

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY B

(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

J411

For first teaching in 2016

J411/61 Summer 2022 series

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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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

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Paper 61 series overview

Centres that have chosen to submit candidates for this component are commended for the extent of the knowledge, depth and empathy their candidates have shown for their chosen sites. While there is inevitably a range of achievement, many candidates demonstrated considerable understanding of the individual nature of their site. There was a genuine sense of appreciation of the value of the sites studied and clear engagement with the questions.

There is a wide range of sites which are used, some of which suit questions more than others, so there has to be a way of comparing the quality of responses across different sites. This year, the mark scheme referred to standard and sustained explanations as a means of quantifying the quality of responses.

A standard explanation was defined as one which made a clear argument and provided a rationale OR supporting evidence from the site/wider context.

A sustained explanation was defined as one which made a clear argument, provided a rationale AND supported this with evidence from the site/wider context.

Responses which did not include any sustained explanations did not progress above the top of Level 3.

Conclusions to responses could raise the marks given but only within the level that the response had achieved; a conclusion did not raise the mark up a level. Responses could be awarded the top mark within the level without a conclusion, if the quality of the response justified that mark.

The Site Proposal Forms are used regularly by examiners to confirm information used by candidates; it is important that they are up to date and reflect current teaching.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided concise explanations of their site using physical features and wider context • regularly referred to the question in their answer • demonstrated a clear line of reasoning in their explanation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wrote generally about their site without specific reference to site features • deviated from the focus of the question they were answering • described the site without reference to the question.

Question 1

- 1 Your site wants reconstruction drawings to show what your site looked like at a particular time in its past.
Explain what you would tell an artist to include in the drawings.
Use physical features of the site as well as your knowledge to support your answer. **[20]**

The question this year related to features which should be included in a reconstruction of the site, in a period chosen by the candidate. It is important that candidates keep referring back to the phrasing of the question to make sure they stay focused.

This question required candidates to specify a single period on which to focus their answer. This is a customary expectation of this paper but there are often questions about what constitutes a 'period'.

Selecting a time period

There is no exact answer. It all really depends on the site the candidate has studied. Whatever time period the candidate specifies has to be appropriate for the site they are writing about. If it is an older military site, it might be appropriate to state a conventional period such as 'The Romans' or 'The Normans' but equally it might be appropriate to state 'during the First World War' or 'during the Hundred Years War'. However, this will not suit many sites; a more appropriate time period might be during the ownership of a particular person or family.

Whichever period the candidate chooses, it is important that it is meaningful for the site they have studied and that it does not unduly restrict them in the information they can use for their response; for example, stating '1120 because that was when the castle was built' is likely to result in candidates having a narrow range of information on which they can draw to support their responses.

The key point is that candidates should select one time period (of whatever length) and keep to it. Adding descriptions and explanations of events/features/activities which are outside the time period they have selected will not gain them credit. Responses which do not specify a time period will be marked as if the first observations they make define the period they wish to address. This frequently means that these responses are less successful in addressing the demands of the question and as a result gain fewer marks.

Successful responses

Responses which gained high marks on this question specified a particular time period which was relevant to their site; identified key features which were important to be included in a reconstruction and provided a sustained explanation of why they were important by providing relevant details from the site and/or use of a wider historical context to justify their choice of features.

The quality of the response was judged on the degree to which their selection of features was supported by relevant site knowledge and awareness of the wider historical context, rather than the number of features selected. Responses which explored the significance of each feature in depth gained more marks than those who presented a large range of different features.

Common issues

Some candidates selected features from multiple time periods, which was outside the remit of the question. Only features from a single time period were credited.

Some candidates chose a time period but then just described their site at that time, rather than identifying key features and constructing their answers around these features.

Exemplar 1

Another physical feature of Temple Newsam house that I would ask the artist to include is the Great Hall. Lord Darcy was a very important person during the early 1500's. Lord Darcy was close to King Henry VIII and also his father King Henry VII. This meant that Lord Darcy had a lot of power when the house was built. The Great Hall was a hall that took up the south wing of the house. ~~It was floor to ceiling and was from the floor to the roof~~ The Hall was two storeys tall and was decorated with expensive ornaments. Due to Lord Darcy's status, he had to impress guests to the house who would have also been gentry and upper class. This was the purpose of the Great Hall, which is why it was built so large. The reason why I would ask the artist to include the Great Hall in the drawings is to show the purpose of the house and also show the power and wealth of the owner at the time, Lord Darcy.

