

**GCE**

**History B**

Advanced GCE **A2 H508**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H108**

**OCR Report to Centres June 2014**

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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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## F981, F982 Historical Explanation

### General Comments:

The idea of marking essays being a pleasurable activity may seem a strange one, but without teachers and examiners experiencing such feelings, at least on occasion, the historical essay as a form would surely die on its feet. Every Principal Examiner and Team Leader is immensely grateful that his or her colleagues are prepared to undertake this vital work. Quite simply, reading and marking a good Historical Explanations essay is a reward in itself. To watch a student dissect a problem and argue to a high level in response, supporting points with evidence and offering a different perspective on a problem or making an unexpected connection is fundamentally worthwhile, and exciting in consideration of what this might lead to for Specification B at A2 with the Controversies and Historical Significance Units. That centres are able to offer the foundations for this process and that students are able to rise to the intellectual challenges of these units is highly creditable to all concerned.

It is hoped that the comments here on specific questions are useful to readers. There will be some comments of universal applicability to any question. Inevitably, these will include the generic observation that some candidates did themselves no favours by trying to shoehorn a prepared answer into an ill-fitting question. It may, therefore, be salutary to restate an observation made last year. In the Report for 2013, I reminded centres that Ofqual regulations hold that no future question wording should be identical to that for any past question. In other words, Historical Explanations past paper questions still offer excellent practice in core skills and in terms of encouraging students to select and deploy appropriate content, but centres cannot expect in future to see 'the same question' reproduced word-for-word from any previous year. The same rule applies to other specifications. The emphasis, therefore, is on students adapting flexibly to the precise wording of the question before them. Contrary to some student opinion, there are no intentional tricks, catches or surprises: the emphasis remains on setting questions which allow students to show what they can do, to the very best of their abilities.

### Annotations

The annotations available to examiners as part of the new online script marking process are derived from the Mark Scheme. Thus the annotation 'MO' indicates that a mode of explanation has been accessed, a requirement for answers in Level 2 and above. It has not been used where a response may have simply included such terms as 'empathetic' or 'causal' without successfully constructing a modal explanation. A key annotation for examiners has been the distinction between 'AE' - ie an attempted explanation which deserves some credit - and 'EXP' - where a relevant and supported explanation has been offered and rewarded accordingly. In other respects, the Mark Scheme has been used in exactly the same fashion as in previous years.

### Endings

To repeat advice given in last year's report, whereas a 'Beginning' is optional, an 'Ending' is not. Last impressions are vital. An explanation of a complex phenomenon is enhanced by a judgement. Ideally, this sense of arguing a case and judging the appropriateness and validity of particular explanations will have occurred throughout the essay. In such instances, a gentle reminder to the examiner of the thrust of this argument is all that is needed as an Ending. In other cases, however, a student may be reaching a judgment in the final paragraph, where there is a lot to be gained in a little time. The *least* effective use of this time and space is simply to summarise a list of points already made, or to engage in some random rank ordering of a 'most important factor' in a fashion divorced from the body of the answer. Such a summary is not a proper 'Ending'. By conclusion or 'Ending' in an Explanations paper is meant a judgment about

the issues at the heart of the question. For example in this year's F981 paper, a weighing of the reasons for the introduction of the Religious Settlement by Elizabeth (Q3a) would be appropriate. For F982, some consideration of how and why the factors behind opposition to the Tsar during 1905 (Q7b) connect with each other would be beneficial. How do the actions and events of 'Bloody Sunday' relate to long-standing states of affairs (Q7a)? Why did ideas about and attitudes toward vagrancy (Q4b) change during Elizabeth's long reign? Endings will almost always be written under time pressure, so to justify their space they should add something new to what has already been discussed.

## **Modes**

It is good to note that many centres have moved away from an overly prescriptive reliance on modes of explanation. It was never the intention that modes should provide a straitjacket, or that random reference to them would fulfil the Mark Scheme criteria. Frequent mention has been made throughout these Reports to 'light touch' use of modes as a way in to an issue, as an illumination of what might otherwise be neglected. If a student is writing intelligently about Nicholas II's options and intentions in considering abdication (Q8b), then they are using a mode. If they are discussing Voltaire or Rousseau's beliefs and writings in the context of Ancien Regime France (Q5a), setting those ideas against the difficult financial and economic context of the 1770s and 1780s, they are using more than one mode of explanation. The label itself is unimportant; it is the explanation and the analysis that gain credit.

## **F981**

Once again, there was some superb work on Lancastrians and Yorkists, 1437-85. Centres are to be commended on the high quality of the teaching and learning they are offering, in many cases. Q2 proved more popular than Q1. Responses showed a good understanding of noble rivalries and factionalism such as the York-Somerset conflicts within and outside France, but there was surprisingly little in Q1(b) on the foundations of Eton College and King's College as public demonstrations of royal piety. Q2 saw evenly-balanced responses with candidates showing a good understanding of the changing roles and perceptions of Margaret of Anjou. The birth of her son was recognised as a seminal event. Some candidates thought Margaret was made Protector or that she governed while Henry was incapacitated. Her partisan support of Somerset, her rumoured affair with him and her malevolence towards York, were all seen as worsening a difficult situation and helping to lead to the first battle of St Albans, with all its consequential blood-feud implications

As ever, questions on Elizabeth I were the most popular on the whole paper, with a majority of candidates plumping for the Religious Settlement. For Q3(a) some responses were grounded more in the 'how' of the Settlement's introduction than the 'why', which limited the room for examiners to reward them in Level 2 or above. Historiography is not a requirement at this level, so paragraphs of prose outlining Haigh's views added little. As one Team Leader pithily put it, the Puritan Choir really should have sung its last Amen.

More successful approaches looked at royal religious beliefs and weighed their importance against the domestic and international states of affairs and against the intentions of the Privy Council and Parliament. Three small points here. Henry VIII was not a Protestant. Secondly, Spain was not an enemy of England in 1558, as many responses asserted. Better responses looked at the specific example of England's trading relations with the Netherlands as an example of the need for Elizabeth to proceed cautiously in antagonising Catholics rather than offering a generalisation about Philip's power or allegedly malevolent intentions. Finally, it is not expected that AS students writing under exam pressures grasp the subtleties of sixteenth-century attitudes towards women, but it is not unreasonable to hope for the avoidance of sweeping statements to the effect that everyone thought that women were unfit to rule. They didn't, and they weren't. Pleasingly, responses to Q3(b) on the diminution of the Catholic threat were often attempted well. One of the annotations available to examiners acknowledges 'Change over time', and this

could be and was frequently deployed as responses outlined how and why the tougher actions of the Queen and her government helped reduce the overt threat, and how and why the intentions and motivations of both critics and supporters of the government changed during a long reign. A few responses indicated that the Catholic threat could hardly have disappeared, given the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and a few (too few) took up the challenge of ‘gradually’ within the question to explain why they did or did not think it an appropriate term. Discussion of the succession problem was also highly pertinent here. Supporting detail about the changing international picture involving relations with France and Spain often helped determine the quality of a response, with some candidates showing excellent familiarity with successive peace treaties and with internal conflict within France.

Vagrancy questions produced more polarised responses. Again it tended to be the (b) question which saw the fuller and more rewardable answers. Examiners were not expecting to read detailed outlines of the poor law and vagrancy legislation, but some factual evidence of the later Elizabethan schemes requiring the levying of poor rates, or the establishment of Houses of Correction, was needed to help translate assertions into demonstrations. Weaker answers to both questions were often predicated on the notion that poverty and vagrancy were entirely central government issues, and at times displayed unhistorical tabloid notions about vagrants littering the streets, committing crimes and spreading disease. Better answers understood the local obligations to vagrant monitoring and punishment and tied in the interventions of the Privy Council and parliament to specific crises - for example, the repeated harvest failings of the 1590s.

Q(a) responses at times became descriptive and generic, overestimating the importance of enclosure (which was only an issue in some parts of the country) and underestimating the perceived link between vagrancy and rebellion. Again, better responses to this question traced the changing nature of the problem across the reign. The contribution of surplus soldiers and sailors was exaggerated. But the issues with law and order and the fears inspired by vagrants were well described, along with the limited means at the disposal of the Elizabethan state for dealing with recalcitrant vagrants.

