



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**HISTORY
GCSE**

SUMMER 2019

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

General Comments

Overall, there was a slight improvement in the quality of responses provided by candidates during this examination series. Many candidates appeared to be well prepared in terms of the techniques required to answer specific questions and some very good responses were evidenced. However, whilst the skills demands were generally well-addressed, 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 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, centres are to be reminded that candidates need to provide at least two relevant points from each source in order to achieve full marks. This was particularly the case on the Elizabethan Age paper. Some candidates merely paraphrased the material and therefore did not address the thrust of the question. Similarly, marks are not awarded for AO1 in this question, so responses that wandered off into description were not rewarded.

Q.2 It was pleasing to see an increase in the number of candidates making an appropriate judgement in their answers, which is a key requirement of this question. As a result of this improvement in examination technique, the question proved accessible to most candidates across the four papers. In some cases, candidates were able to back up the judgement by analysing the content of the source, although this was not consistently applied.

As was the case last year, candidates still need to address the authorship of the source, as well as the audience, in order to address its weaknesses. Some candidates specifically referred to 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' but did not always follow this through with an appropriate analysis. It was also particularly noticeable in the Austerity, Affluence and Discontent paper that subject knowledge was lacking, with very few candidates demonstrating awareness of the reasons for the Winter of Discontent, often confusing it with earlier miners' strikes.

Q.3 In the 2018 series it was noticeable how the majority of candidates tended to provide narrative responses to this question. This year however, there was a discernible increase in the number of candidates focusing on the 'significance' of the chosen feature and they were therefore able to provide more in the way of an explanation. On many occasions however, whilst candidates did refer to the significance of the issue, they were not able to back this up with good subject knowledge and hence provide historical contextualisation. There is also 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.

There were, though, some strong responses evidenced, particularly on the Empire, Reform and War paper, which demonstrated how good subject knowledge can supplement the AO2, or explanation aspect of this question. It was also pleasing to see some good quality responses on the Conflict and Upheaval paper, where many candidates specifically addressed the significance of the Black Prince in the Hundred Years' War.

- Q.4** This question saw a slight improvement in terms of candidates' responses as clearer connections between the chosen issues were produced, presumably due to centres emphasizing the need to do so. The majority of candidates were able to achieve Band 2 for AO1 by demonstrating awareness of their chosen issues. They were also helped during this examination series by the accessibility of the four issues that were chosen for each paper. As a result, there were some well written responses on the Conflict and Upheaval paper and especially the Empire, Reform and War paper where candidates regularly used terminology such as 'connected to', 'linked to' or 'led to', thereby accessing the higher Bands for AO2.

There was, however, still a tendency among some candidates to merely describe the issues chosen and thereby treat them discretely. Centres are encouraged to remind candidates of the need to use the terminology mentioned above, which will enable them to demonstrate understanding of the historical context.

- 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 authorship for AO4. It was pleasing to see candidates attempt, with varying degrees of success, to provide a judgement via a two-sided response. This enabled candidates, particularly those with good subject knowledge, to achieve good marks for AO1 and move into low Band 3 for AO2.

However, with regard to how and why historical interpretations are formed and may differ, there still appears to be a tendency to provide very mechanical and, in some ways, irrelevant comments when referring to the authorship. Responses tend to revolve around issues such as the author having the 'benefit of hindsight', or the interpretation not being valid because 'the author was not there at the time'. Demonstrating how and why historical interpretations are formed and showing an understanding of the wider historical debate, entails candidates examining not just the authorship, but the title and date of the publication and more importantly, the prospective audience. It was interesting to see some candidates make reference to the views of 'economic' or 'social' historians, but these were only successfully developed when candidates backed up their response with contextual support.

SPaG – Candidates generally achieved 2 out of 3 for SPaG.

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, but centres need to remind their candidates that they can gain marks for the skills elements, AOs 2-4, by referring to the content and attribution of sources.

As always, candidates with good subject knowledge were able to gain marks for AO1. With regard to the other AOs, it was generally discernible that candidates are beginning to become better versed in the specific techniques required to answer the questions. Centres are encouraged to share the generic mark schemes with their candidates in order for them to gain a better understanding of the question requirements.

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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 performed at a comparable level to the 2018 series. There was a slight improvement in terms of candidates addressing the skills aspects of the papers, but overall work still needs to be done particularly in relation to Questions 3 and 5 which consider the issue of historical interpretations.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 This question was accessible to the vast majority of candidates across the four papers. Whilst many candidates were able to achieve two marks for AO3 by extracting and contextualising relevant information from the source, some merely paraphrased the information or provided responses such as 'Source A shows a picture of...'. In order to achieve full marks for AO3, candidates need to make an inference from the source material.

