

GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY B
(SCHOOLS HISTORY
PROJECT)

J411

For first teaching in 2016

J411/39 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 39 series overview

This is the second year of the SHP History B paper: J411/39. Candidates were well prepared for the demands of this paper overall and tackled both knowledge based and source questions well showing an understanding of the breadth of the specification's content and also how to apply their knowledge to the constraints of the examination questions. There was a marked improvement on tackling questions this year with more resilience shown by candidates enabling them to attempt all required questions rather than omitting those that require longer essay style responses or require them to analyse multiple sources and interpretations.

Section A overview

Making of America, 1789-1900. This section of the examination paper is all knowledge based, candidates are expected to answer every question from 1-3 and select an essay question from 4 and 5 to complete.

Question 1 (a)

The Making of America, 1789–1900

- 1 (a) Give one example of a group of people who migrated West between 1839 and 1860. [1]

Candidates performed very well on this question. The vast majority achieved one mark with the most common responses relating to Plains Indians such as the Lakota Sioux, gold miners and Mormons.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) Give one example of a way in which the lives of Plains Indians changed in the years 1877–1900. [1]

Again, candidates generally performed very well on this question. The vast majority achieved one mark with the most common responses relating to destruction of buffalo, conversion to Christianity and Reservations.

Question 1 (c)

- (c) Give one example of how African Americans were discriminated against after the Civil War. [1]

Again, candidates generally performed very well on this question. The vast majority achieved one mark with the most common responses relating to the KKK, segregation and Black Codes.

How to answer 1a, 1b and 1c

Candidates are only required to answer these questions with one word or one phrase. Many candidates are still writing a short paragraph which is not required.

Question 2

- 2 Write a clear and organised summary that analyses big business in America in the years 1877–1900. Support your summary with examples. [9]

Those candidates who had revised the final time period of the Making of America module produced very specific and detailed responses for this question which were articulate and achieved marks within Level 3. The candidates who performed well tended to relate their answers to the shift away from family or individually owned business to the development of Bonanza Farms and Bonanza Cattle Ranches, additionally many candidates analysed the impact of corporations such as the American Tobacco Company. Candidates were expected to be able to support their summary with at least two specific examples of Big Business from 1877-1900. They needed to frame their examples around a second order concept which for most candidates led them to speak about the consequences of Big Business during the time period. An example of a strong candidate's response can be seen in the exemplar where the candidate frames their first paragraph around the move away from individually owned businesses and therefore the second order concept of change.

Lower ability candidates often gave examples which weren't linked to Big Business for example speaking about cotton plantations rather than cotton mills. Many also gave evidence outside of the time period for example the cotton gin and slavery.

Second Order Concepts

Candidates are expected to frame their examples within their summary for question two around at least one second order concept for example change, continuity, diversity, significance, similarity or difference. Candidates do not explicitly have to state a second order concept. However they need to understand the 'analysis' constraint of this question means that when they provide evidence for their summary they then need to show why a historian would be interested in this information e.g. this was significant because ... or this was different from what had gone before due to ...

This idea of 'why would a historian be interested' may be a beneficial way for teachers to deliver the idea of second order concepts particularly for lower ability candidates rather than using the phrase 'second order concepts' which some candidates did state without having an understanding of what they were.

Exemplar 1

In America, the years of 1877 - 1900 saw a huge increase in the West. The big business meant smaller businesses suffered as large business such as Rockefeller's oil company took over the market share. ~~Although~~ The big businesses changed the economy to factory workers and employed unskilled workers, this proving a significant change from the smaller, family businesses such as textiles that had existed previously. ~~*~~ (see next page)

Question 3

- 3 Why did the building of the railroads have such a big impact on the Plains? Explain your answer with examples. [10]

Most candidates achieved at least Level 3 on this question. Many candidates had an awareness of the Plains and the railroad construction and could relate this knowledge to impact. Candidates were expected to provide two or more explained points of why the construction of the railroads had an impact on the Plains. Most candidates argued that the most significant impact on the Plains was the destruction of the buffalo which was detrimental for the Plains Indian's nomadic lifestyle. Many others outlined arguments relating to the development of cow towns and the impact this had on both the Plains Indians and on ease for transportation of products. Higher ability candidates provided at least two impacts and explained these in reference to the question. Most lower ability candidates still managed to identify valid impacts of the railroad construction on the Plains and achieve Level 3 however they didn't explain their points.

Question 4

- 4* 'Slavery alone caused the American Civil War'. How far do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. [18]

This was by far the most popular essay question for candidates. Most candidates had a strong understanding of the link between slavery and the outbreak of the Civil War. Many candidates agreed with the statement by explaining the outbreak of Civil War through arguments relating to the role of abolitionists, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise with the Kansas Nebraska Act and the economic tensions between north and south due to slavery. The more able candidates were also able to give alternate causes for the Civil War for example Lincoln's election and secession. Candidates achieved higher marks on this question if they were able to explain how the four pieces of evidence they had given were related to the question: causation of the American Civil War. Lower ability candidates identified accurate causes of the Civil War such as Lincoln's election but gave evidence which was not applicable to causation of the Civil War such as the Emancipation Proclamation or simply described rather than explained evidence which limited their marks to Level 2. A strong example of explanation in reference to the question can be seen in the exemplar.

