

History A (Schools History Project)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J415**

OCR Report to Centres

January 2012

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

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A951/11–14 Medicine Through Time/Crime and Punishment Through Time Development Study/Depth Study

General Comments

The entry for the January session was very small – no more than a few hundred. Medicine attracted more candidates than Crime and Punishment and the American West was the most popular of the Depth Studies. Candidates entered for the British Depth Study were the strongest group although there were also many good scripts on the American West.

In the source-based questions the essential skill still remains the ability to use one's contextual knowledge to interpret and comment on sources. A minority of candidates treat these questions as if they are content free. In the structured-essay questions it is essential that candidates understand the difference between a description or a narrative and an explanation. Letting them study and discuss a range of answers should help some to improve their understanding. Some candidates quite clearly think they are writing explanations, when they are not. For the stronger candidates, the crucial stumbling block remains the ability to suggest and support a clinching argument to round off their answers to the part (c) questions. This skill can be explicitly addressed in the classroom and candidates should be equipped with a range of strategies.

Comments on Specific Questions

Medicine Through Time

Q1 Part (a) produced a wide range of answers. The strongest candidates were able to provide specific reasons why the Romans were using each of the treatments (eg the fact that they conquered the Greeks and adopted many of their gods), as well as pointing out that there is no reason to be surprised that they were using both natural and supernatural methods. Some candidates relied on the reasons given in the sources. It was encouraging to see nearly all candidates suggesting some kind of reason.

In response to (b) a few careless candidates thought they were still writing about the Romans. However, there were many candidates able to give contextual reasons for being, or not being, surprised (eg Harvey's discovery of circulation of the blood and the lack of knowledge about blood groups). It was encouraging to see that nearly all candidates made it clear whether they were surprised or not. Weaker candidates tended to respond on an 'everyday empathy' level.

Most candidates were able to identify the importance of chloroform or the carbolic spray in part (c). To obtain good marks it was necessary to explain the importance of at least one of them and to explain an example of a problem that had not yet been overcome. This could include the problem of bleeding or problems with the spray or chloroform. The question produced a wide range of answers.

The following three optional questions were equally popular with none of them being answered particularly better or worse than the others.

Q2 Part (a) was answered very well with many candidates scoring full marks. Candidates knew and were able to describe specific treatments. There were also many good answers to (b). Many candidates knew about a wide range of enabling factors but some failed to explain them. For example, it is not good enough to simply state that the Egyptians were able to make progress because embalming led them to learn about the body. Candidates needed to explain how it led

to this knowledge. Part (c) was not answered so well. Some candidates wrote general answers about observation rather than writing about Hippocrates' clinical method of observation. There were good answers about alternatives such as the Theory of the Four Humours.

Q3 Part (a) was well answered with many candidates fully aware of the different stages in the story. Part (b) tended to be answered either very well or very badly. Some candidates made vague statements about not understanding enough or simply described poor public health conditions. Better candidates used beliefs about miasma and spontaneous generation, and attitudes such as *laissez faire*, as reasons why little progress was made. In response to (c) most candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of both Koch and Pasteur, although the latter was rather better known. The crucial factor that divided good answers from average answers was whether or not their work was just described or whether there was a proper attempt to explain and assess their importance in the history of medicine.

Q4 Part (a) was known well by many candidates but some struggled with part (b) and failed to mention either the special properties of penicillin or its important contribution during the Second World War. Most candidates knew about the contributions of Fleming, Florey and Chain. What distinguished the better answers was the fact that they contained explanation about importance.

Crime and Punishment Through Time

Q1 In response to part (a) most candidates were able to explain that the Act was passed to deal with witches but had less to say about why people were so fearful of witches, and why it was a particular problem around this time.

In (b) most candidates thought that both drawings are about witches, whereas only Source B is. Source C shows a ducking stool which very few candidates know anything about. Good knowledge was demonstrated about the swimming test in Source B.

In (c) candidates were able to explain sources D and E separately but struggled to compare them. The author of Source E was mocking the ideas about witches held by many of his contemporaries. The titles of the two books also provide a clue about the different attitudes of the two authors.

Question 3 was the most popular of the following optional questions. Very few candidates chose Question 4.

Q2 All parts of this question were poorly answered. Most candidates did not have the required contextual knowledge and answers tended to be very general. In (a) answers tended to be about the situation in Rome rather than about parts of their empire. Answers to (b) were often vague and getting no further than assertions. A few candidates were able to identify some changes and continuities for part (c) but poor answers outnumbered the good. The problem was lack of knowledge and of precise examples.

