

Humanities

Advanced GCE A2 H513

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H113

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Overview

This specification became available for teaching in September 2012. The logistical issues of coming to terms with the demands of a new specification over a relatively short period of time are challenging. The performance of many candidates in these circumstances was creditable. The first entry was small.

Comments on specific issues relating to the two units are dealt with in the Principal Examiners Report on each unit. However, some common issues did emerge. Candidates need to be carefully prepared for the demands of each of the sub-questions in both units. Each sub-question specifies the source, or sources, needed for that question. It also indicates where personal knowledge should, or should not, be used. Some candidates in this first series did not write directly to the demands of the question and went beyond the questions remit. Candidates can only receive credit for answers which directly meet the demands of the question.

G101 Human society and the natural world

Question 1

- a) All candidates showed some understanding of the source and the ability to extract at least some information successfully. There was a variety of responses. Some candidates produced brief descriptions based on the source, which lacked detail, precision or development. Some candidates extracted figures from the source to chart the growth of population and urbanisation but did not develop a reasoned statement to explain it. A minority made detailed use of the source to write an explicit description of the changes that took place.

Some candidates ignored the rubric in the question limiting their response to Source A only and either deployed their own knowledge or referred to the other sources to support their answer. This should be discouraged as there is nothing in the mark scheme to allow reward for information used other than that in the specified source.

- b) All candidates showed some understanding of the source and the ability to extract at least some information successfully. Most candidates also responded to the prompt in the question to use their own knowledge. The quality of the responses was varied. Some candidates identified a basic interpretation of what the source was saying, which produced a response describing some of the consequences of rapid urbanisation, eg decline of rural communities, higher incomes in towns, changing occupations. Candidates needed to link the description closely to the source and develop their explanations. They were also less likely to bring their own knowledge to the answer.

Many candidates produced a sound interpretation of the source linking this with their own knowledge to write a developed answer describing some of the effects of rapid urbanisation in 19th century Britain.

The most able candidates wrote detailed explanations, which were a combination of good extraction from the source, developed by own knowledge deployed to support the points being made, eg the information that people left their villages for towns extracted from the source, was developed by accurate comment on the consequent social and economic effects impacting on the life of workers in the new industrial towns and cities.

- c) There is an implicit requirement in the question that candidates should evaluate the statement by comparing and contrasting the information in the documents, supported by their own knowledge. Many candidates needed to evaluate the statement and overtly challenge it.

Source A indicates that urban growth was linked to population growth. Source B concentrates on the pull effect of higher wages and more opportunities in the towns. Source C in contrast considers the push effect of rural change such as enclosure and changes in land ownership.

A small number of candidates produced very limited responses with few relevant points made, little evidence offered, no support from the sources and a superficial or non-existent conclusion.

Most candidates made reasonable attempts to review the sources with varying degrees of support from their own knowledge. Some made points with reference to the sources and examples from own knowledge which were evaluated in a limited way. A conclusion may have been offered but was rarely well evidenced.

Others more successfully put forward several points with good linkage between the sources and own knowledge leading to a clear conclusion supported by evidence. A very small number of candidates presented well-argued responses based on detailed evaluation of the sources supported by highly relevant examples from their own knowledge. Conclusions were clear and closely related to the evidence presented.

Question 2

- a) All candidates showed some understanding of the source and the ability to extract at least some information successfully. There was a variety of responses. Some candidates produced brief descriptions based on the source which lacked detail, precision or development. Some extracted information from the source to identify factors that would affect future population growth, eg birth control, infant mortality declining and life expectancy, but needed to develop reasoned statements to explain them. A minority made detailed use of the source to write an explicit description of the changes that took place.

Again some candidates ignored the rubric in the question, limiting their response to Source D only and either deployed their own knowledge or referred to the other sources to support their answer. This should be discouraged as there is nothing in the mark scheme to allow reward for information used other than that in the specified source.

- b) All candidates showed some understanding of the source and the ability to extract at least some information successfully. Most candidates also responded to the prompt in the question to use their own knowledge. The quality of the responses was varied. Some candidates identified a basic interpretation of what the source was saying which produced a response describing some of the causes of the imbalance in the quality of life between rich and poor. They did not link the description closely to the source or develop explanations. They were also less likely to bring their own knowledge to the answer.

Many candidates produced a sound interpretation of the source linking this with their own knowledge to write a developed answer describing some of the causes of the imbalance in the quality of life between rich and poor.