Question 1 provides the opportunity for candidates to bring in a wide range of relevant knowledge and in some cases this was evidenced, particularly on the Germany in Transition paper where the work of Stresemann was well-known. Evidence of good AO1 was rather patchier in the other papers. For example, on the Voyages of Discovery paper, candidates narrowly focused upon the impact of disease upon native tribes and on the USA paper candidates merely tended to write about Henry Ford and mass production without referring to other aspects of the economic boom.

Q.2 This question again proved accessible to the majority of candidates, who were able to achieve at least Band 2 for AO2 by providing a judgement as to the purpose of the source. Stronger candidates accessed Band 3 by discussing the attribution of the source and more importantly, its prospective audience. In doing this, candidates were able to develop more not just the purpose of the material, but also the historical context in which the source was produced which constitutes the 'analysed and evaluated' statement in the mark scheme.

However, candidates are to be reminded that half of 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.

Q.3 Of the ten questions across the Component, this question has yet to be properly addressed, with the default mark tending to be 3 or 4 out of 10. There are two reasons for this, the first being that candidates tend to make a superficial judgement but do not develop the AO1 aspect of the question by providing understanding of whatever the key feature is. Secondly, candidates rarely achieve more than Band 2 for AO4 due to the fact that they do not develop the 'how and why' aspect of historical interpretations.

Answers tend to be limited to merely stating which one supports the view with token references to the authorship. As with Question 5, candidates need to discuss the attribution in detail, not just the author but also the title and date of the publication as well as the audience.

As such centres would be well-advised to encourage candidates to focus more on the attribution as opposed to merely paraphrasing the content with token references to their authorship.

- Q.4** The majority of candidates were able to access the question by demonstrating understanding of the source material and providing a relative judgement, which is a key requirement. Once again however, not many candidates achieved Band 3 for AO1 because they did not demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key feature beyond what was provided in the sources. Candidates are to be encouraged to contextualise their response by providing at least an overview of the key feature. An example of this was evidenced in the Germany in Transition paper, where many candidates did not demonstrate any knowledge of the events in the Rhineland, 1936.

With regards to AO3, relatively few candidates were able to move beyond providing rather mechanical comments relating to the content of the sources and somewhat simplistic references to the attribution. In making a relative judgement, candidates should support their response by discussing not just the authorship but also the audience and hence the perspective the sources provide on the key feature. Judgements along the lines of ‘Source ... is more useful because it provides more information’, are not developed enough to achieve Band 4 for AO3. In addition to this, it should be reinforced to candidates that utility and reliability are not the same thing. Some candidates’ responses focused on relative reliability and as such they failed to access higher than Band 2 for AO3.

- 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. In general, the majority of candidates did attempt to provide a two-sided response but once again not many were able to further develop and discuss the issue of differing historical interpretations because they failed to fully engage with the authorship and audience.

In terms of AO1, there were some very good responses evidenced across all four papers and candidates generally scored well in this respect. However, mechanical comments regarding the authorship abound and it was somewhat disappointing to see candidates still referring to ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ sources, thereby failing to develop the idea of how and why historical interpretations are formed and differ.

SPaG – Candidates generally achieved 2 out of 3 for SPaG.

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 inasmuch as they can gain marks for the skills elements by referring to the content and attribution of the sources or interpretations.

Overall, whilst variations in terms of candidates' subject knowledge will always be prevalent through every examination series, further work needs to be done particularly in relation to AO4 where candidates still tend to provide generalised comments on the attribution that preclude them from accessing Bands 3 and 4.

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COMPONENT 2 PERIOD STUDIES OPTIONS C100 1-4

General Comments

There was an overall improvement across most aspects of the four period papers especially on the USSR paper though performance dipped slightly on the Germany paper. Question 3 performed better this year as a result of candidates focusing more sharply on AO2. Most candidates were able to tackle the five questions in the time allotted.

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.

The question was handled well in the main and there were some well-focused responses particularly on the USSR paper. A significant number of candidates on the Germany paper failed to identify opposition groups to Nazi rule during the Second World War citing wartime relations with the Allies instead.

However, the majority of candidates were able to access Band 2 by offering some knowledge of the issue and so gained upwards of 3 of the 5 marks. At the top end there were some outstanding responses that demonstrated very detailed knowledge and understanding of the issue.