Exemplar 1, an extract from a response to Question 1 on Temple Newsam House, is an example of a sustained explanation. The candidate has already identified the period of the reconstruction to be during the time of Lord Darcy's ownership in the 1500s.

The response identifies a site feature to be included (the Great Hall), provides background to Lord Darcy to indicate why this is a relevant feature and describes specific parts of the hall to be included, linking the feature to the overall purpose of the site. The response displays a knowledge of the wider context and some physical features of the site.

Irrespective of other parts of the response, this extract would have gained a mark in the top 2 marks of Level 4.

Question 2

- 2 How far does your site tell us about important local or national changes?
Use physical features of the site as well as your knowledge to support your answer. [20]

The focus of this question is on historical significance, examining particularly how the site has been affected by external change, using examples from local or national contexts. There were some very successful responses to this question where candidates were able to use a wide range of events/changes and make a relevant link to their site.

Candidates were expected to identify a significant change or event which was relevant to their site. They should explain the event/change and the role that their site played, including any impact which took place for the site.

Information could be selected from any time in the history of the site and candidates were able to focus their answers on all local, all national or a mixture of either type of changes/events.

A sustained response to this question might select, for example, the effect of the Dissolution of the Monasteries on Fountains Abbey, by reference to the physical changes that ensued and the longer-term implications for the site. In a different setting, strong responses considered the effect of the Factory Acts on mill ownership and working practices, both short and long term. Local examples often were based around changes of ownership or the response of the site to local disasters.

Common issues

Some candidates misinterpreted the question and answered based on the way their site had affected the local/national community, rather than the effects on their site of external events. While this could still be relevant to local/national change, it was not the main focus of the question and these responses often did not achieve high marks.

A second issue was that some candidates simply described physical changes to their site, without explaining how this was significant in a wider context. These responses remained in Level 2 on the mark scheme.

Successful responses

Responses which gained high marks on this question selected key changes/events which were relevant to their site and explained the role their site had played. They were supported by examples of physical changes that had taken place in the site as a result and/or specific knowledge of the longer-term impact on their site.

Exemplar 2

On one hand the local changes as well as the national changes were useful and important such as the Leeds-Liverpool canal which was built in 1777, almost 30 years before Benjamin Gott bought Armley Mills. The Leeds-Liverpool canal is a very important change as when Benjamin Gott took over and turned the factory into a fulling mill he was able to make it the biggest fulling mill in the world due to the canal: he was able to transfer products to Liverpool which had one of England's major docks where he was able to sell wool internationally. This brought in lots of money to Benjamin Gott and England making it a very important key change that occurred.

This extract on Armley Mills is part of a response to Question 2. It shows an example of a standard explanation which was awarded a lower middle Level 3. The candidate identifies a local change as the construction of the Leeds to Liverpool Canal. The candidate explains the relevance of the canal to the mills by showing how the canal was used to transport goods and asserts the long-term importance but does not use any site-specific features to support the response.

Question 3

3 How far have activities on your site differed over time?

Use physical features of the site as well as your knowledge to support your answer.

[20]

This question was focused on diversity of use. There were wide-ranging responses to this question, demonstrating that this is an area that candidates are well-prepared for.

Candidates could answer based on different activities over the whole period of their site or compare activities within a shorter timeframe. However, the higher marks took note of the phrase in the question 'over time'. As the question asks 'How far have activities differed?', it was acceptable for candidates to show that activities over different time periods had not changed to any great extent. Adding a conclusion to oversee the issue of extent could raise the mark within the level but did not increase the overall level of the response.

One aspect of responses which is important to note is that some candidates wrote at length about the first use of their site before making any comparison of activities. This lent itself to a more descriptive approach rather than analytical. A better approach would be to make the comparison first and to use the site features to illustrate the changes in use.

Common issues

Descriptions or identifications of activities without any element of comparison were awarded at a lower level than those where there was a clear statement of comparison made.

Candidates who only discussed a range of activities within a single time period did not gain higher marks on this question as they could not demonstrate difference over time.

Successful responses

Responses which gained high marks on this question selected a range of time periods to discuss. They clearly explained change or continuity and supported their answers with clear reference to site features which exemplified the activities described, often also providing additional support by referencing the wider context about why changes had taken place.

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