

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY A (EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD)

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/10 Summer 2024 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.

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Paper 10 series overview

In order to perform well on the British thematic study, candidates needed to apply their knowledge and understanding to identify and explain the impact of war on people and society and include the analysis of a significant event. This includes an extended essay that requires use of examples from across two of the three periods of study covered. Successful candidates responded well to the challenges the paper presented and had a secure grasp of the chronology of conflict. Their grasp of the detail of many wars continues to be excellent. Candidates' learning is examined through questions asking for recall, study of impact, significance, and analysis of an issue over two periods.. These skills focus on Assessment Objectives 1 and 2; demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the past, as well as explaining and analysing historical events.

Candidates' responses spanned a wide range of ability, and it was clear that, as always, they had been well prepared and demonstrated an understanding of the 'broad sweep' of this specification. Marks were given across the entire mark range for all four questions. Performance on Question 1 was weaker than usual but compensated for by lots of very good knowledge and explanation on Question 2. Overall candidates approach to Question 3 continues to improve, but at times they were not reaching the highest level because of lack of knowledge of an impact. Question 4 was addressed well, and it allowed candidates to construct a wide variety of arguments. Some were very impressive.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used examples, issues and events relevant to the time periods examined by the question • had a secure grasp of the chronology of conflict • managed their time effectively, balancing their responses proportionally to the mark allocations for each of the questions • established clear explanatory links back to the issues in the questions • displayed an understanding of how historians assess significance • had a clear grasp of the key concepts required from study of the specification such as the different reasons for and causes of wars over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used material that was outside the chronological scope of the question • displayed insecure historical knowledge, for example by confusing information about wars that were less relevant to the question • described and identified issues without analysing them for impact or significance • offered responses to Question 4 that were unbalanced, whether by looking at only one side of the argument or considering only one of the two relevant time periods.

Question 1

1 Describe **two** events of the Jacobite War that started in 1745.

[4]

This question focuses on AO1 knowledge and understanding about the past, and requires candidates to identify two events, and support them with accompanying detail or development.

A wide range of points were acceptable, ranging from comments about Bonnie Prince Charlie landing in Scotland and gaining support in Edinburgh, the subsequent invasion of England, success in Carlisle and reaching Derby, to the final defeat at Culloden. Also acceptable were comments about where the Jacobites drew their support from, or not, be it the support of Highland Scots, but lack of support from English Catholics and the French.

The question proved demanding, and most scored no more than two marks. Many recognised that the Jacobite Wars involved Scotland and religion, or the desire of the Scots for a different King, but lots of candidates were vague about exactly what happened. Some wrote about the border reivers, or referenced the building of roads in the Highlands, which was the aftermath of the 1715 Rebellion.

Where candidates did score well, they usually referenced the invasion of England reaching as far as Derby before retreating, the Battle of Culloden, or the attack on Highland culture (e.g. the wearing of tartan) in the aftermath of the Rebellion. Relatively few candidates scored 3 or 4 marks on this question compared to the usual performance.

Question 2

2 Explain the British public's response to the 2003 war in Iraq.

[8]

This question focuses on AO1 knowledge and understanding about the past, and AO2 explanation and analysis of historical events and periods using second order concepts, in this case, an explanation of impact.

It was tackled well, even by candidates who did not perform strongly on other questions. Many achieved four marks or more. Typically, answers began by arguing that there was initial support based on the fear of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) or as a reaction to 9/11 and the belief that Saddam Hussein had been involved in some way. Candidates often quoted the figure of 57% of the public being in favour of the war in 2017. Then candidates went on to explain how attitudes changed after the lack of WMDs, the chaos in post-invasion Iraq or the feeling that Tony Blair had lied to Parliament/the public.

An alternative way of approaching the question successfully was to say that the British public reacted with anger (for example to the lack of WMDs and the perception that the government had lied) and also fear (as this was perceived to make Britain a terrorist target, borne out by the 7/7 London transport bombings).

The main issue was candidates drifting into discussing the 'war on terror' rather than Iraq, but overall, this question was done successfully.