Liberal Sunset responses seen by examiners were of mixed quality. Q5 proved much more popular and was more successfully attempted than Q6. Taff Vale was well discussed, but the Conservatives of Salisbury and Balfour were blamed in some answers for many of the trade unions’ misfortunes, including Taff Vale. The Judgement itself, whatever the Conservatives’ support for it, was ultimately a legal decision. The role and attitudes of the Liberal Party towards the trade union and labour movement were often glossed over or treated generically. Considering that the subtleties of Catholic divisions later in Elizabeth’s reign can be grasped by candidates taking the ‘Tudor Finale’ unit, it is not beyond students here to outline why the emergence of the LRC presented difficult political challenges for the Liberals. A few responses took issue with the words ‘suffer setbacks’ in the question, which was acceptable provided that this wasn’t used as a means to skew the question towards the only material that the candidate did know about. A small minority of answers seemed determined to write about Tariff Reform, which did not come up this year. Q5(b) was often well answered, the above point notwithstanding, with better responses able to unpack ‘important’ in the short and medium term as well as ‘important’ for the respective political parties. Asquith’s poor wartime leadership was, in many cases, more asserted than demonstrated, with specific detail and examples hard to come by; likewise, the question about the Coalition Government needed to balance expectations and achievements and not just to offer an outline of possible expectations. Fruitful responses included the description of Lloyd George as a puppet, and desperately in need of Conservative support.

End of Consensus answers were better for Q7 than Q8. As one Team Leader told me, ‘This was probably the best-answered question on the paper. Candidates knew the material well and could weigh up the assets of Labour against the woes of the Conservatives and come to different, but well-supported conclusions’. Reasons for the 1945 Labour victory were clearly

understood and explained by many, even if the accurate spelling of the Prime Minister's name proved a step too far. Similarly the intricacies of Indian independence, for example the respective roles of Wavell and Mountbatten, were explored to a high standard. Responses focussed more on independence than partition, but that was acceptable. Contrastingly, the economic struggles of the Wilson Labour government were a challenge to many candidates. Better answers looked at the 'triggers' of dock strikes as examples of actions which could be related to beliefs about currency stability and the arguments for and against devaluation. The (b) question could not be answered with a prepared answer about why the Conservatives won the 1970 election because the actual question needed explanation of Labour's declining political and economic fortunes and the reasons behind them, at least as part of the answer. As stated above, the ability to select and deploy appropriate knowledge in order to shape an explanation to the wording of the actual question is a key AS skill in this paper.

## F982

No candidates attempted Qs 1 and 2 on Charlemagne. Luther and the German Reformation produced some widely differentiated responses. As one examiner put it, the questions required quite a precise focus so that candidates with only a hazy knowledge of the core issues were left struggling. For Q3(a) and 3(b) the difficulty for candidates was to identify which ideas were relevant. How far had Luther's ideas developed by 1520 and what were the Ninety-Five Theses about? Responses also tended to lose sight of the question half way through. Likewise, evidence to support points was at a premium for Q4, not so much about the Anabaptists themselves, but about why they mattered and their importance to the German Reformation. Robespierre and the French Revolution saw more responses to Q5 on The Collapse of the Ancien Regime than to Q6 on Foreign and Domestic Conflict. The temptation with Q5(a) was to offer a descriptive account of social conditions in Ancien Regime France, which could not be justified unless it was very closely related to the question set. The ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu were well explained by some candidates, and it is just such a facility with philosophical and political thought which bodes so well for future study at A2 and beyond. Although examiners were as generous as they could be in interpreting the wording of the question, sections of responses which talked about the well-known political clubs and societies of Paris such as the Cordeliers as if they were flourishing in the 1770s could not be credited. Likewise there was some reasonable leeway in considering precisely which French people may have been receptive to ideas about the separation of powers, for example. However, it was not acceptable for weaker candidates to read into the words 'agree to summon the Estates-General' the idea that Louis XVI willingly summoned them the better to help him sit down convivially with them at Versailles in order to sort out the myriad problems which France faced. Due consideration of states of affairs was important to success with this question, namely the recent actions and responses of the Paris *Parlement* and the Assembly of Notables; responses seen were less familiar with these institutions than with the succession of Finance Ministers whose contributions and failings were mostly well outlined. Q6 was mostly answered by candidates who knew their onions. They showed a good understanding of the events of the revolutionary wars but were on less familiar territory in explaining, as the Specification puts it, 'how the foreign war affected political, social and economic issues within France'. Opposition to the revolutionary government in the Vendee was largely explained from the perspective of the centre and not the region itself, skewing the response somewhat.

Russia in Turmoil was the most popular section of the paper, with most responses to Q7. 'Bloody Sunday' may have appeared as a gift, and the question itself could not have been more straightforward, but some familiar problems resurfaced. The first was a tendency to 'start the story' back in the 1860s with the emancipation of the serfs, and/or to discuss the nationalities question, and/or to discuss in detail the Trans-Siberian Railway. Exploring long-term and structural factors behind an event is perfectly valid, of course, but scene-setting descriptive passages which are not tied in to the question set leave candidates little time and space to reach the heart of the issue. Secondly, and related to this point, I have written in previous Reports that bad history or wrong history features in the Russia questions for F982 more than in other parts

of Historical Explanations units. For example in this case, the Bloody Sunday marchers were not, predominantly, peasants. They were industrial workers and St Petersburg residents, for the most part. 'Bloody Sunday' cannot be portrayed as a peasant uprising against the Tsar. Some responses were able to finesse these points with aplomb. One response talked about redemption payments as a background circumstance which disgruntled some protesters, whereas the humiliation felt at the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War was a common issue to all. As one examiner put it, 'Some [candidates] got into a muddle by suggesting that the poor living and working conditions made the workers hate the Tsar, then (empathetically) explaining the workers' naive belief that the Tsar would solve all their problems - you can't have it both ways, but many candidates wanted to'.

Q7(b) invited candidates to offer explanations that moved away from January 1905 and on to the Union of Unions, the Potemkin Mutiny and the October Manifesto. Some overlap with the previous question, as always, was appropriate. Some responses signalled an understanding of the issues surrounding 'opposition to the Tsar' and opposition to the Tsarist system, which were also entirely appropriate given the formation of the St Petersburg Soviet during this period. Q8 produced stronger answers on the abdication than on economic problems. The abdication was fluently explained in better responses as the outcome, not inevitable, of a series of military and political actions, both longstanding and immediate, some of the Tsar's making and others well beyond it. Starting an explanation with the abdication itself and then working outward and backward proved no less successful than starting with WWI and moving forward. 'Economic problems' was very well grasped in some responses as covering bread rationing and the Putilov strike, to take only two 'immediate' examples in addition to the more familiar longstanding grievances of poor farming methods and underinvestment. The advantage of starting in the 'here and now' is that it helps to explain why economic problems led to revolution, which is the actual question. As several excellent responses indicated, adopting an 'if you take this away' test produces interesting answers and helps shape an argument. Thus, if you take away the problem of too many resources being directed to support the Russian army, would you have a revolution in February 1917? If not, which economic problems *were* necessary for that revolution to take place? Weaker responses took refuge in generic descriptions of famine (it seems to examiners that Russia was in permanent famine and never had a good harvest) or inflation or peasant hardship.

### **Practicalities**

This session again saw very few rubric infringements, so the good work of centres in explaining how the paper works is appreciated. It would be helpful to remind candidates that abbreviations, contractions or informal usages ('Liz' for Elizabeth I, 'NII' for Nicholas II) are perfectly acceptable in plans but not in the body of examination answers.



## F983, F984 Using historical evidence

### General Comments:

The entry for these units remains steady, with slightly more candidates for F984 (c1200) than for F983 (c1000). In F983 the most popular study topic is The Impact of War on British Society and Politics since 1900. However, there are substantial numbers of candidates for each of the other study topics. In F984 a large majority answer on Race and American Society, 1865-1970s, with a few Centres entering for each of the other study topics.

What makes these papers challenging is the fact that candidates adapt to a selection of unseen sources that can be interpreted in a variety of ways and where inferences often need to be made before their relevance is apparent. The thoughtfulness and ingenuity of candidates can be truly impressive and at its best reveals the flexibility of approach and engagement with sources, as well as understanding of the concept of evidence, that this specification is designed to promote.

Almost all candidates completed the paper, although part (a) answers sometimes suggested that candidates omitted reference to a few sources in order to leave sufficient time for (b). There was also evidence of inappropriate use of time where candidates wrote more for (b) than for (a). A few candidates combined their responses to (a) and (b). The questions are different in focus and have discrete mark schemes. It is not the examiner's task to separate out the two answers, and these responses were marked as (a) only.

Many candidates approach the task in (a) by considering the claim made in the interpretation and then organising evidence in a clear argument for and against before reaching a judgement containing a new interpretation that better reflects the evidence in the sources. This is certainly the most successful strategy. While some candidates can handle an argument in which they state their amended interpretation at the outset and then test the original interpretation while simultaneously justifying their improved one, this can lead to confusion. This is most often the case where, on closer analysis of the sources, the 'improved' interpretation is found to contain significant flaws in relation to the source evidence. Both these approaches can only be effective when the candidate has carefully read and considered the sources prior to beginning the answer.