Q3 Part (a) was answered reasonable well with some candidates scoring full marks. There is still a worrying number of candidates who think that being transported was not a serious punishment, or was even seen by some people as desirable. A number of candidates explained how people were committing offences and getting caught just so they could be transported. Part (b) was generally answered well with many candidates able to explain two or more valid reasons. Some answers to (c) were weakened by suggestions again that being transported was such a delightful experience that people were falling over each other to reach Australia. This is very different from a valid answer that carefully explains worries at the time over whether it was a sufficient deterrent. Many candidates seem to be unaware of the horrors awaiting most men who were transported.

There were so few responses to Question 4 that it is not possible to provide any meaningful comments.

Elizabethan England

Q5 Most answers to part (a) were restricted to explaining reasons mentioned in Source A. Part (b) produced better answers with many candidates able to use contextual knowledge to explain and compare valid impressions. Most candidates were able to connect Source D in part (c) to the defeat of the Armada, and an encouraging number went on to suggest a contextual purpose.

Question 7 was the more popular of the following two optional questions.

Q6 There were some general accounts in response to (a) that could have applied to any rebellion. However, there were a few candidates who knew details of the Northern Rebellion. Part (b) produced better answers with a good number of candidates focusing on 'only some' and consequently explaining why others did not support her against Elizabeth. In response to (c) candidates were able to write well on Mary but Essex was less well known with not a few candidates claiming that Elizabeth dealt with him well because she had him executed after his first example of wayward behaviour.

Q7 There were many good answers to (a) with candidates able to identify a number of punishments specific to this period. The only weakness in some answers was the tendency to write about the poor generally rather than just about vagrants. Part (b) was answered very well with many candidates able to explain a range of reasons. Part (c) was less well answered. Candidates were often content to describe how the two groups were dealt with but were less sure when they attempted to make assessments of the policies of Elizabethan governments.

Britain, 1815–1851

Q5 There were many good answers to part (a) with most candidates able to explain reasons for different impressions. Many answers were based on explaining the differences between physical and moral force Chartists, and between Lovett and O'Connor. Knowledge of particular events in Newport was not required. A few candidates simply described the differences. Part (b) provided a wide range of responses, but there were very few weak answers. A number of candidates confused this petition with that in 1848, but there were many more candidates who interpreted the cartoon as saying that the Chartists were demanding far more than Parliament was ever going to concede. Details in the cartoon and contextual knowledge of Chartist demands were used to develop answers. Many candidates made good use of their knowledge of the events of 1848 to explain why the Chartists were being mocked in Source D.

Q6 Part (a) was answered well with most candidates being able to provide accurate details about the Swing Riots. Some candidates got confused over (b) and wrote explanations of why some people defended the New Poor Law. Despite this, there were still many good answers with candidates able to explain the merits (as seen by some) of eg Speenhamland and the worries of northern factory owners. There were many good answers to part (b) with candidates able to explain both sides of the argument. Few, however, were able to producing a clinching argument at the end.

Q7 Part (a) was not answered very well. Many candidates wrote about the parliamentary system generally rather than about what happened during an election. There were many good and detailed answers to (b) with excellent multi-causal explanations. Part (c) is a challenging question at this level but was again very well answered. Many candidates were able to produce detailed explanations for each side of the debate. Unfortunately, few were able to score full marks by producing a clinching argument at the end.

The American West, 1840–1895

Q5 Candidates responded to part (a) with good answers. Most were at least able to focus on the date of the sources or the different experiences of the two authors. Better candidates focused on their different values, life styles and expectations. Very few candidates did badly in response to (b). All candidates recognised a buffalo hunt and most went on to explain the techniques shown in the painting. Better candidates, and there were a reasonable number, went further and explained the crucial importance to the Indians of what is shown in the painting. Part (c) was not answered as well. Some candidates simply dismissed the source on the grounds that it is an advertisement. Some were able to use it for its surface information but only a few used the fact that it is an advertisement for a railroad as a positive feature that makes the source so useful as evidence of the opening up of the West.

The two following optional questions were equally popular.

Q6 Many of the answers to (a) could have been descriptions of women's lives anywhere and at any time. Only a few candidates placed their answers in a specific context by mentioning eg the conditions in sod houses. Part (b) was answered much better with many candidates able to explain a series of reasons. Some candidates did not score as well as they should have done because they attempted to list seven or eight reasons rather than explain two or three. There were many good answers to (c) with candidates able to argue both sides of the debate using relevant factual detail. Few, however, were able to come up with a clinching argument at the end.

