

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY B

(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

J411

For first teaching in 2016

J411/43 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

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper 43 series overview

Paper 43 was Britain in Peace and War, 1900–1918.

To do well on the British Depth Study, candidates need to be able to analyse and compare interpretations; devise historical questions; and recall and apply their knowledge to support and challenge a historical interpretation in an essay-style question.

Most candidates performed reasonably well on Questions 1(a) and 2 and were able to pick out relevant parts of the interpretations to support their responses. However, in Questions 1(a), 1(b) and 2, there were many irrelevant responses or parts of responses where candidates wrote at length about the topic given, rather than addressing the questions. Furthermore, although it was clear from the responses to the essay-style questions that most candidates had a good range of knowledge, they were not always able to deploy this knowledge effectively. Many responses appeared to be answering a different question to the one being asked.

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"> • picked out a general feature in Interpretation A in relation to how the text made readers sympathetic towards conscientious objectors, and then supported this with two points of development (Question 1(a)) • used Interpretation A to ask a historical question i.e. based on a second-order concept such as causation, consequence or change, and gave some kind of indication of how that might help us to further understand men's responses to the First World War (Question 1(b)) • compared the overall message about the Edwardian upper classes in Interpretations B and C and went on to give a reason that they differed, on the basis of these specific interpretations e.g. given the purpose/ audience of B or C (Question 2) • effectively deployed a range of knowledge in the essay question, using precise evidence to support their responses (Questions 3 and 4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pointed out different features/methods in Interpretation A instead of focussing on one way the book made readers feel sympathetic towards conscientious objectors (Question 1(a)) • didn't actually ask a question or tell us something they wanted to find out from Interpretation A; and/or told us lots of things they knew about conscientious objections (Question 1(b)) • summarised Interpretations B and C separately, or pointed out smaller/individual points of similarity and/or difference (Question 2) • wrote a great deal about the Suffragettes /Suffragists but did not use this to address the question; and/or focused overly on these groups (Question 3) • wrote about the British Empire generally, or about attitudes abroad rather than in Britain; or wrote about events outside of the time period given e.g. the Easter Rising Question 4).

Question 1 (a)

Britain in Peace and War, 1900–1918

- 1 (a) In **Interpretation A**, journalist Darren McCullins tries to make readers feel sympathy for Conscientious Objectors during the First World War.

Identify and explain **one** way in which he does this.

[3]

The aim of this question is to get candidates thinking about the methods used by writers, artists, film-makers, etc to put forward a particular interpretation of a historical figure, period or event.

The vast majority of candidates were able to access the interpretation and they understood the question. Most scored 2 marks by picking out a method used by the author e.g. 'He talks about how horribly the conscientious objectors were treated' and then developing their response by giving a specific example from the text e.g. 'They often faced hard labour and enforced silence'. However, many neglected to say how this made us feel sympathy. Where candidates started with a very specific feature e.g. 'The author says they were force fed during hunger strikes', they often struggled to make two points of development about their feature. The most successful responses were the ones which began with a more general point e.g. 'The author paints the conscientious objectors as very brave' and then went on to give an example of this e.g. 'For example, it says how they had "courage" and "moral strength"' and then said how this made readers feel sympathy e.g. 'This makes the reader feel sympathetic towards them because they did not take the easy way out'.

Responses which picked out several features rather than one feature as the question asks (e.g. 'The author says that 73 died and also that they were thrown into pools of sewage.') were unable to move past 1 mark.

Advice to centres

In this question, candidates should aim to pick out just one method used in the interpretation and go on to make two points of development about that to address the question asked.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) If you were asked to do further research on one aspect of **Interpretation A**, what would you choose to investigate?

Explain how this would help us to analyse and understand men's responses to the First World War.

[5]

The idea of this question is to test candidates' ability to come up with a genuine historical enquiry, using the interpretation as a starting point.

Most candidates were able to ask a question, or questions, or indicate something that they would like to find out. At the lower end, these were typically things such as finding out more about the treatment of conscientious objectors.

Better responses framed their questions around a second-order concept, such as causation, with the most frequent question being why people chose to object, or the reasons behind the poor treatment of this group. Fewer candidates were able to go on to indicate how this might help us to analyse and understand men's responses to the First World War.

However, a significant minority of candidates seemed underprepared for this question, or misunderstood it. Instead of identifying an area for further enquiry, they wrote a lot about what they already knew about conscientious objection.