Many candidates displayed sound contextual knowledge and fewer than in previous years used their knowledge of the topics covered in the sources, rather than the source evidence, to answer the question. For example, Examiners noted that many candidates had a working understanding of the powers of the different elements within the U. S. Federal Government and were able to use this to explain the inaction of FDR and the actions of Truman and LBJ. The use of knowledge rather than sources is more commonly an issue where the content is episodic rather than continuous, as in F983 study topics on Tudor rebellions, radicals and popular protest and on the impact of war on Britain.

Too many answers were flawed because candidates had not read and understood the interpretation, or alternately, had failed to read the sources and the information beneath them fully and accurately.

Some candidates were aware that they should unpack the interpretation before starting to use the source evidence. Certainly it is worth having a clear idea of what the interpretation means, but questioning what is meant by 'people' or 'wars' in F983 Q4(a) was not productive. In F983 Q3(a) some candidates started with a narrow definition of 'radicals', asserting that the term could only apply to those who demanded political (constitutional) change. They therefore rejected sources 2 and 4 as useless for testing purposes. While this is a view, candidates need to

recognise that it is possible to class as 'radical' any idea or activity that seriously challenges the status quo, whether the challenge be constitutional or socio-economic.

The term 'classical past' defeated some candidates on F984 Q3(a) and although most recognised the term and its meaning where it was clarified in Source 7 several candidates simply took the meaning to be 'past' whether medieval or classical. A few candidates did not understand what was meant by 'taking the lead in the struggle for' in F984 Q4(a).

The failure to read sources thoroughly presented particular problems in F983 Q3 Source 1, where many candidates failed to note that members of the London Corresponding Society were acquitted. This meant that the starting point regarding the control exercised by the authorities was inaccurately represented. Sources that contained evidence which, at face value, appeared contradictory also presented problems.

F984 Q4 Source 3 had Wilson stating, 'I wish to see the colored people progress'. Some candidates were able to put this together with, 'Segregation is not humiliating but a benefit,' recognising that Woodrow Wilson was appeasing his audience with the first part of his remarks. Too many, however, read these elements as two contradictory statements and were unable to reconcile them with each other or with their contextual knowledge of Woodrow Wilson's racist credentials. In F984 Q1 Source 2, the description of Denmark identified that while some parts were sterile and desert-like, other parts were more fertile. It was rare to find a candidate who used these two points together.

Many candidates read too literally and at face value. Hence a source which does not directly mention the issue in the interpretation is either ignored or discarded as useless. This was often the case with F984 Q4 Source 1. Again this resulted in invalid amended interpretations. While examiners were liberal with the way candidates interpreted this source - the Freedmen's Bureau was initiated by Lincoln, but not supported by Andrew Johnson - they were less sympathetic to candidates who assumed that Jim Crow laws applied to schools during Reconstruction or who misread the source and assumed it referred only to schools in the North ('... a multitude of small schools scattered in the rural areas of the South that are not included in this report.'). Further issues with sources are detailed in comments on individual questions.

A further issue arises when candidates try to make the evidence fit a pre-learned interpretation or one based on their own assumptions. Simple patterns cannot always be found, and those who attempted to argue that there was a gradual decrease in the level of patriotism in relation to war in F983 Q4(a) or that the control exercised by the authorities over radicals gradually increased (or decreased) in F983 Q3(a) had to distort their interpretation of the sources significantly in order to establish these patterns.

Responses often contain vast quantities of material that does not move the argument forward and which is, therefore, redundant. Most candidates would benefit from spending more time reading the sources, thinking about how they relate to the interpretation and planning an argument before starting to write. Examiners do not need to be told what the source is and what it says before learning how the candidate intends to use the evidence to test the interpretation. A particularly cumbersome approach involves identifying what the source says 'at first glance', then making inferences from the text, then referring to the provenance to undermine all that has already been said by claiming that it is unreliable or exaggerated. By the time the candidate has used this technique with each source in turn, the argument has become so obscured as to be impenetrable. All that is really needed is the use of the evidence that is deemed to be acceptable once the source has been evaluated. This must necessarily take into account why the 'face value' reading has been added to, amended, or rejected.

Conversely candidates often expect the Examiner to do a good deal of work, failing to provide evidence or quotes to demonstrate how they have drawn an inference from a source. If claims or assertions about sources are not clearly made they cannot be credited.

Some candidates seemed deliberately to limit the number of sources used in (a). This conclusion is drawn on the evidence that their responses to (b) often contained detailed and insightful references to sources not used in (a). The result is that they cannot score well in AO2b, since they have ignored a large proportion of the evidence in terms of valid testing of the original interpretation and any conclusion cannot be said to reflect the evidence that can be inferred from the sources as a set.

Part (b) answers were disappointingly weak this session. There is no need to begin a part (b) answer with an outline of the task or a generalised statement along the lines of this example. "Like many sources around the world most of them can not be 100% reliable, this is the same with sources we have been given. Also we must be aware of how typical they are. Such as if they are used a lot of the time."

What is essential is that the candidate steps back from the task undertaken in (a) and recognises and acts on, firstly the need to think like an historian, and secondly the need to consider the value of the sources rather than simply the evidence they contain.

What was noticeable was that candidates find it difficult to stand outside the source and see it as a source of evidence rather than of information. Most know that they should consider the reliability, typicality and purpose of the source, but having picked a source to comment on, they consider these qualities in relation to the content rather than the source itself. Supporting evidence is often too generalised to allow, but it was clear that many candidates had been well-rehearsed in the requirements of the question and were trying to support their assertions. For example, F984 Q1 Source 3 describes the attack on Lindisfarne. Many candidates evaluated this well using the fact it was written by a monk about pagans who had desecrated a monastery to explain why the comments were harsh. Comments regarding typicality, on the other hand, tended to relate to the activity described. Where further examples were provided this was rewarded, but vague claims about typicality cannot be accepted as they do not reveal what the candidate knows and understands about the topic.

Few candidates were ambitious, instead confining themselves to evaluative comments about types of sources rather than engaging with the particular sources provided. Comments generally related to the problems encountered by the candidate sitting the examination rather than the historian referenced in the question. Thus candidates frequently identify missing information about a source: we do not know who collected the information on strikes (F983 Q4 source 2). More disturbingly many candidates identified information as missing when it was clearly on the paper: we do not know how many people were questioned in the poll (F983 Q4 source 6) or, there is only one source from an African American (F984 Q4).

In (b) answers, candidates will not be rewarded above L4 in AO2a unless they make points about the sources on the paper, rather than the type of source in general or the evidence in the source. The most commonly identified issue is that a source is biased or otherwise unreliable. This gives the impression that historians are simply looking for more and more factually correct information; it fails to recognise the nature of historical enquiry, which is what this question addresses. The assumption is made that there is a 'true' version of events and that this is what the historian is searching for.

This limited understanding of the nature of the discipline of history also leads to the identification of fact-based 'historians' questions'. As guidance, candidates could use the rule that if they can find out the answer on the internet within a few minutes, it is not an historian's question. Thinking about the enquiry term at the beginning of the question would be a good start: questions starting with 'what' or 'who' are less likely to lead to historical enquiry than those starting, for example, 'why' or 'how significant'. It is unlikely that an historian would use a source to find out simple factual information. If the candidate, sitting in the examination room, does not know something she cannot look it up; her position is not that of the historian. Candidates should, therefore, be discouraged from listing those whose voices are omitted or identifying what they are not told on

the basis that an historian would benefit from a more balanced set of views (this is entirely dependent on the historian's question) or that an historian cannot judge the reliability of a source without knowing exactly who wrote it.

There was, however, more evidence this year that candidates were trying to explain the significance for the historian of what was omitted from the sources provided. In F983 Q2 candidates noted that no rebellions from the reign of Henry VII were included, thus distorting the overall conclusion because tax and dynastic challenges were at the heart of these rebellions, while religion only became an issue after Henry VIII's break from Rome, and so sources about them would have changed the balance of the evidence. F983 Q4 started with the First World War. Candidates were aware of the jingoistic patriotism of the Boer War and noted that a source about it could have provided a firmer basis for the idea that patriotism was stronger at the beginning of the period than later on. In F984 Q2 several candidates criticised the set of sources on the basis that there were no examples of sculpture which they felt was the art form at the heart of the Renaissance artists learning from the classical past.