Q.2 The need here is for candidates to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of an issue while analysing the nature and extent of change in order to arrive at a well-supported judgement.

Performance on this question showed a marked improvement across all four papers when compared to the 2018 series. Making a judgement is key to achieving success on this question.

Many candidates offered a “framing judgement” at the beginning such as “improved/changed to a large extent” while displaying hints of a judgement in the body of the response.

Candidates at Band 2 displayed detailed knowledge (AO1) while beginning to analyse the reasons for change (AO2) and so gained upwards of 4 marks. Those responses which analysed the nature and extent of improvement/change while arriving at a reasoned and supported judgement were elevated to Band 3 (AO2).

Q.3 Candidates need to offer knowledge of three factors/developments while explaining and justifying their relative significance. There needs also to be appreciation of the nature and extent of change.

This was the most attempted of the five questions on the paper and all four papers showed an improvement on last year. Weaker candidates again tended to write something on the factors but in isolation with little, if any, reference to importance/significance. This year however many candidates focused sharply on AO2 and offered more reasoning for their selection of the factors often using suitable vocabulary such as “affected, created, influenced and encouraged”.

Candidates who demonstrated some knowledge of the factors/developments while hinting at their significance, though often in isolation, achieved Band 2 and 2 marks for AO1 along with up to 4 marks for AO2. Those candidates who were able to link the factors/developments while analysing their relative significance set in context gained up to 6 marks for AO2.

Q.4 The question demands that candidates offer detailed knowledge to construct a focused and reasoned explanation of an issue.

Again, there was a general improvement in the quality of the responses. As previously the strongest responses were evidenced on the USA paper but there was an encouraging improvement on the USSR paper. Many candidates struggled to explain moves to reunification on the Germany paper and likewise, the reasons for civil unrest in Northern Ireland by the 1970s was dealt with rather sketchily on the UK paper.

Candidates at Band 2 who demonstrated some knowledge (AO1) of the key feature of the question while offering partial explanation of change and the reasons for it (AO2) were able to secure 5 of the 8 marks. Those who tied knowledge and evaluation together and explained the issue fully and clearly gained Band 3 for both AO1 and AO2 and 7/8 of the 8 marks.

Q.5 The need here is for the bulk of the response to be focused on the main issue of the question while analysing its importance against other factors and their significance in order to arrive at a reasoned, well-supported judgement.

Responses were largely in line with the 2018 series but there was a marked improvement on the USSR paper.

There was often a lack of balance with insufficient focus on the main issue and responses drifted into a disjointed, two-sided debate with little, if any, analysis and evaluation. This could be the result of a lack of knowledge of the main issue of the question or the temptation of exploring other factors.

That said there were some excellent responses to the question that combined detailed knowledge and understanding with sound analytical skills while reaching quite sophisticated judgements.

The advice remains the same for this question. The bulk of the response should be on the main issue while the significance of other factors should be considered as part of the judgement. Without the discussion of other such factors, candidates cannot access AO2.

Summary of key points

Whilst many candidates were able to pick up marks for knowledge and understanding (AO1), more attention needs to be given to AO2 viz. the need to reach a judgement in question 2 along with a discussion of the relative importance/significance of the factors in question 3. Candidates must focus more sharply on the main issue of question 5 and offer analysis and evaluation together with an appreciation of the significance of other factors to form a judgement.

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COMPONENT 2 THEMATIC STUDIES OPTIONS C100 5-8

General Comments

The performance of candidates showed a general improvement on the 2018 series. Candidates were more focused on AO3 in question 2 and were more prepared to offer better coverage in question 5. The majority of candidates were able to deal with all questions in the time allotted.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** This is an entry level question where candidates need to consider three visual sources in order to identify one similarity and one difference of a set issue.

Candidates do not have to refer to all three sources nor should they produce a detailed description of the content of the sources. There is a tendency with some candidates to produce a “flipped response”. For example, on the Crime and Punishment paper credit was given to those who identified the similarity of a watchman/policeman in Sources A and B patrolling the streets. They then “flipped” the response stating that Source C does not show beat policing as a difference. They are essentially the same issue.

The question was again done well in general and many candidates were able to access Band 2 for 3/4 marks.

- Q.2** Candidates need to analyse and evaluate two sources from different historical eras by considering content and authorship in order to reach a judgement about their relative reliability.

With the exception of the Warfare paper which dipped slightly, the other three papers showed an improvement on last year, particularly on the Crime and Punishment paper.