Exemplar 1

	b	One aspect I would choose to do further investigation into is the tribunals that the conscientious objectors faced and the role of the military in them. I would ask the question "how far was the military bias and involved in the tribunals of conscientious objectors?" What I would discover is that hardly any CO'S got full exemption from fighting as the people deciding their fate were people from the military who viewed conscientious objectors as cowards. This would help us understand men's response to the first world war in that
		We are able to see how those who refused to partake in the war were viewed by others and that there were differences in viewpoints at that time.

This is an example of a response which does briefly identify something they would like to find out - what the role of the military was in the tribunals (Level 1). However, the response then goes on to say what they would they know they would discover, i.e. answering their own question. It is important that candidates understand that the question does not require them to outline their knowledge of a given topic.

Advice to centres

This question does not require candidates to answer their question and it is not asking what candidates already know. Candidates should also make sure that they consider the second part of the question, i.e. pick a question that will help further understanding of X.

Question 2

2 Interpretations B and C both focus on the upper classes in Edwardian society.

How far do they differ and what might explain any differences?

[12]

(✎) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology

[5]

This question offers candidates the opportunity to show that they can identify the different ways that historical events, periods or figures are presented and explain why they may differ. The interpretations in this question, about the Edwardian upper classes, were accessible to most candidates; most were able to at least pick out individual points to show how they were similar or different. Most frequently, this was done by pointing out that the interpretations both agreed that the upper classes had luxurious lifestyles, but that while B claimed they weren't arrogant, C said they mocked their servants. Many candidates were unable progress beyond these details; however, some were able to explain the different overall impressions given about the upper classes. Most typically, this involved the comparison of B's sympathetic portrayal e.g. describing how their way of life was 'threatened' and that although rich, they were not 'excessive' or arrogant with how C paints an almost entirely negative picture e.g. calling them 'abusive' and showing them as uncaring by 'throwing' out servants into the workhouse if they behaved incorrectly.

Where candidates were able to move towards impression/message, fewer were then able to explain why B and C had offered such different impressions. Successful responses usually explained the differences in terms of the audience of C i.e. being a newspaper sympathetic to ordinary people, so it was much more likely to focus on the role of the upper classes as employers of the working class, and be critical of their treatment of their servants. Very few made much of the nature of B as a 'celebration' of a TV programme whose characters are an upper-class family, so was more likely to be light-hearted and show the characters as well-rounded people.

However, most candidates tended to fall back on undeveloped comments about provenance, such as that *The Guardian* was 'biased', or tended to treat B as if it were the TV programme *Downton Abbey* itself, rather than an extract from a book written to celebrate the series.

A minority of candidates' responses did not emerge from Level 1 because they either dealt with the interpretations separately, with no valid comparison, or else compared the provenance of the interpretations rather than their content. As with Question 1(b), some candidates misunderstood the question and attempted to evaluate the interpretations by explaining how reliable they were given what they had learned.

Exemplar 2

2	<p>Interpretation Interpretations B and C are similar in some aspects but they do definitely differ.</p>
	<p>For example, interpretation B portrays the wealthy upper class in a positive light and even tries to make the reader feel sympathy towards them, interpretation B uses the words 'surviving' and 'threatened' to describe their way of life the words surviving and threatened make make the reader feel concern and even sympathy towards the upper class, ^{and their communities} on the country country interpretation C depicts the upper classes in an almost villainous light and encourages the reader to view them with distaste. Interpretation C uses the words and "verbs" abusive, mocking, sneering and complaining'. Those words especially mocking and sneering encourage the reader to feel dislike even disgust in the upper classes and the word complaining encourages the reader to view the upper class as dramatic and pathetic. Interpretation B however suggests that the Edwardian upper class is only doing what was expected and even encouraged of them to do, this is backed up by the sentences 'yes they lived in splendor with a sense of ordinariness, they had dignity but not arrogance and things had to be done correctly but not excessively'.</p>

This is an example of a response which did a good job of taking a step back and thinking about how the authors of each interpretation wanted us to view the Edwardian upper classes.

Before plunging into specific detail, the response starts off by stating the message carried by B, i.e. it portrays the upper classes in a positive light which tries to evoke sympathy from the reader. This is then supported by some specific detail from the interpretation. The candidate then effectively compares this to the impression given by C where the upper classes are presented in a 'villainous' light. Again, support is offered from the interpretation.

This is a highly effective comparison which, although not considering the reasons for the differences, which would have taken it to Level 4, was placed at the top of Level 3.

Advice to centres

Candidates should take a moment before beginning their response to consider, 'What impression does the author or artist, etc want to give me about X?' They should then select details from the extract, or image, to support their response.