The proportion of candidates who express themselves lucidly and legibly is disappointing. There were too many examples of incomplete argument or inferences that were not clearly drawn from the sources. Where the inference is obvious then an examiner can follow the argument and may give the benefit of the doubt. However, where the argument is unclear they will not do so. In some cases amended interpretations were phrased in the form of a question. Equally, too many candidates handicap themselves by poor handwriting. This presents a particular problem when the numbers of sources are impossible to identify.

### **Comments on Individual Questions:**

#### **F983 Q1: The Impact and Consequences of the Black Death in England up to the 1450s**

Most candidates engaged successfully with the interpretation, recognising that wealth and power could relate to land holdings and values, numbers of personnel and the ways in which they were regarded by society, including in their political roles.

The sources were understood at face value, and most candidates were able to draw at least simple inferences. The source least well-used was Source 6, the extract from the Canterbury Tales. This was partly because many candidates seemed to think that Chaucer came from peasant stock and that literary views reflect those of the lower orders rather than the elite. In addition many candidates do not progress beyond the idea that the purpose of literature is to entertain: few recognised that social commentary such as the description of the monk can only entertain when it refers to character types that are recognised by the audience. Source 5 was not understood by all, with the reference to 'moderate salary' being taken by some as indicating a pay-cut and by others as an increase. This demonstrates the consequences of not reading sources fully, since the first paragraph of the source made clear that priests were demanding excessive payment for their services. Most candidates grouped Sources 1 and 3 on the basis that they indicated a decrease in wealth, although some noted that in Source 3 this was also attributed to the high levels of taxation demanded of them by the king. The most common point made in evaluation was that Sources 1, 2 3 and 7 only related to one locality. The most common point that was missed was that Source 1 provided a comparison before and after the Black Death, so there was an indication of how the relative wealth of the Church before and after could be judged.

Contextual knowledge was generally adequate, but could be used more effectively to draw inferences or evaluate the sources. Some candidates recognised that if the Archbishop of Canterbury, the most senior cleric in the country, had to reissue an order, then power in the Church was clearly diminished. Some candidates also recognised that the Church had a vested interest in under-assessing its wealth, since the tax-grabbing monarch, eager to finance the

Hundred Years' War would see a wealthy Church as easy prey for tax demands, as Source 3 implies. The meaning of Source 4 was only appreciated by a few candidates. This suggests that they were not sufficiently familiar with the workings of government to recognise that the clergy were to be excluded from the chief offices of state.

Many candidates recognised that the short term impact of the Black Death was not maintained and used this to formulate an amended interpretation. Some differentiated between power and wealth, recognising that although wealth improved, power was compromised in that the monk in Source 6 was a source of ridicule and the money-grabbing priests in Source 5 had also damaged the reputation of the Church.

### **F983 Q2: Protest and Rebellion in Tudor England, 1489-1601**

The rebellions to which the sources related were all familiar to candidates. None were inaccessible although there was a tendency among weaker candidates to use the source as a reference point for writing about what had been learned about the causes of the rebellion. The reference to the clergy and Church parliament in Source 1 was rarely claimed to be a religious cause, perhaps because the candidates were well aware that the Amicable Grant protest was caused by tax demands. Fewer picked up on the anti-Wolsey comments, although those who knew that Edward Hall was an opponent used this to evaluate the source. Many candidates quoted Source 3's final sentence, 'There is no mention of religion made among any of them, ...' to challenge the interpretation, ignoring the final clause 'except in Cornwall and Norfolk'. This selective reading clearly distorts the ambassador's commentary on events. Besides this, candidates did not seem aware that this final point referred to the two most large scale rebellions of 1549 - perhaps because they had learned to call them the Western or Prayer Book and Kett's Rebellions. Again, this meant that their use of the source was limited. Most candidates recognised that Sources 5 and 6 both related to the Northern Earls Rebellion. However, although they recognised that one was from the government's side (some thought it was written by William Cecil) and the other was a statement by a rebel, they made nothing of the clear corroboration of the two regarding the causes of the rebellion.

While many recognised that rebellions can have multiple causes, few candidates saw factors such as religion and succession as being linked. Thus Source 4 was seen to show xenophobic tendencies, with some desire to protect the rebel leader's political position. This was rarely linked to the religious element, although many were aware of Wyatt's Protestant leanings. Similarly, the statements made by Northumberland 'Our first object was the reformation of religion' was not linked to 'and preservation of the person of the Queen of Scots as next heir' as a religious element. However, there was clear understanding of the issues - several candidates recognised that there was a discrepancy between what the earl said about Mary's position as 'next heir' and the actual aim of deposing Elizabeth and placing Mary on the throne. This was used effectively to evaluate the source.

In (b) many candidates made vague claims about the nature of chronicles, letters and interrogations in general without effective linkage to the sources provided. There were more attempts than in the past to comment on the sources themselves, but effective evaluation remains an area for improvement. Candidates are prone to speculation - for example, suggesting that the German ambassador may have wished to demonstrate the weakness of Edward VI's government. A better approach would have been to recognise that the comment 'except in Cornwall and Norfolk' suggests that the ambassador had little grasp of the relative seriousness of different rebellions. He implies that these two rebellions were less significant, yet they were the most widespread and difficult to quell. Alternatively, candidates might have recognised that grouping these two rebellions as having religious causes is misleading since the Western (Cornish) rebellion had primarily religious aims, while Kett's Norfolk rebellion gave only minor reference to religious factors.

### **F983 Q3: Radicalism, Popular Politics and Control, 1780-1880s**

While unpacking the interpretation is a useful starting point, those who did so by defining radicalism as a term that only describes those who wanted revolutionary changes to the political, meaning constitutional, structure of the country handicapped themselves significantly as this meant that at least two of the sources were rejected as irrelevant and others were of questionable relevance. Knowledge of the topic was generally sound. In the case of the use of the militia to suppress radicals, however, some candidates did not appear to be aware that using the police force was not an option in the early nineteenth century. The political stance of the Leeds Mercury also presented some problems: some claimed it was a government newspaper, while others assumed that because it was based in a northern city it was a radical publication. Responses in this topic often follow a formulaic approach that prevents candidates from constructing a coherent argument. Typically candidates group sources by period. Thus Sources 1-3 related to the period of the French Revolution, Sources 4 and 5 were from the Chartist era or the period of the Reform Act, and the last two sources were simply what was left over. Date was the only factor that these sources had in common, so this grouping was a handicap to coherence. Candidates would have been more successful in generating an argument if they had grouped according to the type of aims of the protestors, for example. A second formulaic approach is that described in the general remarks: the candidate extracts evidence at face value and comments in relation to the interpretation; then looks more closely at the source, possibly still at face value but extracting more detail and revise their comments regarding the interpretation; then provides all the reasons that the source is unreliable without any further comment regarding the interpretation. The candidate then continues, using this approach for the other sources in the group, then generalises from the evidence. The stage of deciding what conclusions or evidence can reliably be inferred from a source is omitted, so the generalisation may draw on evidence that has been shown to be flawed. This almost invariably leads to a confused and often invalid argument.

In Source 1 many candidates only noticed that the leaders of the London Corresponding Society were acquitted on second reading. Since this reversed the conclusion that had been drawn regarding government control, this created confusion in the argument. Few candidates made good use of the cartoons. Certainly the formulaic approach described above is not useful since no historian would use a cartoon to find out 'what happened' and nor are cartoons designed to convey that information. Many candidates recognised or knew that Cruikshank sympathised with those in the crowd at St. Peter's Field. A few used the way in which the hussars are depicted and what the officer is saying to demonstrate Cruikshank's sympathies. On the whole, however, candidates used their knowledge of the incident, rather than the detail in the source in their argument. This extract is an example of using knowledge rather than the source. "Source 6 is another act from the government, the Second Reform Act. This shows that the government were giving more to the people as they now respected the radicals and the working class more." Source 7 was less well used than Source 3, perhaps because candidates had spent so long analysing and commenting on the earlier sources that they did allow sufficient time for consideration of the later sources. Those who did use the source recognised that the politicians were competing for votes, but often failed to put any weight on what the politicians were championing: Socialism and Tory Democracy. Others claimed, despite the information beneath, that the cartoon was of Gladstone and Disraeli. Those who made good use of this source often did so to demonstrate how the nature of control had changed from attempts to suppress radicalism using harsh legislation and the militia to making concessions and incorporating its ideas within the legislative agenda.

### **F983 Q4: The Impact of War on British Society and Politics since 1900**

Prior knowledge and/or superficial reading of the source evidence suggested to many candidates that patriotism had declined over the period. Trying to make the evidence fit this pattern of change was, however, challenging and led to some contorted arguments where candidates realised part way through their answer that this interpretation could not be supported. Attempting to demonstrate that the evidence showed more patriotism during total wars than at other times was also problematic in the light of sources 2, 3 and 4. The strong showing of patriotism at the time of the Falklands conflict also undermined this argument. Although Source 7 suggested that the 'all-British' nature of the Falklands conflict was the key to generating patriotism and from Source 6 it could be inferred that it was being America's partner in crime was the issue that turned people off the war, these issues were less clear in the other sources, so could not be used to generate an overall argument without introducing a good deal of knowledge that was unrelated to the sources. Interpretations focusing on the role of propaganda in generated patriotism were often the ones that worked best.

