

GCSE (9–1)
Candidate Style Answers

HISTORY B

(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

J411
For first teaching in 2016

J411 – The making of America, 1789 - 1900

Version 1



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Introduction

This resource has been produced by a senior member of the GCSE History examining team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied. It illustrates how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provides some commentary on what factors contribute to overall levels.

As these responses have not been through full moderation, they have not been graded and are instead, banded to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Question 1

- (a) Name **one** of the states that were added to the USA between 1789 and 1838. [1]
- (b) Name **one** of the Indian wars fought between 1861 and 1876. [1]
- (c) Name **one** of the main industries that provided employment for large numbers of African-Americans in the south after 1877. [1]

High level response

- a) Indiana
- b) Little Crow's War
- c) Tobacco

Examiner commentary

3/3

The candidate has done exactly what is needed; they have answered concisely and accurately.

Medium level response

- a) Louisiana and Indiana
- b) Massacre at Wounded Knee
- c) There were lots of opportunities in the tobacco industry and the cotton industry because they needed workers to do repetitive work for low pay.

Examiner commentary

2/3

Answers a and c are typical of candidates who do more than is needed. The candidate has offered two alternatives and also some subsidiary explanation, none of which can improve the answer beyond 1 mark.

The answer to part b is incorrect. This event is out of the chronological dates included in the question and so there is no mark awarded.

Question 2

Write a clear and organised summary that analyses the difficulties faced by early migrants on their journeys to Oregon and California in the 1840s and 1850s. Support your summary with examples.

[9]

High level response

One of the difficulties faced was in the terrain that they had to cross. At the start this included crossing the Great Plains, which could often be dusty and windy. People who made the journey had to struggle with real changes in the weather, from beating sun to heavy rain, and high winds that made fires impossible to light. Often the length of journey led to animals and people dying. As they got further to the west, there were mountain ranges to cross, like the Rockies. One of the hardest was right at the end for travellers going to California. This was the Sierras. One example is the Donner party. 87 people set off, but the snow storms that hit them in the Sierras led to only 46 surviving the journey, and most of these had only survived by eating the bodies of the dead. This was probably the biggest threat, since there was no way to re-equip once the journey started, and it was hard to prepare for both types of terrain.

Another challenge was the threat from Native Americans. The travellers had to cross the territory of different tribes, like the Sioux. One danger was being raided, since Native American culture had raiding as a way that the men proved their status. But even if they did not get attacked, the Native Americans were the only people that the travellers could buy food from. If they could not find them, or they did not sell them food, the travellers would starve.

Examiner commentary

Top Level 3

This answer is very strong. There is a range of specific information, with examples like the Donner Party and the Sioux tribe. This shows a significant understanding of the events. The answer also shows second order conceptual thinking in that the candidate has distinguished between the two types of territory, plains and mountains, and also judges as to the significance of the threat by choosing which was more important.

Medium level response

The journey to Oregon and California was very difficult for the travellers. They had a really long journey to make. One really difficult problem was the mountains. Often, the travellers were not well prepared and the mountains could be snow covered. Lots of the travellers died and some even had to commit cannibalism to survive. This made the journey very dangerous.

As well as the mountains, there were the Great Plains to cross. These were often very windy or could have rain or sun and these conditions could be difficult to deal with. Even keeping warm could be difficult because the fires would blow out from the high winds.

A further problem was the threat of violence. This could be from Native American tribes who lived on the land or it could be from other travellers. Sometimes violence broke out between travellers, especially if they fought over property or food. In the wilderness there was no police force to turn to.

Examiner commentary

Mid Level 2

The candidate has offered some development to the problems that they have identified. These are specific problems faced by the travellers. However the answer is limited by the use of secondary order concepts, which could included evaluating the challenges or comparing, for example, the geographical regions more clearly. Also, the knowledge is somewhat generalised and could be improved by the use of more specific examples, perhaps specifical geographical examples.

Question 3

What was the impact of the Californian gold rush of 1848-1849? Support your answer with examples.

[10]

High level response

One impact of the gold rush was that cholera was spread by the travellers. It spread especially along the river routes as the travellers moved, heading from the East to the West. This was especially serious in 1849 which fits perfectly with the gold rush. This disease had a serious effect on some of the mining communities that it reached.

Another impact was the growth of the mining communities. In the areas where gold had been discovered, miners began to settle. Other miners settled in the same areas. These communities became large, violent towns. Other types of work grew, like shops and saloons, owned by people who wanted to make money out of the miners. The saloon culture led to alcoholism and violence, especially since the mining settlements had no real police. Also miners often fell out over areas that they had claimed to mine.

The violence and disagreements led to miners creating local committees to judge cases. They judged crimes and also decided between miners if they disagreed over a claim. They would often use flogging as a punishment. However they had no real legal power and often the judgements could be unfair. For example, one Mexican woman was executed for killing a drunken miner who attacked her. This combination of violence with ineffective law and order created poor, dangerous living conditions.