Q7 Answers to (a) were generally good with candidates able to identify a number of problems specific to Mormons at that time. Part (b) was answered very well with many candidates explaining several contextual reasons. Part (c) was not answered as well. Candidates were comfortable writing about Manifest Destiny but struggled to find another factor that was distinct from Manifest Destiny. This could have been used in a positive way to link factors, but for many candidates it meant they struggled to come up with alternatives.

Germany, c.1919–1945

Q5 Part (a) produced a range of responses. Some candidates failed to recognise the cartoon as about Jews. Some only got as far as message, while the better candidates explained the purpose in publishing such a cartoon at that time in Nazi Germany. There was also a wide range of answers to (b). Weaker candidates were able to explain that both sources described horrible events. Better candidates compared the reaction of the crowd across the two sources, while the best answers were those that focused on the attitudes of the two authors. For part (c) it was clear that most candidates were unfamiliar with this source. However, through an intelligent knowledge and understanding of Nazi attitudes about race, many candidates were able to write good answers.

Of the following two optional questions, Question 6 was the more popular.

Q6 Part (a) was answered very well with many candidates having a detailed knowledge of the events in the Ruhr. Stresemann is also known well both for his domestic and foreign policies and as a result part (b) was well answered. In response to (c) candidates were comfortable with explaining different ways in which the Putsch helped Hitler, but struggled when trying to explain ways in which it did not help him.

Q7 Part (a) was surprisingly badly answered with a worrying number of candidates writing general answers about harsh and nasty punishments. Specific examples were often missing. Candidates were more comfortable with (b) and explained the changes just before, and during, the war years very well. The earlier change from Weimar policies was less well explained. Part (c) was not well answered. Many candidates could get no further than 'less unemployment'. It was clear that some had no idea what it meant by 'working class'.

A952/21 Developments in British Medicine, 1200–1945

Public Health in the Middle Ages

General Comments

There was a reasonable range of responses to the paper, although the standard overall was not as good as that which was achieved in January 2011. This may have been because of the larger entry. Candidates had some contextual knowledge although this was often related to the specific theme of the Black Death, rather than the broader consideration of public health in the middle ages.

Candidates did best on questions 5 and 6. They performed least well on questions 2, 3 and 4.

Question 1

This was a difficult question for many candidates. Many of the inferences were not valid, being about the prevention of sickness and the treatment of illness rather than about public health. There were a number of possible inferences that could be made from this source, particularly in relation to systems of drainage and sanitation. The siting of the monastery next to a river and the existence and positioning of the latrines should have provided candidates with plenty of opportunities to discuss the relative quality of public health. A number of candidates went on to develop the point that, since this was a monastery, it was difficult to comment on the overall quality of public health elsewhere in this period.

Question 2

It is still the case that candidates of average ability find the task of comparing sources difficult and there were many candidates who did not address this question properly. Many candidates interpreted the question as ‘agree’ that B was wrong rather than ‘prove’. Some simply described what was in each source and then reached a conclusion. Lots of candidates simply explained what the source said, often with cross-reference or contextual knowledge, but did not address the question; such answers rarely achieved above level one. A significant proportion of candidates used a lot of rather weak and vague contextual knowledge without reference to sufficiently **specific** examples. Better contextual knowledge was demonstrated by those candidates who concentrated on the fines that had been introduced as attempts by authorities to regulate the conditions in the streets. Some candidates incorrectly interpreted the question as being about the Black Death.

As a result of the range of preceding issues, there were many answers in level one and level two. Consideration of reliability seldom got past level one. It is still the case that many candidates believe that a source produced at the time (primary) must be reliable, whereas a source produced later (secondary) must be unreliable. Some candidates tried to argue that the Italian visitor must have been biased. Such answers made an attempt to describe the better climate ‘back home’ in Italy, or the fact that Roman systems of public health had probably survived better in Italy, being the heart of the former Roman Empire. More convincingly, a few candidates argued that since the Italian was a visitor, he probably did not know what conditions were like the whole year round. Such answers achieved level three. The key to the higher levels was to take on the notion of ‘proof’. Using cross-reference or contextual knowledge, it was possible to demonstrate that there was support for the impressions given by both sources, therefore, source C could not prove source B to be wrong.

Question 3

Many candidates misinterpreted source D. Some assumed that it was Aubrey and his wife that had made the complaint. (It was, in fact, William who had complained to the assize that his work had been stopped.) Such candidates were either unsurprised, because they would not want a smelly cess-pit built near their own house, or surprised, because they would have thought that Aubrey and his wife would have been pleased that someone was paying attention to the 'proper' disposal of waste. Others believed that the source proved that the authorities did not care about regulations, since they allowed the work to continue. These candidates believed that the cess-pit was not in accordance with the regulations, whereas the source clearly states that the cess-pit was 'in accordance with the customs and regulations'. Those candidates who interpreted the source correctly often made sound judgements about this ruling. They often used source F or source H to good effect to explain their surprise or lack of surprise. Some made reference to gongfarmers and used contextual knowledge well.