The most able candidates wrote detailed explanations which were a combination of good extraction from the source developed by own knowledge deployed to support the points being made, eg the information that the reluctance to give up their comfortable lifestyle by the rich, linked with adverse economic factors and climate challenges to doubly disadvantage the poor.

- c) There is an implicit requirement in the question that candidates should evaluate the statement by comparing and contrasting the information in the documents, supported by their own knowledge. Many candidates did not evaluate the statement or overtly challenge it.

Source D presents a relatively positive view of the factors affecting population growth. Source E suggests that it is optimistic to suggest that the balance between population and technology can be overcome to everyone's benefit. Source F uses Bangladesh as an example of the imbalance. Population will grow, the environmental footprint is small but global warming could have major impacts.

A small number of candidates produced very limited responses with few relevant points made, little evidence offered, no support from the sources and a superficial or non-existent conclusion.

Most candidates made reasonable attempts to review the sources with varying degrees of support from their own knowledge. Some made points with reference to the sources and examples from own knowledge which were evaluated in a limited way. A conclusion may have been offered but was rarely well evidenced.

Others more successfully put forward several points with good linkage between the sources and own knowledge leading to a clear conclusion supported by evidence. A very small number of candidates presented well-argued responses based on detailed evaluation of the sources supported by highly relevant examples from own knowledge. Conclusions were clear and closely related to the evidence presented.

G102 People, community and power

There was a small entry for this unit.

Candidates appear to have studied the relevant indicative content and there was some awareness of the issues which were relevant to the questions.

Question 1

- a) Candidates demonstrated some knowledge of the recent enquiry into media standards, although there was little understanding of what self-regulation is. Some commented on the role of the PCC but did not seem to recognise that this applied only to the press and not to other forms of communication. There was little focus on the fact that some media groups had opted out of this. Comments were focused on the behaviour of journalists, mainly negative, with little consideration of the positive aspects of press freedom. The subtleties of phrases such as “**totally** free press” and “enraging **some** politicians” were largely overlooked.
- b) Most candidates understood that social media operate very quickly and have mass followings, enabling material to spread widely and almost instantly. There was also some awareness of the possibility of unreliability and defamation, although few were aware that existing laws can be used to pursue prosecutions. Many candidates wrote, incorrectly, that the people who tweeted could not be identified and prosecuted. Very few commented on the positive aspects of social media.
- c) There was little evaluation of the quotation. The majority of the candidates were very accepting of the statement and very few challenged or qualified it. There was some mention of censorship factors such as D notices, but there was also some misunderstanding of the circumstances of use. A small number of candidates focused on what democracy was and lost sight of what the question was asking.

Question 2

- a) There was some good awareness of Chartism and the aims of the movement, although many answers did not reflect the range of aims outlined in the source. Some were very limited responses.
- b) Generally, candidates focused well on the suffragette movement. Many approached this question by comparing the methods of the suffragists with the more direct methods of the suffragettes. In a small number of cases, candidates misread the question, which asked about the types of actions used in gaining the right to vote for women. There was some confusion with more recent women’s movements, and comments about free contraception, abortion and bra-burning were sometimes in evidence. None of the candidates seemed to be aware of Emily Davison’s record of direct action. A few candidates recognised that when the vote was achieved, it initially only applied to certain women and not all. Some mentioned that it was largely the efforts of women during the First World War that had greater impact.
- c) There was little awareness that the Chartist aim of widening the franchise applied only to men and not women as well, although there was some implicit recognition that the movement did support women. Source C was not well used. Although some candidates realised that there was still some gender inequality, the reasons for this were often vague and impressionistic.

Overall, the sources were not well used by many candidates. There appeared to be little awareness that this is a source-based qualification. There were a large number of responses, particularly for the 5-mark questions, which made little reference to the actual sources, and wrote extensively about the topic in a general way. Comments loosely linked to the subject area do not score very highly. Candidates need to demonstrate that they can analyse and interpret all three sources, with a perceptive understanding of the connections and contradictions between them. Some candidates commented on how reliable they thought these sources were, but made little reference to the content. In a small number of cases, the standard of skills demonstrated was disappointing.

In order to be successful, candidates need to know how to interpret, analyse and use sources effectively, particularly for questions which direct them to a source alone. Sources such as photographs and statistical data require different skills to make sense of them, and centres should address these skills in their teaching programmes.

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