

# **History B (Modern World)**

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1937**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE 1037**

## **Reports on the Components**

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**June 2010**

**1937/1037/R/10**

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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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# **1037/01 (Short Course) Paper 1**

## **General Comments**

Teachers preparing candidates for the short course will find comments in the Report on 1937 / 1 useful as the comments made in that report have relevance and significance for the Short Course. Comments relating to 'message', 'purpose' and 'are you surprised?' are equally relevant in this instance to the short course as they are to the full course. The mark schemes used to evaluate the quality demonstrated in relation to these skills are of the same format on both papers.

This year examiners were encouraged by the standard demonstrated by the candidates as, compared with the past, they were able to focus more on the challenge of the question and provide pertinent responses. It was particularly noted that candidates scored more highly on Section B than they have in the past, although failings similar to those noted in the full course report were evident on occasions.

Question 1(b) asked candidates - How far do these sources agree about the Versailles settlement? This required candidates to find similarities and differences between the sources. Whilst numerous candidates were able to find elements of the sources which agreed or disagreed, a significant number took the question to mean – 'does each of these sources individually agree with the Treaty'. In Question 2 (c) the focus was on reliability and candidates were more comfortable with this.

Some candidates when answering part (e) in both question 1 and question 2 failed to follow the instruction in the question and failed to identify the sources to which they were referring. This approach limited significantly the marks available.

## **1937/11-14 Paper 1**

### **General Comments**

Candidates generally used the allocated time efficiently. There was more evidence this year of thought being given to the question prior to writing an answer and this was reflected in answers which were more clearly focused on the question as set, rather than more general responses which contained significant amounts of knowledge but failed to answer the question. Even for Paper 1, candidates often possess significant amounts of knowledge but, on occasions, lack the ability to select and deploy information that is pertinent to the question, leaving the examiner to search for relevant material. With the better use of time the vast majority of candidates completed the paper. There were relatively few rubric errors. Those rubric errors that occurred were usually committed by the candidate who had to search for the questions to answer or where a decision could not be made as to which question would allow a few more marks.

As in previous years a significant majority of candidates were able to demonstrate sound factual knowledge of both the core and the Depth Study for which they had been prepared. Knowledge was used to good effect in writing well-developed explanations and arguments to their chosen questions. Additionally, there were many good quality responses to the evidence based questions in question 1 and question 7.

Good quality answers to those questions requiring longer responses were characterised by the candidate remaining focused on the demands of the question and selecting and deploying material which directly provided an answer to the question asked. Selection of relevant information to use is important. Some candidates were less successful in this process, resulting in over-long answers which often concentrated on the generalities of the period, missing the point of the question. Another area where candidates are less strong is in the final part of the (c) answers in Section B of the Core and in questions 8 and 9 of the Depth Study. To gain the higher ranges of marks requires some comparative judgements or evaluation based on the arguments presented in the response. On numerous occasions, responses to descriptive part (a) questions still remain over-long, although it is fair to state that most candidates now realise that a concise response here allows more time to focus on the higher weightings of other questions.

### **Comments on Individual Questions**

Answers to part (a) descriptive type questions are expected to be purely factual. Even over-lengthy answers often gain maximum credit within the first five or six lines. Parts (b) and (c) of these questions require understanding and explanation. Candidates should be encouraged to move away from telling the story and concentrate on explaining events or issues. This is important if the higher levels of the mark scheme are to be achieved. A significant minority of candidates appear not to understand the difference between identification of a reason and explanation of that reason. This often results in those candidates failing to move into the higher levels, thus failing to access higher marks. This was particularly prevalent in relation to Question 3 parts (b) and (c) where candidates were content to state that 'The League was successful in settling the Aaland Island dispute' and that 'The League failed because the USA did not join'.

Equally important is ensuring that the explanation is based on historical fact. Explanation should avoid the 'I think...' approach. In part (c) candidates often disappoint by only providing one side of the argument. This approach can affect the marks achievable significantly. All (c) essay type questions required 'how far' to be considered. Very few examples were seen of answers which fully addressed this issue of degree.

## **1937/02 Paper 2**

### **General Comments**

The topic of female suffrage was widely anticipated and candidates responded well to the questions and sources, with the vast majority displaying an assured confidence about the period under examination. The nature of their answers was proof that all levels of ability had been prepared with appropriate skills and knowledge for the demands of the paper. Nonetheless, it was apparent that a number of candidates had set ideas about what they thought should be asked. Consequently, they were weaker in their application of knowledge to the specifics of questions than might have been expected.

The new specification will maintain continuity in terms of knowledge and skills. Consequently, it is emphasised that the essence of Paper 2 is using and evaluating historical sources critically in their context. Testing the sources against historical knowledge, against other sources on the paper and against the internal evidence of the sources themselves gives access to the higher mark levels.

Paper 2 is a Depth Study and candidates are expected to have depth of understanding as well as depth of knowledge. For a high-level answer the two are interdependent, together with detail from the source/s in question. It is also important that candidates read the questions so that they focus their efforts appropriately. All of the questions require the source/s to be placed in context, but not all require evaluation. For example, 'What is the message of this poster?' and 'Why was this poster published?' do not demand critical evaluation of their message or purpose, but they do need to be placed in their historical context. Candidates need to be clear about the difference between 'message' and 'purpose'. They need to ask, 'What message/point/information is the artist/cartoonist/writer/speaker trying to get across?'. Then they need to ask, 'Why do they want to give that message at that time/under those conditions?'. Contextual knowledge enables the candidate to make sense of the purpose of a source.