Question 4

Once again, a number of candidates did not perform well on this question. Several candidates gave very developed analyses of both sources, but did not address the question. Too many concentrated on explaining how each source was useful without reaching an overall judgement. If such answers had started with the proposition that both sources were equally useful, depending on what you wanted to know, then there was every chance that higher levels might have been achieved. Regrettably, these answers tended to descend into descriptions of how source E was useful and how source F was useful. It was rare for such answers to achieve higher than level one or two. Some candidates successfully focused on the typicality or limitations of either or both sources. Source E was rightly seen as representing provision for the rich. Source F was also rightly seen as only one case from a court record. The key then was to use cross-reference or contextual knowledge to justify whether one source was more useful than the other.

Question 5

This was well answered, and it was pleasing to see so many candidates discuss the purpose of the source. Some candidates were confused by the attribution, thinking that the order was issued by the mayor and not by the King. However, many were familiar with the source and were able to recognise that the order was issued by the King during the Black Death. Although some candidates used this as an opportunity to write at length about the causes of the plague, most stuck to the point about why this particular source was produced at this particular time. A small number of candidates confused this with 'the Great Stink'. Candidates did not always spell out why the King issued this order, but instead made the assumption that mentioning the Black Death would be enough to reach the top levels. Unless the purpose of the King was directly addressed, candidates rarely achieved higher than level one.

Question 6

This was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates, and the vast majority of centres now know how to prepare their candidates to tackle the over-arching question. Some candidates wrote valid answers but failed to make any detailed reference to the sources other than the source letter, while some gave good details from the sources without addressing the question. However, there was clear evidence that a number of candidates had planned their answers. Few candidates made reference to some aspect of reliability and were unable to pick up the additional two marks. Some candidates showed an understanding that several of the sources could be used to both support and oppose the statement.

A952/22 Developments in Crime and Punishment in Britain, 1200–1945

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT THROUGH TIME

General Comments

This paper was about eighteenth-century smuggling. As is usually the case, neither the questions nor the sources created surface comprehension problems for most candidates. Despite this, many candidates experienced difficulties because of a lack of understanding of dates and the significance of the passage of time. At its most basic this was seen in the responses of candidates who clearly did not know that the eighteenth century and the 1700s are synonymous. For others it led to twentieth-century sources (Sources D and E) being treated as if they were contemporary with eighteenth-century events, or two sources of different dates (Sources B and C) being used as if they were about the same event. These misunderstandings had a significant impact on the answers of many candidates. For example, Sources D and E are evidence about how smugglers were represented in the twentieth century; they show romanticised images, yet most answers simply accepted them as factual information about smugglers, with an inevitable limiting effect on the answers given.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

This question was answered well by most candidates. There were many possible inferences about smugglers that could be made from the picture. The most common were that they were daring, violent, organised, determined or worked in gangs. As always, the best answers responded to the prompt in the question to ‘use the source’, and sought to support their inferences by showing through source detail how they had reached them. There were a few misinterpretations based on the people in the background being innocent bystanders or customs men, but more often than not these did not prevent candidates from making other valid inferences.

Question 2

The most remarkable feature of answers to this question was that many ignored the content of Source B, and answered solely on the basis of assertions about smugglers, and/or by using the content of Source C. Source B provided conflicting testimony about a case where a customs officer was attacked. The officer identified the defendant and heard him give the order to shoot. The smuggler had four witnesses who claimed to have been with him in his house at the time of the shooting. In deciding whether or not it was the smuggler who fired at the officer (as the question asked), the obvious place to start was this testimony. Material external to Source B (ie Source C, other sources, contextual knowledge) was only really relevant in helping to determine who – the officer or the smuggler – was the more credible. Without using the testimony in Source B answers could be little more than assertion – *eg I think the smuggler was guilty of firing the gun because I know smugglers were violent*. The best answers used the testimony in Source B, then concluded that the smuggler probably was guilty in the light of supporting evidence offered by Source C. It was possible to reach a judgment based on the *rejection* of testimony in Source B – *eg I think he was guilty because, although his witnesses say he was with them at the time of the shooting, it’s probable that they are just lying to protect him* – and this was rewarded, but at a lower level than answers indicating how accepting the testimony of one part or other of Source B would support a guilty/not guilty conclusion. Two final points are

worth mentioning. As indicated in the general comments at the start of this report, it was not uncommon for candidates to assume that Sources B and C were describing the same events. Any conclusions based on this misunderstanding were simply ignored by markers, but did not prejudice valid arguments made elsewhere in the answer. Finally, it was a rare candidate indeed who noted that the trial in Source B took place in London, rather than in Cornwall (where, as Source C told us, ‘prosecution would be useless’), and that this made it (slightly) more likely that Bawden was not guilty.