Exemplar 2

~~Furthermore,~~ Furthermore, the Kansas-Nebraska Act further increased tensions between the North and South by ending the Missouri Compromise. The Missouri compromise, signed in 1820, aimed to balance the number of slave and "free" states in America so no part of America became more powerful. The Kansas-Nebraska Act angered the North as the new state was by drawing an imaginary line from Missouri to the West, and allowing any state below that line to become a free state and any above becoming a slave state. The Kansas-Nebraska Act angered the North as

The new state was allowed to choose whether it became a slave state or not, ending the Missouri compromise of 1820 and angering the North as they perceived it as giving into the South of America. The Kansas Nebraska Act meant ~~that~~ there was increased tensions over the slavery and thus demonstrating how divisions over slavery caused the civil war.

Question 5

- 5* How far do you agree that control and ownership of land was the most important cause of conflict in the early years of America, 1789–1838? Give reasons for your answer. [18]

This question was not opted for by many candidates. Those who did tackle this question on the earlier time period performed well if they were able to explain specific examples relating to the control and ownership of land such as The Battle of Fallen Timbers, The Indian Removal Act and The Louisiana Purchase. Higher ability candidates also provided alternate arguments for what caused conflict such as the introduction of slavery. Many lower ability candidates produced responses which were generic rather than specific in terms of the examples they gave for why land caused conflict. For example, many described how the American government encouraged Native Americans to move West rather than supporting this with an explained example such as the Trail of Tears. Candidates achieved higher marks on this question if they were able to explain how the four pieces the evidence they had given were related to the question: causes of conflict in the early years of America.

Section B

Question 6

Living under Nazi Rule, 1933–1945

- 6 What can Source A tell us about the Holocaust? Use the source and your own knowledge to support your answer. [7]

Candidates were generally given Level 2 (4-5 marks) for identifying evidence and making an inference based on the source. The most relevant comment to make here is that teachers had clearly taught the skill of inference well this year, but few candidates got to Level 3 because the purpose of the source was not explained. It would be worth explicitly focusing on the importance of provenance when teaching candidates to answer source-based questions.

Question 7

- 7 How useful are Sources B and C and Interpretation D for a historian studying the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship between January and July 1933? In your answer, refer to the two sources and the interpretation as well as your own knowledge. [15]

This question was not well answered by candidates. Too many candidates simply approached this by summarising each of the three sources before making a summative comment on the utility. This level of response is based on the surface features of the evidence and could not progress between Level 2. Some candidates were able to move into the highest levels by explaining what can be learnt from the evidence or explain the purpose of the evidence on a more critical level. The main lesson was that candidates did not focus on the idea of establishing a dictatorship as identified in the question.

Question 8

- 8* 'The lives of all workers improved as a result of Nazi policies between 1933 and 1939.' How far do you agree with this view? [18]

This was the most popular essay question for Nazi Germany. Most candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of policies that were related to work but did not always explain how these policies benefited or disadvantaged workers. For the top marks, candidates needed to explain four examples of impacts. There were some excellent responses that centred on issues such as economic anti-Semitism and 'strength through joy'.

Exemplar 3

8	<p>I agree to a small ^{certain} extent that workers lives improved due to Nazi policies during 1933 and 1939. This is because, I</p>
	<p>think their wages were improved, and they had many more jobs on offer due to things like the construction of the autobahn, and they also had more luxuries such as cheap holidays and vouchers given to them when they worked hard, yet they also worked in poor conditions, for long hours, and despite wages increasing, real wages fell as prices for things like food went up, and workers were tricked into things such as winning a Volkswagen car for their hard work.</p>
	<p>Firstly, I agree because because workers were given more opportunities for work. This was because more jobs opened up before the war began, such as the construction of the autobahn and machinery/weapons, in preparation for the war. Because so many new jobs were available, more people had jobs, and less people were unemployed. Workers also had a lot of hope for themselves, the future of their country under Hitler's power, and hope for their families. This was due to Hitler's promises of cheaper food, vouchers and cheap holidays. They were also able to listen to music, literature and cinema for cheaper prices under Hitler's power. This gave them hope, and also made them work harder. Because of the promises Hitler made to them, they were happier and more excited for the future than before.</p>
	<p>On the other hand, I think their lives also got somewhat worse. Despite their high hopes, the workers who worked hardest never won a Volkswagen car from Hitler, so Hitler lied to them. The fact they won cheaper things meant they had more to look forward to, yet due to propaganda reasons, workers were only allowed to watch Nazi films, music and</p>

literature, and so their freedom was limited greatly. The fact they were working so hard also meant they were working under poor conditions, and the fact they had lost their ^{women's} rights under the law passed by Hitler, ^{in 1933} it meant they had no say in how they wanted working conditions to be improved, so they continued to work hard, and for long hours, under bad conditions such as tiredness and unhygienic conditions, that were unhealthy. Despite an apparent rise in their wages, the cost of things such as foods and other necessities had ~~rose~~ increased, meaning their real wages hadn't increased, but fell instead, as they were paying more for things, which they originally paid less for.

In conclusion, I do agree that Nazi workers lives improved due to Nazi policies between 1933 and 1939, yet only to a small extent, as the workers ~~only~~ lives improving was mostly down to propaganda, and Hitler's lies which gave them hope for a better future for them and Germany, promising them cheaper things, higher wages and unemployment to be ended. Yet, workers lives got worse, as they worked harder, with the hope they'd get more out of it, yet could only listen to Hitler's propaganda music or cinema, and had their rights taken away from them, meaning they worked under extremely poor conditions, for long hours, and for their real wages to be reduced as prices of food went up.

Question 9

- 9* 'The German people supported the war between 1939 and 1945.' How far do you agree with this view? [18]

Few candidates completed this question and it would be accurate to summarise that knowledge and understanding for this question was not closely aligned to the war. The most common error was that candidates were focused on knowledge which was too generic, and this could have been better if examples such as the July plot were a greater focus.

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