Source 2 was generally used to indicate lack of patriotism: striking is unpatriotic in wartime. The fact that these industries were critical in wartime was sometimes noted. Better candidates recognised that government controls over workers and the expectations of workers in terms of pay and conditions during wartime made their lives harder and that they were, therefore likely to protest. What few recognised was that the number of strikes does not give an indication of how many workers were on strike nor for how long. A similar issue arose with Source 5. Candidates tended to see any action that challenged displays of patriotism as unpatriotic - recognising that soldiers might be patriotic yet offended by the Sun's headlines was not an option.

The sources that presented the greatest problems of interpretation were the statistical ones. Simply reading them was difficult for some. For example, one candidate criticised Source 2 because underneath it said that the list of strikes was from 1914 - 1945, yet the table finished at 1930. Several decided that a short-coming of Source 6 was that it did not indicate how many had taken part in the poll. Although the numbers questioned might be regarded as small, one could assume that Ipsos-Mori ensured an age, gender and background spread in those questioned. Of greater significance, as a few candidates recognised, was the question that was asked. This left scope to discuss whether backing a prime minister or not is related to patriotism, and offered the opportunity to cross-reference with Sources 7 (the Falklands War as a successful vote-winner for Thatcher) and 4 (Churchill's speech).

In terms of use of the evidence, however, Sources 3 and 4 were most challenging. Both indicated not patriotism, but attempts to generate patriotism. Candidates were aware of the 'Blitz spirit' and the extent to which it was manufactured, yet found it difficult to use sources that were doing exactly that. Better candidates then linked this with the Sun's efforts to replicate this Second World War government tactic during the Falklands War.

### **F984 Q1: The Vikings in Europe 790s-1066**

Candidates were familiar with the idea of push and pull factors for Viking journeying so were in a good position to recognise the factors implied by the sources. None of the sources was particularly problematic although some candidates found Source 4 difficult to interpret as they were not sufficiently familiar with the different groups mentioned. Source 1 differentiated well between those who simply identified the hardships described and those who went further by inferring that if the level of wealth described was that of a chieftain, then ordinary Vikings must have lived a tough life. Too many candidates used Source 2 selectively, picking some points in support of the interpretation and others to challenge it without considering the source as a whole. Source 3 elicited some predictable comments about monks demonising Vikings, but also allowed better candidates to discuss why the raiders destroyed what might have been of use to them. The reasons for sailing further afield were not always clear and some nuances were missed, such as the description of 'uninhabitable lands' in Source 7. Evaluation of sources

tended to rely on generic points rather than relating to the Sources provided. Hence monks writing about Vikings are always critical because the Vikings are heathen and destroy monasteries, even when the events refer (as in the case of Source 6) to an era when Norman Vikings had converted to Christianity. Sagas are regarded as entertainment more often than as a means of conveying cultural values, and consequently evaluation of Source 5 was limited. One of the problems for candidates was that most sources referred only to Scandinavia or to places to which the Vikings journeyed, so they found it difficult to link hardships in Scandinavia with journeying. Better candidates made good use of details in the sources to cross-reference points. For example they noted that Source 1 stated that the Finns only fished in the summer whereas one of the attractions of Iceland, according to Source 5, was 'good fishing all-year round'. Source 2 refers to the Danish habit of enslaving fellow Danes whom they had captured, while Source 3 notes that monks who were not slaughtered were taken away in chains, suggesting that they too were to be kept or sold as slaves.

Candidates often succumb to the 'raiders then traders and/or settlers' interpretation of Vikings, but candidates should be aware that they need to refer to dates when analysing the sources if they want to justify this conclusion. Candidates also know that most Vikings did not journey, but they did not need to mention this in relation to the interpretation on this year's paper which only sought to explain the motives of those who did journey.

### **F984 Q2: The Italian Renaissance c1420-c1550**

Candidates generally engaged well with this question provided they understood the term 'classical past'. The following vague definition illustrates the confusion of some: 'Classical past could mean many things but due to the Renaissance it means all the art that has come before its time. ... In my opinion the classical past is something of art that happened before and it tied with things such as the Church as many paintings were commissioned for it'. For those who were uncertain, there were clues in sources such as Source 7. Knowledge of the basic terminology of the topic is expected.

Some candidates are well-rehearsed in the characteristics of paintings at different periods of the Renaissance and were able to identify salient details in the Source 1 and 5 to illustrate their arguments. The following extract is an excellent example of a candidate using the evidence to test not just whether the classical past was a causal factor, but whether it drove the *development* of the arts. 'The subjects of the Mannerist painting are two classical figures - Bacchus and Ariadne from Greek literature. This shows the desire to revive the classical past in a contemporary way, using the new Mannerist techniques to express a classical story. However, as Source 5 was commissioned by the Duke of Ferrara for his palace, another motive for this painting would be to impress courtiers and not simply because of a desire to return to antiquity. The level of support Source 5 offers is therefore decreased and the interpretation needs to be modified to include patronage as a driver of the arts'. While there is excellent analysis and evaluation here, the candidate fails to recognise that it was probably the Duke of Ferrara's interest in the classical past that determined the subject of Titian's painting. At the very least he must have had some interest in classical mythology to commission or purchase the painting. Other candidates failed to spot the obvious classical mythological subject matter of Source 5, but claimed that the Roman tax collector in Source 1 was an example of classical subject matter. Candidates recognised the classical columns in Source 3 but were less secure about the dome; they knew that Brunelleschi's dome in Florence was the first example, but not always that it was the first example in the Renaissance.

When drawing a conclusion most candidates saw the causal factors that were apparent in the sources as discrete; better answers established a relationship between them, or identified changing influence over time.



### **F984 Q3: European Nationalism 1815-1914: Germany and Italy**

This is the least popular option, but candidates are generally knowledgeable about developments in both Italy and Germany. Contextual knowledge was used effectively and related to both events and the characters mentioned in or writing the sources. The construction of a coherent argument proved more difficult, although the topic lends itself to separate consideration of Germany and Italy. The sources that were used best were those that related to events familiar to the candidates, such as Source 6. However, the use made of Source 1 showed an excellent grasp of the situation in Germany at the beginning of the period and of the nature of the influence of the French revolution and subsequent occupation. There was good debate about the relative importance of the circumstances created by revolutions and the role of individuals, for example in relation to 1848 in Germany and in 1860 in Italy.

Clearly there will be omissions from the set of sources provided, but some candidates identified topics beyond the scope of the specification such as developments in unified Italy as limitations of the set.

### **F984 Q4: Race and American Society, 1865-1970s**

Candidates generally tackled this question well in the sense that they were able to provide an argument with evidence from the sources on both sides. Source 1 did not say that the Freedmen's Bureau was Lincoln's responsibility although many knew that it was. Others knew that Andrew Johnson, the president at the time, was unsupportive of its work and that the bureau was soon closed. Even without this knowledge most candidates worked out that a government organisation must have some measure of support from the president. Thus the source could be used on either side of the argument, but it was ignored by too many. Weaker candidates often read the source carelessly, concluding that it referred only to northern schools and not appreciating that it was the rural southern schools that were omitted from the report. Most candidates were familiar with the work of Booker T. Washington, although a few thought he was a president. The main issue with this source was that candidates knew what else was said in the Atlanta Address and used this rather than the extract on the paper to form their argument. Source 3 needed some unpacking as Wilson's initial comments sounded supportive of African Americans, yet the final sentence confirmed what many knew - that Wilson had racist views. Surprisingly few candidates put the opening remarks in the context of the audience to whom Wilson was speaking. Another issue with this source was that some candidates, presenting an amended interpretation suggesting that individuals were more important than presidents, placed William Monroe Trotter in the 'individual' category, although he is part of a delegation and is designated by his role in the National Equal Rights League. He represents the views of an organisation rather than simply his own. Some candidates thought that Eleanor Roosevelt was married to Theodore, which would have made the content of her letter somewhat surprising. Nevertheless, most knew about Eleanor Roosevelt's views and used this well. Many were also able to pick up on her statement about the powers of federal government, although they did not cross-reference this to Truman's remarks about the limits of federal powers in protecting the civil rights of its citizens.