Question 3

For most candidates, the fact that Source D was produced in the 1930s made no difference to their answers. The source showed smugglers at work, and was therefore useful as information about them. But this is never all there is to questions about utility. Behind the face-value acceptance of a source another question should always be lurking – what is the source *really* useful for? When the source is produced, why it is produced and for whom, are vital matters in reaching a true judgement on the utility of a source. Source D is therefore evidence of how smugglers were perceived in the 1930s, of how people in the 1930s wished to represent smugglers, and of how interested in smugglers people still were in the 1930s, rather than simply as information about smugglers riding horses, or working in daylight, or being feared by townspeople. It is true that plenty of answers showed awareness that the source should not simply be accepted at face-value, but more often than not this led merely to a rejection of the source on the basis of its provenance – just a cigarette card, produced long after the date. Few used the nature of the romanticised image of the ‘free traders’ to argue that the source was unreliable, and therefore not useful, though were well rewarded if they did.

Question 4

There was a fundamental divide between answers that thought Kipling was writing about smugglers who were still active and working in 1906, and those that realised he was writing about the (eighteenth-century) past. The former were in the majority, many believing that Kipling was a smuggler himself. Knowledge of Kipling was not, of course, expected. Theoretically, then, the poem could have been written in the eighteenth century and not published until 1906. There were, indeed, some candidates who made that very point, and then gave *separate* reasons for writing the poem based on whether it was eighteenth- or twentieth-century in nature. Fair enough. What was less understandable was to ignore the publication date and treat the poem as if it were a warning to people to prevent smugglers hurting them. Amongst those who knew that Kipling was writing about historical, rather than contemporary, characters, the most basic reason for writing was to tell people about smugglers – what they did, how they did it, who benefitted, and so on. However, this still begged the question ‘Why smugglers?’ The best answers gave reasons addressing that question – because of the romantic image of the smugglers, because people were still attracted by the image of the smugglers. In short, he wrote this poem because he knew the audience would find the subject matter interesting and exciting.

Question 5

The two keys to answering ‘Are you surprised?’ questions are first to make it clear what it is that you find surprising or not, and then to give your reason. The reason must, of course, be consistent with the judgement on the issue of surprise. Most answers to this question managed to satisfy these requirements, but the quality of the answers was nonetheless limited by the nature of the reasons given. These were usually based on a generalised awareness of what smugglers were ‘really’ like. A typical response would be *‘I am surprised that the source calls smugglers bandits, because I know that most people were very happy to work with them and buy goods from them.’* Better quality support (because of being more specific) could be offered by using other sources: *‘I am surprised that the source calls the smugglers bandits, because when I look at Source D I can see that people were quite happy to let the smugglers get on with their work and did not see them as bandits at all.’* What was still missing from these answers

was awareness of who was making these claims about smugglers, and why. The best answers were able to infer that Source F was, in some sense, the voice of the 'authorities', trying to deter people from having anything to do with smugglers. From this perspective the source was entirely unsurprising, as of course the authorities would be against smuggling and wish to put an end to it.

Question 6

Many candidates do not find it easy to extract from sources those details that can either support or question the given hypothesis. One reason for this is that they do not keep a sufficiently clear eye on what exactly the hypothesis is claiming. The hypothesis this time was about *attitudes* towards smuggling, asking whether or not people saw smuggling as a crime. Many answers, in whole or in part, were allowed to slide on to a different issue – whether smuggling was a crime, which, of course, was unarguable. Others focused on whether or not people *supported* smuggling – again, not quite what the question was asking. For those candidates who could maintain a correct focus on attitudes, the issue then was how the sources could be used, since almost all could offer both support, or lack of it. For example, Source F clearly showed that the authorities regarded smuggling as a crime since it calls smugglers 'a terror to the King's Officers, and a pest to the community'. But on the other hand, most ordinary people probably did not see it as a crime since 'smuggling has reached a level greater than in any nation in Europe', so if this many people are involved they can't see it as a serious crime. The trick on all the sources was to make it clear whose attitudes were being discussed.

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