A cause of disappointment for examiners is the able candidate with depth of knowledge and depth of contextual understanding who fails to cite information from sources. The absence of source detail from some answers makes one wonder if candidates simply respond to the provenance/description of sources to the neglect of studying the content of sources. Centres are reminded that this is a source-based paper and candidates must use information taken directly from the sources. Failure to root an answer in the source/s in question will compromise its quality by failing to support valid reasoning and inference. It is not enough to assert that a source 'shows' something, candidates need to demonstrate how the source agrees or disagrees with their point.

A tendency persists for a number of candidates to be rather perfunctory in the application of skills, knowledge and source detail. They know what to do and how to do it, but do not produce the developed answer they are capable of. Consequently, where a range of marks is available for a particular level, poorly developed responses limit themselves to the bottom of the level. Time for completing the paper is not a problem for candidates, but too many are writing and explaining far too briefly to do full justice to themselves.

A high quality answer will contain, in varying combinations: specific source detail; comment about that detail in relation to the particular question being answered; clear contextual knowledge enabling a judgement to be made about the purpose or validity of the source in question.

Content – quote it.

Comment – on the content.

Context – relate to events.

## **Comments on Individual Questions**

### **Q1 Source A What is the message of this cartoon?**

The best responses said what the message was at the start of their answer and then put it into context. Most candidates were clear about women being disregarded because they did not have the vote and so being treated as less important than men. The majority of them used contextual knowledge about Asquith's opposition to female enfranchisement, rejection of the Conciliation Bill, Liberal social reforms which favoured men and proposals to widen the male franchise, in a variety of ways. They were not asked to try and identify each individual in the cartoon, nor write at length about suffragettes and suffragists.

### **Q2 Sources B and C Is one source more reliable than the other in helping you to understand who opposed votes for women?**

This type of question, requiring candidates to address two sources, appears each year and the great majority of answers did use both sources in reaching Level 3. Progression to Level 4 or Level 5 was common, but it was uncommon for candidates to reach Level 6, evaluating both sources. Source B was commonly evaluated through knowledge of Christabel Pankhurst, but candidates must say how a role has an impact on what they say. Source C was most often evaluated through tone/language, but candidates must comment on the nature of the tone or language used. It is not sufficient to quote part of a source without pointing out how the tone/language affects our judgement of the value of the source as historical evidence. A common mistake was to write about the Labour government.

### **Q3 Source D Is this cartoon for or against votes for women?**

This divided candidates evenly into those who accepted the cartoon at face value and those who recognised its criticism of the anti-suffragists. There was no other obvious categorisation, because there were many 'able' candidates who were perfunctory in accepting it at face value and many 'weak' candidates who gave the cartoon some thought and progressed to a higher level.

### **Q4 Sources E and F How different are the attitudes to votes for women in these two sources?**

As with Q2, the great majority of answers did use both sources in reaching Level 3. Progression to Level 4 or Level 5 was common and it was more common for candidates to reach Level 6, evaluating both sources. Source E was routinely evaluated by using knowledge of suffragette militancy and Source F was commonly evaluated by reference to female involvement in war work.

### **Q5 Source G Why was this poster published in 1912?**

Familiarity with the poster enabled candidates to respond well, using contextual knowledge. There were others who interpreted it as being pro-suffragettes who had a hard day's work campaigning.

**Q6 All the sources, A to G**

**'It was the suffragettes' fault that women did not win the vote before 1918.' How far do the sources in this paper support this statement?**

The vast majority of candidates knew they had to produce a balanced answer to score at the highest level and the majority of them did reach Level 5. A significant proportion, however, did not get further than Level 4. Their main weakness was not giving support from the sources for a balanced argument. Others were intent on presenting a one-sided answer. Candidates used a variety of source groupings, clearly reasoned and supported in detail. There is still, however, work to be done to ensure that they are able to reach Level 6 after investing so much effort in marshalling the sources for and against the statement in question. After all, the key part of the question is 'how far do the sources support the statement?' Consequently, candidates do need to comment on the extent/degree of support given by the sources they have used in their answer.

## **1937/03 1037/02 Coursework**

### **General Comments**

As this is the last time that candidates will submit coursework for this specification this report will be shorter than usual. The new specification replaces coursework with controlled assessment, therefore candidates will not be completing coursework in future.

The marking was found to be generally accurate and very few centres had their marks changed by moderators. Where there were changes, these usually involved marks being reduced, especially right at the very top of the mark range. The detail and accuracy of much of the annotation of the candidates' work was impressive. Such annotation does help moderators and it is hoped that centres will continue to provide this for controlled assessment where summative comments relating to the generic mark scheme will be helpful.

The standard of the work this year was similar to previous years. It is clear that many candidates put an enormous amount of effort into their coursework and the overall standard was high. For Assignment 1 some candidates still write too much. Relevant material can be found in their answers but it is sometimes surrounded by irrelevant description and narrative. However, there was much good causal explanation and comparing the relative importance of different causal factors. It is important to note that the abilities to select what is relevant and deploy it in a relevant ways are key skills that will be assessed in controlled assessment. It is also important to stress that moderators will be focusing on whether or not candidates have actually answered the question and passages of irrelevance will have more of an impact on the final mark awarded than they have had in the assessment of coursework.

Much of the work for Assignment 2 was impressive with many candidates able to make inferences from sources about message and purpose. There was also much good evaluation for reliability and usefulness. It is important to stress that in the controlled assessment work candidates are asked to use sources in a rather different way. Rather than set pieces of evaluation, moderators will be looking for the ability to support arguments with appropriate evidence. Candidates should focus on answering the question. They should avoid being sidetracked into long-winded evaluation of sources. These issues are explained in detail in the Guide to Controlled Assessment which all teachers are advised to read carefully.

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