Most amended interpretations recognised the greater efforts made by post-war presidents in respect of supporting the struggle for civil rights. However, only a few consistently addressed the issue of leadership, usually down-grading presidential efforts based on the source evidence and contextual knowledge to show that Truman, Kennedy and Johnson were influenced by the impact of the Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement - specifically the actions that had landed Martin Luther King in jail. Rather than taking a lead they were supporting what had become possible in a changing context.

Part (b) contained some valid evaluation at L3, but too often candidates listed what was missing without considering an enquiry question to which it might relate. Lists of Civil Rights leaders and groups, and racial minority groups in the U. S. are not required or rewarded.

## F985, Historical controversies

### General Comments:

The size of the entry was about the same as last year and the overall performance of candidates was similar. It is pleasing to see so many candidates rise to the challenge of a demand exercise that raises issues often not dealt with until undergraduate level. There were clear signs that issues explained in previous reports are being acted upon by candidates and teachers. Appeasement and Imperialism were more popular than the 17th Century Crises.

In response to part (a) questions there were more candidates addressing the interpretation first and basing their answers more securely on the extract. The best answers were those based on several careful readings of the extract with candidates gradually teasing out the main interpretation or argument. It is sensible not to attempt writing the answer until this has been done. The main interpretation can then be explained with relevant use of the extract.

There were fewer answers where the candidates dealt with the interpretation in a few sentences and then spent the rest of the time writing down everything they knew about approaches that recognised in the extract.

The best answers avoided two pitfalls: they did not produce a paragraph-by-paragraph summary of the extract; nor did they break the main interpretation into several sub-interpretations. In all the extracts in the British options there were several parts to the main interpretation, but they all contributed to the big interpretation and needed to be explained as a part of the whole. Some of the extracts contained separate subsidiary interpretations but these needed to be distinguished from interpretations that actually formed part of the overall interpretation.

The best answers were often amongst the shortest. This was because candidates had carefully thought through their answers and knew what they were going to be before they started to write them. Some answers were too long because candidates tried to find every possible approach and method in the extracts and then wrote down everything they knew about these approaches and methods rather than focusing on explaining the part they played in the extracts. Most extracts have no more than two or three main approaches. The most effective answers explained these with close reference to the extract rather than mentioning many other historians who have used similar approaches. Such references should be kept short and used in such a way that they help explain the part played by the approaches and methods in the extract. The weakest answers explained about a range of approaches and methods and lost contact with the extract.

There were still some candidates who found it necessary to evaluate the extracts and explain what they lacked in terms of argument, approaches and methods. Not only does this not gain candidates any marks, but it has a detrimental affect on the overall quality of the answers. It was pleasing to see so how many well-informed candidates there were but this knowledge should be used carefully - candidates need to select what is relevant to the extract and leave out what is irrelevant.

To sum up: the best answers produced a holistic reading of the extract that explained the main interpretation and all of its facets. This was done clearly and concisely with close reference to the extract. These answers then went on to explain the main approaches and methods present. Some brief references were made to historians who have produced similar or contradictory interpretations, but this was done so as to further and deepen the analysis of the extract. A similar approach was used with approaches and methods. Some connection should be attempted between the interpretation and the approaches but this should not be done in a mechanical way.

Answers to part (b) are gradually improving. The breadth and depth of knowledge of candidates of a range of historians and their interpretations was most impressive. But, as in answering part (a), this knowledge needs to be used in a selective and disciplined way.

Evaluation of the named approach was at the heart of the best answers. Weaker answers described and explained the approach but failed to evaluate. Some candidates only evaluated interpretations of particular historians who have used the approach. The better candidates evaluated the approach more generally, as an approach. The interpretations of particular historians can be used as examples of the approach, but the approach itself needs to remain the main focus. The weakest answers simply explained all the other possible approaches and claimed that the named approach was lacking because it did not include them. Examiners are looking for an assessment of the contribution the approach has made to the study of the topic. This can often be achieved by examining the questions that historians using the approach have asked about the topic and has been learned by investigating and responding to these questions. It is also worth considering what important aspects of the topic have not been revealed by the approach because of its main characteristics.

## **Comments on Individual Questions**

### **British History**

#### **Question No.1**

The Debate over the Impact of the Norman Conquest, 1066-1216

No candidates attempted this question.

#### **Question No. 2**

The debate over Britain's 17th Century Crises, 1629-89

An encouraging number of candidates were able to explain the overall argument of the historian in part (a) - that war was neither inevitable nor a result of chance factors. Nobody wanted a war but beliefs and actions (especially because of Pym's work) led to mistrust and misunderstanding between the sides resulting in a situation where people's real intentions were less important than what others believed were their intentions. There were some candidates who used each paragraph separately and as a result produced a lot of interpretations and were unable to put them together. Many candidates understood the rejection of grand theories. For part (b) many candidates were knowledgeable about Marxist historians and their interpretations. There was a tendency to evaluate individual historians (Christopher Hill was a favourite) rather than evaluate the approach as a whole.

#### **Question No. 3**

Different Interpretations of British Imperialism c.1850-c.1950

There were some excellent analyses of the extract for part (a) with the candidates producing a holistic reading of the interpretation. However, some fell just short of this. Most candidates understood that the historian argues that economic factors were key but tended to treat aspects of the extract about, e.g. informal empire, new imperialism and domestic issues, as separate arguments rather than as part of the overall argument. Most candidates identified the approach as economic, far fewer went as far as explaining it as a Marxist approach. There were some excellent answers to part (b) demonstrating a mature and sophisticated understanding of the

cultural approach. Other candidates were far less sure and only touched the surface of the approach. Attempts to explain disadvantages often ended up as a list of all the things the cultural approach is not.

#### **Question No. 4**

The Debate over British Appeasement in the 1930s

The interpretation in this extract has several elements (by 1936 Britain had an effective policy, Chamberlain was wrong to change it but his policy can be understood until after Munich when there is no excuse for his policy at all), and they all feed into one overall argument. Many candidates explained the different elements in their answers to part (a), but far fewer put them altogether into a holistic reading of the extract. Many candidates were able to explain the mixture of a focus on human agency and on structural factors. Many concentrated on the release of government documents in 1969 and because it was something they recognised often made too much of it. There were some very interesting answers to part (b) with many candidates explaining how a focus on alternatives often runs into trouble because of structural factors.

## F986, Historical controversies

### General Comments:

The size of the entry was about the same as last year and the overall performance of candidates was similar. It is pleasing to see so many candidates rise to the challenge of a demand exercise that raises issues often not dealt with until undergraduate level. There were clear signs that issues explained in previous reports are being acted upon by candidates and teachers. Witch-hunting and the Holocaust were the most popular options.

In response to part (a) questions there were more candidates addressing the interpretation first and basing their answers more securely on the extract. The best answers were those based on several careful readings of the extract with candidates gradually teasing out the main interpretation or argument. It is sensible not to attempt writing the answer until this has been done. The main interpretation can then be explained with relevant use of the extract.

There were fewer answers where the candidates dealt with the interpretation in a few sentences and then spent the rest of the time writing down everything they knew about approaches they recognised in the extract.

The best answers avoided two pitfalls: they did not produce a paragraph-by-paragraph summary of the extract; nor did they break the main interpretation into several sub-interpretations. In several of this year's extracts there were several parts to the main interpretation, but they all contributed to the big interpretation and needed to be explained as a part of the whole. The Holocaust extract is a good example. Some extracts did contain separate subsidiary interpretations but these needed to be distinguished from interpretations that actually formed part of the overall interpretation.

The best answers were often amongst the shortest. This was because candidates had carefully thought through their answers and knew what they were going to be before they started to write them. Some answers were too long because candidates tried to find every possible approach and method in the extracts and then wrote down everything they knew about these approaches and methods rather than focusing on explaining the part they played in the extracts. Most extracts have no more than two or three main approaches. The most effective answers explained these with close reference to the extract rather than mentioning many other historians who have used similar approaches. Such references should be kept short and used in such a way that they help explain the part played by the approaches and methods in the extract. The weakest answers explained about a range of approaches and methods and lost contact with the extract.

There were still some candidates who found it necessary to evaluate the extracts and explain what they lack in terms of argument, approaches and methods. Not only does this not gain candidates any marks, but it has a detrimental effect on the overall quality of the answers. It was pleasing to see so how many well-informed candidates there were but this knowledge should be used carefully. Candidates need to select what is relevant to the extract and leave out what is irrelevant.

To sum up: the best answers produced a holistic reading of the extract that explained the main interpretation and all of its facets. This was done clearly and concisely with close reference to the extract. These answers then went on to explain the main approaches and methods present. Some brief references were made to historians who have produced similar or contradictory interpretations, but this was done so as to further and deepen the analysis of the extract. A similar approach was used with approaches and methods. Some connection should be

attempted between the interpretation and the approaches but this should not be done in a mechanical way.