Another impact was a growth in immigration from other countries, especially China. This was where companies who wanted to make a real profit out of the gold brought in lots of workers. Chinese companies in San Francisco shipped thousands of workers from China under the Credit Ticket system. They worked for a set amount of time before returning home. Most lived in the large mining settlements, making them even larger. By 1852, about 25,000 had moved from China to America to mine.

Examiner commentary

Level 5

This answer has several clear impacts; most are explained with quite specific examples of knowledge and show a good understanding of the topic. There are second order concepts addressed in the answer, for example it links the poor law and order together with the saloon culture to explain the increase in violence, and it links the geography of the migration to the spread of cholera.

Medium level response

The gold rush made a huge impact. This was because lots of towns grew where the miners settled. These towns became violent places, full of saloons. People could get away with murdering each other because there was no real police apart from other miners making judgements about crimes. They would have to decide about things like whether or not a miner had a claim to mine in the right place.

Another impact was that there was a huge increase in the number of Chinese people who lived in America. These were brought in by businesses who wanted to make money out of the mines. They worked hard mining gold so that they could go back to China with money.

Examiner commentary

Level 3

This answer shows some understanding of the key impacts by identifying accurate examples. It also has the conceptual link between growing towns and the increase of lawlessness. To improve this answer, a stronger sense of explanation and more precision in the examples of knowledge that are used.

Question 4

How far do you agree that the building of railroads across the Plains was the main reason for the destruction of the Plains Indians' culture after 1877? Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

High level response

To a certain degree, the railroads were important in destroying the Plains Indians' culture after 1877. However, there were other more important reasons.

The trains played an important role. Two train lines were built from east and west and they met in 1869 to create one communication line to link the two sides of the country. This was a great threat to the Plains Indians because it cut through their territories. Buffalo herds were cut in two, either side of the train line. More importantly, buffalo hunters travelled the trainlines, hunting huge numbers of buffalo to feed the train workers and the towns and to send east to where the industrial centres had a large leather industry. By 1875, the southern herds had been hunted to extinction. This was a very serious problem for keeping the Plains Indian culture alive because buffalo were so important. Even the bones and other parts were used by "bone pickers" so there was literally nothing left for the Plains Indians. This was a direct impact of the railroad.

Also, the railroad led to a new creation of towns and settlements along the trainlines. This made it easier to settle and take the colonists' culture into the wilderness, whereas earlier they had travelled through but not settled. They didn't need to trade with the Native Americans any more because the railroad brought supplies and materials.

However, although the railroad was important, there were more important factors. One was the development of cattle ranching. This involved taking areas of land which could be used to farm cattle, and it cut down on the areas that the buffalo and migratory Plains Indians could travel. Later on, by the 1880s, more cattle ranchers were using barbed wire fences to control areas instead of using the open range, and this further cut down on the available space for Plains culture.

Another issue was the power of the US Army. Whenever the Plains Indians attempted to respond with violence to the threat of the colonists, the army was able to outfight them. Even though there were some successes for the Native Americans, like when Crazy Horse defeated Custer at the battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, overall the years that followed 1877 were where the forts and numbers of the US army were too much for the Native Americans to compete militarily.

Another issue was the use of reservations. By the mid-1870s, the reservations were the main limitation on Native culture. The reservation lines and camps were deliberately designed to break up existing tribal structures and links. In the camps, native culture was systematically destroyed. Religious dances and rituals were banned. New police forces disrupted the tribal relationships. Children were sent to western schools where they were taught the US culture, not the tribal culture and instead of warriors providing for their families, they relied on government handouts.

Overall, the railroad had a big impact because they opened up the plains to US settlement which threatened tribal culture, but it was the development of cattle ranching and also the use of reservations that played a larger role in destroying Plains Indian culture.

Examiner commentary

Level 6

A very strong and well detailed response. The knowledge is consistently of a high quality and shows a good understanding of the topic. It has created a balanced viewpoint between the two sides and then reached a specific judgement which has some support.

Medium level response

The railroad had a large impact on the culture of Plains Indians. When the railroad was built, it went all the way across America. It meant that the colonists could settle towns into regions of the plains. As they settled, they brought industry with them. One massive impact was that the colonists killed off the buffalo. They had buffalo hunters and bone pickers who killed hundreds of thousands of buffalo and this left the Plains Indians with no buffalo which were central to their culture.

The railroad also divided the land up and the colonists with it used barbed wire to control areas near the towns. This limited the Native Americans from being able to migrate which was important in their culture. They could no longer move around to follow the buffalo and live off the land.

The railroad also allowed the army to be supplied more quickly. This meant that when the Plains Indians threatened the settlers, troops could get to places more quickly and with their more powerful weapons, they could defeat them.

Overall, I agree that there are several reasons that the railroad led to the destruction of Plains Indian culture.