It was especially pleasing to see a question with such relevance to the present day being completed so well. This is a testament to the value of the subject in explaining today's politics and world events, and centres' ability to help candidates understand the modern world.

Exemplar 1

2)	<p>The British public's response to the 2003 war in Iraq was negative. After it had been proved that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction, it was clear to the British public that the US had no reason to be in Iraq and had only caused distress for the people in Iraq. A survey conducted in 2003 shows how support for the Iraq war was high but another survey in 2011 proved that the Iraq people no longer supported the Iraq war, which is also seen in Tony Blair's decline in popularity. This highlights that the British believed the Iraq war was unjust and unreasonable, implying that the USA and Britain should have looked at investigated the weapons of mass destruction allegations against Saddam Hussein before invading Iraq and disturbing the people there. This is how the British public responded to the 2003 war in Iraq.</p>
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This first paragraph of the response was well explained and achieved Level 3, 6 marks. The candidate identifies straight away why there was a negative response, because of the lack of weapons of mass destruction, and the harm the armies were doing to civilians. The answer develops the explanation, talking about the change in survey responses over time, which show a fall in support for war and why that was. This was a well-developed and focused explanation of response.

Question 3

3 How significant was the impact of the First World War on life in Britain?

[14]

This question asks candidates to structure a response around significance: this year the focus was the significance of the impact of the First World War on life in Britain. Candidates certainly understood that they should be looking for depth and breadth of impact to explain significance rather than change. However, lack of details about the impact prevented many from reaching the highest level.

Performance on this question varied considerably. Where candidates were successful, the usual areas of focus were DORA, rationing, mass conscription, the idea of 'total war', the role of women (often linked to the 1918 Representation of the People Act), and the Zeppelin bombing or the bombardment of coastal cities like Scarborough (some candidates argued legitimately and successfully that this was NOT significant as it was on a far smaller scale than in WW2). The role of women in wartime jobs was often argued as significant as it paved the way for the extension of the franchise to women (although some candidates were confused about chronology and argued that this led to the emergence of the Suffragette movement). Conscription and DORA in particular were argued to be significant as they were unprecedented and involved a far greater intrusion of the state into people's lives than ever before.

Candidates were often confused about rationing. This was frequently argued to have caused malnutrition or even mass starvation, when it was, of course, introduced to prevent such things, or to have caused a widespread deterioration in health, when the evidence is that it had the opposite effect. Some candidates talked about the impact of rationing as if it were from the start of the war, as opposed to very belated, although many did understand that it was the result of U-boat attacks. There was clearly confusion with the impact on the Second World War. Another weakness was to talk about casualties in broad terms and mention how this caused PTSD and devastation to those who had lost loved ones. This needed to be made relevant to the First World War to be creditable above Level 1, usually with some sort of statistic or explanation. However, some candidates did successfully link this to the continuing memorialisation of war dead on November 11th and therefore show significance through long term effects.

An important minority of candidates successfully argued for significance of areas like the role of women or DORA, but without any detailed support and were therefore limited to Level 2, 6 marks. Candidates must have enough evidential support even if they do make a valid case for significance.

Exemplar 2

3		<p>The impact of the first World War in Britain was significant in the short term due to the damage and violence caused by bombing and Air coastal shelling. THIS WAS For example, the coastal towns of Hartlepool and Scarborough were shelled by German subma ships, killing 200. Raids from Zeppelins also killed 500, with there being 50 total raids from 1915-17. This would have been significant as the public had never been attacked from abroad since the Norman conquest, leading to a fear of invasion that was carried by Britons into WW2. Zeppelins had also never been seen before, which would be particularly frightening.</p>
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This answer achieved Level 4, 14 marks overall, but this first paragraph was a clear Level 4, 12 marks: explaining the significance of the impact of bombing. The significance is measured in terms of the fear it caused, given its unprecedented nature (first time since the Norman conquest British civilians had been targeted in Britain) and the fear it inspired (still felt at the outset of the Second World War). Specifics are given of the extent and impact of that bombing, which scaffold the answer, and make it a clearly explained example, rather than an asserted example (which would not get higher than Level 2). This was a particularly clear and focused explanation worthy of showing to your candidates.