They should also be encouraged to consider specific reasons that a particular organisation or individual might want to give us that impression. As these will be interpretation-specific, it is important that candidates are given numerous opportunities to 'bump into' historical interpretations to practise this kind of thing routinely. Generic or pre-learned responses will rarely make it to the higher levels.

It should also be noted that the question is not asking for a judgement about whether the interpretations are accurate/reliable.

Question 3

- 3*** In an article called 'The history of women in the United Kingdom', the website Wikipedia says that in the Edwardian era, women were 'breaking away from the limitations' placed on their freedom.

How far do you agree with this view of women's lives in the years **before** the First World War (1900 to 1914)?

[20]

(✎) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology

[5]

The quality of the responses varied enormously but there were many responses which relied heavily on the activities of the Suffragists and Suffragettes for their entire response, rather than making full use of the content of the course which covers many different aspects of women's lives. Quite often, these responses didn't use the knowledge presented to address the question of whether women were 'breaking away from limitations' but instead drifted off into explaining the successes and failures of each group.

Better responses raised a variety of points to support the interpretation. In addition to using the activities of the WSPU and NUWSS to show women 'breaking away' from limitations on their freedom e.g. militant actions and demonstrations, candidates acknowledged points such as: there were more women working e.g. as teachers, nurses and in office jobs; there were more girls' schools springing up, some of which had an academic curriculum; and there was an expansion of sporting clubs for women, such as cycling and golf. The most frequent things pointed to in order to challenge the interpretation were: under a third of the workforce was female in c.1900; in professional jobs, women were expected or even forced to stop work upon marriage; and the campaigns for the vote were met with much resentment in obstruction in Parliament.

Less successful responses tended to make accurate but vague and generalised assertions which did not demonstrate the knowledge of the period required, usually relating to women's roles as housewives. These responses were generally placed in Level 1.

Question 4

- 4* The website 'Historic UK' argues that people in the Edwardian era were 'proud of Britain's great Empire.'

How far do you agree with this view of attitudes towards Empire in Britain between 1900 and 1914?

[20]

() Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology

[5]

Question 4 appeared to be the more popular choice of the two essay-style questions. As with Question 3, the quality of the responses did vary; however, more responses fell into Level 1 because they tended to drift off into descriptions of Empire and into a discussion over whether or not it was beneficial or a 'good' thing. There were also many responses which referred to attitudes towards the Empire in the colonies, as opposed to 'in Britain' as laid out by the question, and therefore could not be credited above Level 1.

Where candidates did understand what the question was asking, they were able to offer a range of points. To support the interpretation, pro-Empire ideas in popular culture e.g. advertising, children's fiction, newspapers were discussed, alongside how the press condemned Liberals who opposed Boer War; and the formation of the UVF Jan 1913 in response to Home Rule. To challenge the interpretation, the most cited argument was the growth of opposition to Boer War as the concentration camps were exposed by Emily Hobhouse. Candidates also argued successfully that the government campaign in 1903 to show the Empire in a positive light e.g. Empire Day in schools, 'lantern slides' in towns and villages reveals the necessity to address changing attitudes; and pointed to the formation of the Irish Volunteers to support anti-Empire sentiment.

Knowledge of this topic tended to be rather vague with the exception of the Boer War and concentration camps, with many candidates unable to develop their points.

Exemplar 3

		I agree because it was the biggest empire in the world, it controlled $\frac{1}{4}$ of earth's land and $\frac{1}{5}$ of the population. It had control over places like India and Canada. Furthermore it helped progress other countries and colonize under developed area locations. Along with the Empire came a massive navy with 121 battleships, on top of this spices and sugars were being imported rapidly and the rich were becoming even richer. These are definitely things to be proud of, especially in such a patriotic era.
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This is an example of a paragraph from a Question 4 response where the candidate clearly has some knowledge about the British Empire. However, the knowledge is not used to address the question asked; there is just a generalised comment at the beginning about the scale of the Empire and then the response digresses into speculation about why people may have been proud of it given the benefits brought to Britain. This means that this particular paragraph cannot be credited as an explained point because it does not answer the question set. To properly address the question set, we need specific evidence of British people being supportive/proud, or not, of the Empire.

Advice to centres

Candidates who have revised thoroughly and have a wide range of precise evidence at their fingertips to support their points will do best on these questions. It is also very important that candidates are familiar with scope and focus of the specification. Candidates should be encouraged to read questions carefully, and be explicit in their responses about how the evidence they have presented supports or challenges the interpretations.

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