Examiner commentary

Mid Level 3

The candidate has shown a reasonably good knowledge of how the railroad affected Native American culture. Though in parts it is generalised, this is not the biggest weakness. The key limitation is that it does not address alternative ideas or use these to evaluate the concept in the question.

Question 5

“The period of Reconstruction from 1863 to 1877 was a time of progress for former slaves in America’s southern states”. How far do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

High level response

The period of reconstruction was in some ways very beneficial for African Americans. First the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 declared that slaves had to be freed. In 1865, it was turned into the 13th Amendment which made freeing slaves part of the American constitution so that legally everyone had to do it. This meant that all slaves had to be freed in every state. Then the 14th Amendment guaranteed equal citizenship which meant African Americans were legally equal to whites, and the 15th banned anyone from blocking the right to vote for racial reasons. These were important legal decisions that gave African Americans legal rights. Even though these did not get properly enforced until the 1960s they were ultimately very important because they gave the civil rights movement years later legal evidence to gain equality.

About 4 million slaves were freed. To help them to get set up, the Freedman’s Bureau was set up by the federal government in 1865. It gave housing and education to ex-slaves to help them to survive in a world where they were free. Lots of African Americans were helped by the bureau. However it was limited, because there was a shortage of money for the bureau and it was shut down in 1872 because of pressure by Southern politicians.

There were some cultural developments for African Americans as well. A number of African American Churches formed, especially Baptist. By 1890, there were about 1 million African American Baptists. Another area of progress was in the schools. The government made the first state school systems and 600,000 African American children registered for schools. This gave access to education for a large number of African Americans.

Also, in the Reconstruction era, the power of the KKK was weakened. The federal government passed laws which protected the rights of African American voters and also in 1871, President Grant prosecuted a number of KKK members in South Carolina.

However, this is not all evidence of progress. Firstly, even though the amendments were passed, they were ignored in a lot of ways. For example, even though the 14th Amendment made everyone in America citizens, there was unequal treatment when it came to wages and often white workers were hired before black workers. And even though the 15th Amendment protected voting rights, other limits like literacy tests were used to prevent African Americans in some areas from voting. Some Southern States wrote specific laws, called “Black Codes” which said that a person was legally black if they had more than one black great-grandparent and they were limited to certain jobs like farming.

After the Civil War, most African Americans thought that they would be given “40 acres and a mule” by the federal government because this is what one of the Union generals had let farmers have when his army had freed them. But the federal government did not have the money to do this and also wanted to keep Southern politicians friendly. So they got the Freedman’s Bureau to tell farmers to pay rent for their land. If they did not, federal soldiers were used to remove them from the land. Many African Americans ended up share-cropping, where they rented land by paying for it with part of the harvest. This meant that they stayed poor and still ended up working land for white land owners like they had as slaves.

Also, after 1877, the Democrats took power back from the Republicans. They stopped a lot of the progress, including schools, and focused instead on the spread West. This meant that many developments like schools were limited and did not continue to develop after 1877. So although there was some progress, it did not continue to lead to better conditions and so is limited in scale.

Overall, it is true that there was a measure of progress during Reconstruction, but this progress was limited in scale and mainly came to an end in 1877.

Examiner commentary

Level 6

This answer is very detailed. It uses specific knowledge and the examples in the answer are used to evaluate the progress, or lack of, for African Americans. There is an awareness of the key events and concepts, like the limitations to the application of the amendments. This shows clearly the overall secure knowledge of this candidate. It leads to a conclusion which does not choose either side but instead creates a middle option. However, it is of note that this middle ground answer is not the same as a lack of opinion but rather a combining of two viewpoints into one specific conclusion.

Medium level response

There is plenty evidence to support the statement in the question. One example of progress is the way that African Americans built a network of Churches across the Southern States, especially Baptist churches, and this gave a network that supported African Americans as a group. One thing that this led to was schools, since these churches supported the new state schools which thousands of African American students went to.

Another sign of progress was that the KKK lost a lot of their power. They had grown at the end of the Civil War but the federal government passed laws limiting their power, and the President had some KKK members prosecuted. This was progress because it limited the power of the KKK and stopped them being such a big threat to African Americans.

A third area of improvement was that there were new amendments added to the US constitution. These gave African Americans more rights, like making them citizens and letting them vote. This was good progress.

Not everything was progress. There were also examples of things that worked against the African Americans, like not all the decisions that the government made helped African Americans and there were still some people who did not like African Americans being equal. But overall, it was a time of progress.

Examiner commentary

Mid Level 4

This answer has some good general knowledge which has been used in developed points, albeit without a great deal of specific supporting evidence. Nonetheless, it has a clear understanding of the key points of the topic. It does attempt a second side to the answer, but this is not enough to raise the marks because although it identifies in a vague sense the basics of the opposing interpretation, there is very little beyond simple statements. In addition, without an opposing view, the value of the conclusion is limited since it is not based upon a reasoned evaluation between opposing ideas. To improve, the main area would be to develop the counter-argument with some more specific knowledge.



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