Misconception



As always with a question about the First World War, a significant minority of candidates wrote about the Second World War instead and described the Blitz and mass evacuation. Similarly, a number of candidates believed that the Labour Party came to power and introduced the Welfare State/NHS at this time. Others believed that the suffragettes movement began as a result of the war.

Question 4*

4* 'Between 790 and 1750, war united more than it divided the people of Britain.'

How far do you agree?

[24]

This question requires candidates to consider a statement across two of the three study periods and offer examples of how it could be both supported and challenged. Three explained examples covering both sides of the argument and both time periods gives access to the higher marks of Level 4 and 5.

For the most part this was done well, as long as candidates had enough knowledge. Overall, there was an impressive grasp of the periods and its conflicts, and performance was strong. Most candidates had a clear focus on the concept of unity/division. The depth study of the Civil War gave candidates opportunity to discuss this as an example of division, even if they were not able to explain other valid examples, which at least accessed Level 3. Focus needed to be on division, rather than the causes of war, but most had enough knowledge and understanding and could structure a valid response.

Typically, the Viking invasions (Christian Anglo-Saxon unity against the pagan 'Northmen') and the Elizabethan Wars were argued to be evidence of unity. For Elizabeth, the focus tended to be Protestant versus Catholic, combined with the relative ease of funding the wars through privateering (so it did not become too onerous on the population), coupled with the impact of Elizabethan propaganda.

Edward I's wars were sometimes used as evidence of unity in terms of building Britain, although they could also be used as evidence of division between England, and Wales or Scotland.

The 100 Years' War was another legitimate example, but here candidates were often vague about how it was evidence of unity beyond broad comments on patriotism and 'national identity'.

For division, the Civil Wars of the 17th century were often used well, as outlined above, as was the Norman Conquest, in terms of Norman attempts to eradicate Saxon culture and Saxon rebellion and its harsh treatment (e.g. the Harrying of the North).

The Anarchy was often used, but here, as with the 100 Years' War on the other side of the argument, candidates tended to be more vague and reduced to broad comments on how people were divided between supporters of Matilda and Stephen. Explanations usually focused on the nature of divisions being at a baronial level with some switching sides, and ordinary people suffering.

Some responses did not focus sufficiently on the idea of unity or division. Having identified that a war showed unity or division, what followed was a description of the build up to the war, or a description of how the war played out, both of which left the idea of unity or division unclear. These responses were left in Level 2. But even these usually scored well in the level.

Other candidates tried to make one example of a war fit both the idea of unity and division, however unless each aspect was developed and supported sufficiently, this often did not achieve above Level 3.

Only a few candidates seemed unaware of the relevant dates and wrote about wars that fell outside the dates given, although the 7 Years' War was sometimes included or muddled up with the 100 Years War. Equally, a few candidates confused Edward's Wars with the Hundred Years War.

Exemplar 3

However, the Civil war between the Royalists and Parliamentarians deeply divided the country, with many people being forced to pick a side. ~~before~~ Many picked sides because they believed their side was the ~~right~~ ^{right} should be the rightful rulers of Britain, but many also picked sides because of grudges against other people

who just happened to be a supporter of a particular side. The Civil war deeply divided ~~many~~ the entire country over which side was right, with many not even choosing a side and instead keeping all sides out of their town or village to avoid any death or destruction e.g. 'Clubmen' from Wales and Southern England. Many families were deeply divided with siblings often turning against each other, or father and sons turning against each other. ~~Some~~ villages and towns often received conflicting messages over who to provide their militia to, which further emphasises the division of the country. Overall, the Civil war divided the people of Britain much more than it united.

This response achieved Level 5 overall, including this paragraph that explained clearly how the English Civil War divided the country. Some candidates ran out of things to say having identified the two sides engaged in the war and resorted to discussing the build up to the war, but this answer was clearly focused on the question. It develops the explanation with details over what the sides were fighting for, how deep the divisions were, and the comment about Clubmen is not out of place as an example of another division created: those who felt this war was stripping them bare. The comments about militia seal the explanation as strong.

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