Answers to part (b) are gradually improving. The breadth and depth of knowledge of candidates of a range of historians and their interpretations was most impressive. But, as in answering part (a), this knowledge needs to be used in a selective and disciplined way.

Evaluation of the named approach was at the heart of the best answers. Some candidates only evaluated interpretations of particular historians who have used the approach. The better candidates evaluated the approach more generally, as an approach. The interpretations of particular historians can be used as examples of the approach, but the approach itself needs to remain the main focus. The weakest answers simply explained all the other possible approaches and claimed that the named approach was lacking because it did not include them. Examiners are looking for an assessment of the contribution the approach has made to the study of the topic. This can often be achieved by examining the questions that historians using the approach have asked about the topic and has been learned by investigating and responding to these questions. It is also worth considering what important aspects of the topic have not been revealed by the approach because of its main characteristics.

### **Comments on Individual Questions:**

#### **Question No. 1**

Different approaches to the Crusades 1095-1272

In part (a) a good number of candidates managed to focus on the central place the extract gives religion and doing penance in the First Crusade. They were able to explain that this was a new development introduced by Urban that established that fighting could be penitential. Some candidates went on to explain that people were joining the Crusade to benefit themselves in religious terms. Weaker candidates recognised that penance is a central feature of the argument but were unable to fully explain all its facets. Part (b) was generally answered well with most candidates focusing on nineteenth-century interpretations of the Crusades with Scott and a range of relevant historians being used. This worked well and there was good evaluation although most candidates found the shortcomings easier to explain than how the approach has contributed to our understanding.

#### **Question No. 2**

Different Interpretations of Witch-hunting in Early Modern Europe c.1560-c.1660

For part (a) the key to understanding the overall argument of this extract is the focus on 'older' women rather than just on women. A number of candidates missed this. There were also some who dismissed the extract as 'feminist' when it is far more subtle than that. However, a good number of candidates understood that the historian is arguing that older women had key characteristics that reduced their use to society and led them to being identified as witches. Weaker candidates treated the extract as a series of interpretations - e.g the paragraph about German art was treated as a separate point. The best candidates recognised the cultural approach of the extract.

Answers to part (b) were very variable. Some wrote about 'stresses and strains' and social, political and religious changes in a general way with few actual changes being identified. Other answers were able to base their answers on developments such as the rise of capitalism, the Reformation, and the rise of centralized states. Evaluation for disadvantages sometimes consisted of simply explaining alternative approaches.

### **Question No. 3**

#### Different American Wests 1840-1900

Candidates' answers to part (a) came in one of two groups - those which thought the extract rejects Turner, and those that understood it uses a revised version of his approach and reaches partially different conclusions. The latter group was larger. The best candidates understood that the historians argues that people who moved West took many of their values and characteristics with them, and sought the same things that they had wanted in the East. The importance of economic and cultural factors was recognised by many candidates.

In part (b) there were some excellent answers about gender and less good answers about the role of women in the West. The distinction between 'womens' history' and approaches based on issues about gender is an important one.

### **Question No. 4**

#### Debates about the Holocaust

This extract looks at the evolution of Hitler's ideas and aims. In response to part (a) candidates who understood this were more likely to give a holistic reading of the extract and less likely to regard it as consisting of several different interpretations. The historian covers Hitler's ideas in 1918, evidence in 1919 and 1922, and the broadening of Hitler's horizons in 1922 under the influence of Rosenberg. Overlaying all this is the argument about Hitler's use of code words. An encouraging number of good candidates were able to explain all this as one overall interpretation. Most candidates recognised a focus on human agency as an important approach but structural factors were also detected.

In part (b) there were some excellent evaluations of a focus on the German bureaucracy, but there were also some very general answers that were about structuralism in general rather than bureaucracy. A number of candidates fell into the trap of focusing too much on the interpretations of a few historians rather than examining the approach more generally and using particular historians as examples.

## F987 Coursework

### General Comments:

- All Moderators have noted improvements this year in the accuracy of centres' marking, as familiarity with, and confidence in, the coursework experience broadens and deepens.
- Having said this, centres that have been disappointed with coursework results can do at least two things to improve the situation. One is to make use of OCR's Coursework Consultancy Service, which is generally praised for its good advice on proposed titles; another is to persuade the Librarian to subscribe to serious historical journals such as *History Today* or *History Review*. Apart from giving candidates a 'quick start' to their choice of topic, the format is likely to be more accessible than that of 'big books' (though both should, of course, be used).
- Websites should be reviewed very carefully before being referenced in the main study - the minimum requirement is identification of a genuine historian as author of whatever is being used as a source of evidence.
- It is also a good idea to give candidates an opportunity to present the progress of their research and to defend their developing ideas and arguments against the constructive challenge of their peers. The Powerpoint presentation is a regular feature in the coursework provision of several centres, and reflection on this experience often figures prominently in candidates' Research Diaries.
- This links to the formative value of the Research Diary. It is worth repeating, yet again, that the surest route to a good study is a good diary (see further comments below).

### Presentation of Studies:

Coursework studies are generally very well presented. Where they are not, it is usually for one or more of the following reasons:

- There is no front sheet (CCS363).
- The front sheet is attached but the checklist at the bottom is ignored. This may mean that actions associated with the checklist have not been carried out – i.e. cumulative and summative word counts; authentication of the study as the work of the candidate (CCS160); and completion of the **Record of Programme of Study (ROPOS)**. The latter is particularly important. Moderating cannot begin until it has been received, since the Moderator has to check that the content of the study does not overlap with that of any of the taught units. If all candidates have followed the same programme of study, only one copy of the ROPOS need be included.
- It is still the case that occasionally scripts are not stapled together. Whilst separate diary notebooks are permissible (and clearly preferred by several centres), the conventional format is for the study to be printed on several A4 sheets (single or double sided, double line-spacing), followed by a few pages of diary – all stapled or paper-clipped together and placed inside a poly-pocket.
- There are now very few candidates who exceed the word limit and almost all centres 'draw a line' when the 3000-word limit is reached. It would be even more helpful if candidates would remember that they need to include a word count *for each page* as well as the final figure.



### Marking:

The marking was generally sound and some of it most impressive. However, there were inconsistencies as to the use, prevalence and location of (on script) comments. Overall, there was a tendency to be a little generous at the top end and the reverse at the bottom end. This could be the product of a desire to stretch marks but, at times, it was a little harsh on those nearer the low end of the mark spectrum. Narratives in this category quite often had some semblance of analysis or tried to evaluate sources, even if very rudimentarily. The quality of teacher annotation is mainly good – and in some cases very good. Where it is less than accurate or helpful, one or other of the following tend to be evident:

- failure to use the generic mark scheme level descriptors – particularly in summative commentary;
- failure to offer precise margin annotation – identifying, for example, significance at the time/over time; critical use of sources/interpretations; analysis, evaluation, description, cross-referencing etc.
- a tendency to reward too quickly - margin awards should only be made when the relevant 'moves' have been completed. For example, a source cannot be said to have been used 'critically' unless either its value as evidence has been assessed, or it has been used in combination with other sources (usually in cross or counter- reference) to advance the argument in some way. On occasion, candidates were rewarded for 'critical use' when really they had done little more than paraphrase the content of a source.
- Inconsistency in the standards being applied by different markers in the same centre – cross moderation is obviously needed in such cases.

One Moderator reported that scripts from one centre had no comments on them at all, apart from some cursory statements at the end justifying the marks given. Common sense ought to dictate that candidates are placed at a significant disadvantage when the Moderator cannot see how or why particular marks have been awarded by the centre.

