that this is the result of a lack of detailed knowledge about the key factor or an abundance of knowledge on other issues.

Some responses to this question were of a very high standard, particularly in the Germany and USA papers. The best examples were able to combine detailed knowledge and understanding with perceptive analysis while reaching some quite sophisticated judgements. Many answers in the USSR paper mixed up the events at Stalingrad with Leningrad, hampering their responses.

Candidates should endeavour to focus the majority of their response on the main issue in the question, while the significance of other factors should be considered as a part of the judgement. Candidates who do not consider other factors cannot access AO2.

Summary of key points

These papers are about more than simply remembering facts. Many candidates were able to pick up marks in AO1 for their knowledge and understanding, yet many marks are lost in AO2 where candidates do not explain or analyse aspects of the events and periods studied.

In Question 2 candidates should endeavour to support their judgements clearly.

In Question 5 candidates should remember to focus sharply on the main issue rather than stray into an extensive discussion of other factors.

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COMPONENT 2 THEMATIC STUDIES OPTIONS C100 5-8

General Comments

While candidates have improved their use of supporting detail in Question 3 since 2019, there still needs to be more included in responses to Question 4 in most options apart from the Development of Warfare, as identified after the 2019 series. Most candidates seem to have answered all of the questions in the paper, and a number wrote so much that they needed to use the extra pages set aside in the exam paper, and in a number of cases an extra answer booklet as well.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** Candidates need to consider one similarity and one difference between the three sources provided.

Candidates do not need to describe what they can see in the sources, although sometimes they do this instead of identifying a similarity and a difference between them. Other candidates write a lot of unnecessary detail about the topic in the question, again not necessarily doing what the question is asking. The most successful answers to this question are those that are simple and clear – for example on the Entertainment and Leisure paper, identifying that Sources A and B both show cruelty to animals, but Source A shows bears being used, which are different to the animals being used in Source B.

Most candidates seemed to do well on this question, scoring Band 2, 3 or 4 marks.

- Q.2** Candidates need to analyse and evaluate the content and authorship of two sources from different eras and make a judgement about their relative reliability.

Most candidates were able to link the content of the source to the topic in the question and were able to make simplistic judgements based on the relative reliability of the authorship of the sources. However, very few candidates used their own knowledge to show their understanding of the topic so were unable to get Band 2 for AO2. Analysis of authorship for AO3 was also limited to simplistic statements about the source attributions, sometimes wrongly suggesting that one source was “from the time” and the other was “from after the time”. To get AO3 Band 3 candidates need to combine knowledge, content, and authorship.

Most candidates scored Band 1 for AO1 and Band 2 for AO2 as their responses were not detailed enough.

- Q.3** This question requires several historical details about a feature of a particular historical era.

Candidates in most of the options managed to get the correct era, although in the Entertainment and Leisure option there was some confusion about the differences between the 16th and 17th centuries as required by the question, and the 18th and 19th centuries in particular. For some options there was a misunderstanding about the focus of the question – in Crime and Punishment the question was about medieval punishment but some responses were about law enforcement, and in Health and Medicine the question asked about causes of illness in the medieval period but many responses were more about knowledge about the causes of disease.

The candidates who focused on the correct topic within the correct era mostly scored very well at AO1 for this question.

- Q.4** Candidates need to give a reasoned explanation of a specific issue set in an historical context, supported by specific factual knowledge.

For all options except the Development of Warfare, most candidates only scored AO1 Band 1 as there was no specific supporting detail in their answer. In the Warfare option the issue was more that not all knowledge used was relevant to the period of time in the question. As with Question 3 there were also issues with candidates not focusing on what the question was asking. In Crime and Punishment many candidates wrote about punishment rather than enforcement of the law, and in Health and Medicine many candidates wrote about causes or knowledge of disease rather than public health and hygiene.

Candidates who gave several relevant explanations supported by specific factual details scored well in both AO1 and AO2 in this question.

- Q.5** Candidates should provide a structured narrative about an issue of change across all three historical eras.

Across all of the options there were some issues with focus on the question set. In Crime and Punishment combating crime should have been the focus instead of punishment. In Health and Medicine the focus should have been on medical knowledge rather than prevention or cure. In the Development of Warfare it should have been on the technology of warfare rather than on the navy. And in Entertainment and Leisure it should have been on musical tastes rather than musical technology. Most candidates had a good attempt at trying to cover all three eras, although there was often imbalance between them, but overall responses across all the options demonstrated a sound chronological grasp.

Candidates who scored very well on both AOs tried to give roughly equal levels of detail to all of the eras and to make the changes between them clear.

- Q.6 (a)** Candidates should provide detailed knowledge of two features of an historic site.

While there was a lot of specific, detailed, and relevant knowledge about the historic sites deployed in responses it was sometimes difficult for examiners to determine exactly which two features candidates were focusing on as they wrote in continuous narrative, for example on the Crime and Punishment paper mixing the separate and silent systems up and writing about them as if they were the same thing.

There were also a noticeable number of generalised responses which could have been about any relevant historical site. Many responses were Band 2 as they began to specifically describe features but there were not many detailed Band 3 responses.

The candidates who scored highly on AO1 in this question made it clear which two features of the site they were focusing on and supported the points they were making with detailed relevant knowledge of that site.

- (b)** This question requires candidates to explain the significance of an historical site over a period of time.

There was a lot of knowledge of the issue demonstrated, especially in the Development of Warfare option, but this knowledge was often not well focused on explaining the issue in the question. Sometimes candidates limited themselves chronologically by just writing about a short period of time, such as Pentonville in the middle of the 19th century as opposed to up to the present day. In the Health and Medicine option many responses focused purely on Scutari Hospital rather than considering how it influenced hospital care elsewhere. In the Entertainment and Leisure option many candidates considered the reasons why Butlins Skegness was originally attractive to holidaymakers but did not consider how it adapted to changing holiday trends.

To get to Band 3 and beyond in this question candidates needed to explain the significance in the question, not just list things that happened. They also needed to support this with specific relevant knowledge from the historic site. Very few responses got beyond Band 2 in this question. This is a very similar situation to 2019.

Summary of key points

It is important that candidates give specific factual knowledge for all questions awarding AO1 marks. It is also important that candidates address the focus of the questions that are set and do not drift off into talking about the wrong topic, especially for questions awarding AO2 marks.

The historical environment studies for 2023 will be:

- Crime and Punishment – Pentonville Prison, 1842 to the present
- Health and Medicine – Scutari Hospital and the treatment and care of the wounded during the Crimean War, 1853-1856
- Development of Warfare – the development of Dover Castle, 1066-1945
- Entertainment and Leisure - the development of Butlins holiday camp, Skegness, 1936 to the present day.

Centres are reminded of the change to the historical environment for the 2024 and 2025 series:

- Crime and Punishment – Lincoln Castle gaol and prison, 1787-1878
- Health and Medicine – living conditions in the Ancoats district of Manchester c.1790 to the present day
- Development of Warfare – significance of RAF Biggin Hill, 1916-1959
- Entertainment and Leisure - the development of Alexandra Palace, 1859 to the present day.



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