Most candidates were able to extract content from both sources with some development while referencing authorship. Despite the issue being flagged up in last year’s report, some candidates are still categorising sources as primary and secondary with the misconception that Source D is primary and that Source E is later and so secondary and is more/less reliable. Some candidates continue to read utility for reliability and their responses were skewed as a result.

The majority of candidates gained upwards of half of the available marks by offering some knowledge/understanding at Band 1 together with a partial attempt to analyse and evaluate the reliability of the sources along with an attempted judgement at Band 2. There needs to be a sharper focus on the authorship of the sources together with a consideration of reliability in order to access Band 3.

- Q.3** The need is to provide detailed knowledge to describe an issue set within the appropriate historical context. The question is set in a particular time frame which can span between a decade, part of a century or one/stroke two centuries.

There were mixed fortunes across the papers which was largely the result of the inability of candidates to recall and deploy accurate historical knowledge from the correct time frame. On the Crime and Punishment paper candidates considered treason along with heresy in the 16th century but there were references to the Gunpowder Plot which could not be credited. Similarly, on the Health and Medicine paper a significant number of candidates failed to offer specifics on endowed and voluntary hospitals in the 18th century offering instead highly generalised accounts of hospital provision and often the contribution of Florence Nightingale. On the Entertainment and Leisure paper a significant number of candidates described the musical trends of the 1950s/1960s in terms of the rise in jazz, flapperism and the speakeasy culture, probably caused by confusion with Component 1.

Those candidates who demonstrated some grasp of contextual knowledge achieved Band 2 and up to 3 marks for AO1. More detailed responses achieved Band 3 with 4/5 marks.

- Q.4** Candidates need to offer a focused, reasoned and well-supported explanation of the issue set in its historical context.

Performance across the four papers was in line with last year. Most candidates were able to demonstrate decent knowledge and understanding and were rewarded for AO1 yet as in question 3 too many responses referenced detail that was outside of the time frame. On the Crime and Punishment paper the question was on the reasons for increased crime rates in the 18th century but many described the London of Jack the Ripper. On the Health and Medicine paper the question was on improvements in medical knowledge in the 16th century yet candidates were citing the work of Harvey, Pasteur and Koch.

A lack of explanation (AO2) meant that the bulk of candidates gained Band 2 with only a few offering sufficient explanation for Band 3.

- Q.5** The question requires candidates to provide a structured narrative spanning all three historical eras while demonstrating a secure chronological grasp and a clear awareness of the process of change.

There was improvement on this question particularly on the Crime and Punishment and Entertainment and Leisure papers. This was down to the attempt by most candidates to consider change across the three historical eras.

Weaker candidates offered three blocks of narrative with little attempt at linkage and so gained Band 2, 2 marks for AO1 and borderline Band 2/3 and 4/5 marks for AO2.

The better prepared candidates offered a clearly structured narrative account while demonstrating a secure chronological grasp along with an appreciation of continuity and change and the reasons for it. There needs to be an appreciation of the pace of change and that change can coexist with periods of continuity. Candidates need also to consider turning points and factors that encourage or restrain change.

- Q.6 (a)** Candidates need to offer detailed knowledge to describe fully two main features of the historic site set in its historical context.

Performance was very much in line with last year.

Most candidates offered some knowledge of the features and so gained Band 2 and upwards of 5 marks. Fully detailed accounts gained Band 3 and upwards of 8 marks but these were relatively few.

- (b)** The question requires candidates to produce a reasoned analysis and supported explanation of how the historic site illustrates change set in its historical context.

There was an improvement in performance overall especially on the Crime and Punishment paper.

Most were able to display knowledge of the issue with the better candidates being able to consider how the study of the historical site illustrates change set in context. There was sometimes a general lack of contextual knowledge which is a concern when the study of the historical site represents 20 marks and 10% of the award.

A significant number of candidates were not able to access Band 3 as they tended to mostly describe and did not offer reasoned explanation and analysis of the issue. There were again few sophisticated and reasoned explanations worthy of Band 4.

Summary of key points

The need is to focus more sharply on the authorship and the issue of reliability in question 2 and to ensure that the detail offered in questions 3 and 4 is set within the appropriate time frame.

Centres are reminded of the change to the study of the historic environment for the 2020 and 2021 series:

- Crime and Punishment – Botany Bay: the settlement of criminals in New South Wales in the late 18th and 19th centuries.
- Health and Medicine – The British sector of the Western Front 1914-18 and the treatment and care of the wounded.
- The Development of Warfare – Kenilworth Castle, 1125-1660
- Entertainment and Leisure – The development of Wembley Stadium in the 20th century.



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