### Titles:

- There is a clear distinction that can be seen between the work of centres that made use of the Consultancy Service and those who did not. Those in the former category came up with a number of successful topics, such as:
  - The Suez Crisis;
  - The Great Fire;
  - Peter the Great;
  - Nelson;
  - The Role of the crowd in the French Revolution;
  - The Dissolution of the Monasteries in Norfolk (local study);
  - The Glorious revolution;
  - Chartism;
  - The Punic Wars;
  - The Gaius Marius Reforms;
  - The Irish Famine, and
  - Satyagraha.
- Some candidates suffered from questions that did not create the mechanism for proper analysis, evaluation or assessment of significance. For example,
  - Questions with no reference to significance in the titles

- Questions in which significance is presumed – “Why is Churchill regarded as such a significant figure in ....?”
- Questions that set up comparisons (and so, effectively, double the weight of the task) - “Compare the significance of...”
- The main problem was that of candidates writing to questions that required a causal explanation, rather than a judgement about significance – e.g. ‘*How significant were the Suffragettes in achieving votes for women?*’ This sort of title called for – and all too often received - an assessment of the relative importance of the stated factor, set against other factors, in causing the outcome in question. This betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of historical significance, which is more about *consequence, change and development* than it is about cause – i.e. about the *impact* of a person or event both across and over time. Whilst some studies of this kind managed to establish impact at the time (albeit through causal reasoning), most struggled to progress beyond L3, since the required span of 50-100 years was lacking for the ‘over time’ attempt.
- A similar problem was to be found in topics limited by the duration of a larger event (usually a war) – e.g. ‘*What was the historical significance of Stalingrad?*’ This could certainly succeed for significance ‘at the time’ and could include short-term consequences reaching as far as the end of the war. To succeed ‘over time’, however, the battle would need to be placed within a much longer developmental context of, say, international relations prior to, and following, the war. Hence, candidates who dealt with this in purely military terms found it difficult to develop an ‘over time’ dimension beyond 1945, and so to progress beyond Level 3.
- Finally, candidates found it difficult writing to titles lacking a specific focus – e.g. ‘*How significant was the use of terror by Soviet leaders?*’ or those carrying a twin focus, - e.g. ‘*How significant was JFK and the Civil Rights Bill?*’

### **Attributing Significance:**

#### **AO1:**

- As in previous years, candidates generally scored more highly on assessments of significance at the time than over time.
- In most cases, candidates adopt a ‘developmental’ approach to measuring significance over time, in which they look at the person/event etc. within a context of prior and subsequent developments and make judgements using the terminology of change and development (‘trend’, ‘turning point’, etc.). In some cases, the ‘over time’ measure was arrived at by taking other than a developmental approach – e.g. one based on historiography (where change over time in historians’ interpretations of a person, event, etc. are identified, explained and assessed), or based on ‘resonance’ (where methods of commemorating a person, event, etc. are assessed) – but each must contain similar amounts of critical judgement as the ‘developmental’ approach - in the latter case, for example, something more than an identification of anniversaries, monuments and plaques is needed.
- Beware of formulaic approaches attributed to this or that historical pundit. These can provide a restrictive, rather than liberating experience. It is fine, of course, for candidates to take note of what such people have to say, but they must deploy methods of measuring significance that are relevant to the question at hand rather than to some pre-set formula.

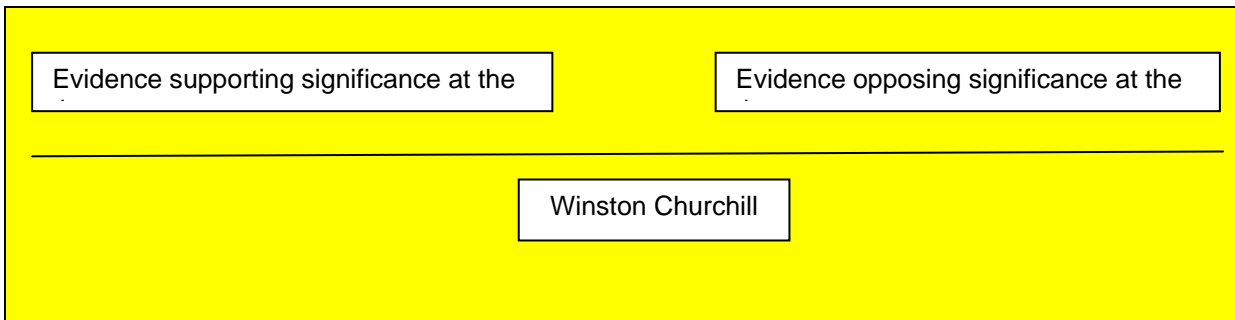
- It is still the case that some answers tended to confuse significance with fame or notoriety. These tended to depend on simple assertions - or assumptions - about “X” being significant, without either explanation or negotiation.
- A distinction needs to be drawn between arguments that lay the two ‘significance’ narratives alongside each other, identifying similarities and differences between them (Level 4) and those that try to *explain* such, and so establish a *relationship between* the two narratives (Level 5). In the very best work, candidates create, in effect, a third interpretation (i.e. a synthesis), based on a merging of both narratives; a form of alchemy that is sustained throughout the study.
- It is important not to neglect the need for basic factual accuracy in all of this. Much can depend on the nature and extent of teacher supervision and guidance here, but for topics that are new to them, candidates need to read widely, in order to create a context of knowledge, within which to develop the argument. For example, in an otherwise well-written analysis of the significance of the Henrician Reformation, the candidate’s argument was undermined by the repeated assertion that England – and its king – became Protestant during the 1530s. This effectively left the candidate nowhere to go in terms of an argument

#### AO2:

- There was a tendency for L3/4 awarded for face-value or illustrative use of source material – i.e. where sources are used simply to illustrate a statement or claim made in the text. At L3, the candidate *begins to make critical use of* source material. This means that there has to be some sign of the candidate treating a source as *evidence of* something. At its most basic level, this might involve the candidate making a simple inference: ‘This would seem to suggest that...’ And the word ‘*begins*’ from the level descriptor also implies that the candidate does not do this consistently. Meanwhile, at L4 and L5, ‘critical use’ is expected to be more persistent and confident – using, for example, skills of cross-reference and/or tests for reliability or usefulness. However, just as the best sports referees tend to be unobtrusive, the best source evaluation tends to appear naturally, without fanfare, throughout the argument. Conversely, weaker candidates tend to pause, give brief biographical information about an author and an often spurious judgement about likely ‘bias’ – e.g. ‘*This historian comes from the same city as Kennedy, so is likely to be...*’; alternatively, they will announce that a source is useful and justify this by reference only to its content. In extreme cases, this deliberate, ‘source-by-source’ approach can actually come to overshadow, and hence conceal, the quality of the argument itself.
- It is quite common to find sources handled critically in the Research Diary but the same sources handled less critically – or even at face value – in the main text. The reasons for this are necessarily obscure; less obscure is the waste of an obvious opportunity to develop sections of the argument in a self-reflective way before launching into the main study (See also below)
- A word about cross-reference. This is a perfectly valid and straightforward approach to the critical use of source material, primary or secondary. So it is puzzling why more candidates – particularly weaker ones – do not make use of it.
- It was clear from Diary entries that some candidates had made ingenious use of sources from past papers for the second AS Module (F983/4). Whilst, clearly, this was only feasible where candidates had actually studied a different AS option, it gave a useful ‘kick-start’ to candidates’ collection and appraisal of source material for their study.
- Another useful ploy seen in Diaries was the ‘synchronic scale’, used for the evaluation of primary and/or secondary sources. This is where, for any dimension of significance,

sources are ranged along an imaginary spectral line pivoted around a point of argument (see Fig 1 below). Sources offering evidence strongly supporting or opposing the argument are placed near the centre; those offering weaker evidence are placed away from the centre. The beauty of the approach is that it keeps critical use of evidence focused on the argument.

Fig 1:A Synchronic Scale



### Footnotes and Bibliographies:

Attempts at cross-reference can occasionally be undermined by super-scripted links to footnotes. Whilst this is a perfectly acceptable convention, it does tend to remove the author from the main text, and so cause more work for the reader in checking the super-scripted reference, to the extent that, in such cases, it is not always clear whether the candidate is offering a reference or a cross-reference! The obvious solution is to make sure that an author's name appears close to the quoted source in the main text – as well as in the footnote.

This is doubly confusing when Internet references are used because they are often lacking an author's name. If the author cannot be identified – or is not a genuine historian - this renders critical use of the source virtually impossible. It is as simple as that.

### Diaries:

Here is a fairly typical Moderator's comment about the quality of the Research Diaries. *The Diaries usually reflected the eventual quality of coursework, not least in the search for sources, the examination and evaluation of such, the interaction with teachers and the extent of interplay and responses to advice given. However, some Diaries' genuine quality was not reflected in the actual texts; points about sources and a sense of critical use were often, strangely, omitted in the main text.*

And here is the explanation. The purpose of the diary, beyond that of providing a basis on which the study can rest, is to give candidates an opportunity for critical reflection on their own thinking and planning – in short, to the experience of metacognition. This explains why, year on year, good diaries produce good studies – at various levels. It is because it provides candidates who are open to the idea with a forum, in which they can draft, amend and refine their thinking - not only about the argument they are building but about the range and value of the supporting evidence. There is also a considerable body of evidence to suggest that reasoning generated in this way is more easily retained and applied to similar problems on other occasions.

### Summary:

In sum, the coursework unit discriminated well, and, at various levels, produced work of remarkable scholarship relative to the ability of the candidates concerned. This included, at the top end, work of a quality that would sit well for any University consideration. The very best responses were often worth 40-plus for their qualities.

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