Qualification Accredited



GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY B (SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

J411

For first teaching in 2016

J411/18 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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 18 series overview

This paper incorporates the Thematic Study and the British Depth Study, each accounting for half the marks of this paper. To do well on the Thematic Study, candidates need to be able to present a historical summary of an area of content they have learned (Question 2), offer an explanation in response to a historical question (e.g. explaining the causes or consequences of something) in Question 3 and recall and apply their knowledge to support and challenge a statement in an essay-style question from either Question 4 or Question 5.

To do well in the British Depth Study, candidates need to be able to identify and explain how producers of interpretations portray historical events, use second order concepts to develop an enquiry (Question 6a and 6b), analyse and compare historical interpretations (Question 7) while recalling and applying their knowledge in a further essay-style question from either Question 8 or Question 9.

The ability of candidates to use different techniques, from employing second order historical concepts to organise their responses around, to comparing historical interpretations, was impressive across the range of questions.

Areas which continue to require further preparation of candidates are the more developed explanations required for Question 3, the ability to effectively explore the purpose of interpretations in Question 7, and the provision of sufficient evidence across a range of factors in the essay questions.

OCR support



Please note the date of the upcoming Exam Review session which is 15 October 4-6pm. Booking link is here.

Section A: Migrants to Britain, c.1250 to present overview

The Thematic Study requires candidates to understand change and continuity from c.1250 to the present. The study requires them to consider historical development over a long period and to identity and explain why certain developments occurred. The questions test various historical skills from the ability to deploy second order concepts in their answers to writing explained arguments for or against certain views.

Many responses displayed a high level of preparation from candidates who selected and deployed accurate knowledge, particularly on Irish migration in Question 2, African migrants in Question 3, and to some extent with Questions 4 and 5 (the essay-style questions). In some responses to Question 2, there was a lack of an organising concept to access higher levels, while on Question 3, many candidates asserted that the experience of African migrants was either positive or negative, without providing valid supporting examples.

5

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:

recalled at least one valid answer for Question

- analysed Irish Migration in the 1800s by organising their response around one or more historical concepts, most commonly causation, with the Potato Famine leading to migration, or consequence of migration with treatment once in Britain, or even reasons for prejudice against them; they supported this with valid historical examples (Question 2)
- deployed precise evidence to explain whether African migrants were welcomed or accepted into Britain between 1500 and 1800 (Question 3)
- carefully selected evidence to argue points in Questions 4 and 5 that were tied to the specific question.

Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:

- did not recall a valid answer on Question 1
- described Irish migration or remained focused on the nature of Irish life once migration had occurred (Question 2)
- described the slave trade without linking to Britain or made vague assertions about racism or discrimination (Question 3)
- did not use correctly selected evidence or sufficient evidence to move beyond Level 2 in Questions 4 and 5.

Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Give one way in which medieval kings tried to encourage migrants to come to Britain after 1250.

[1]

Many responses did not gain a mark here. They offered responses such a 'job opportunities' without identifying a specific migrant group, such as Flemish weavers being encouraged through the banning of wool exports, or a specific method such as letters of denization.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Identify one contribution made by Huguenot migrants to early modern Britain (1500–1750). [1]

Again, the vagueness of answers prevented many candidates from receiving a mark here. There were many possible answers, from silk weaving and clockmaking to making the uniforms for the East India company, even helping to fund the setting up of the Bank of England in the 1690s.

Question 1 (c)

(c) Identify one business typically set up by Chinese migrants during the period 1750 to 1900. [1]

This was the best answered of the three 1 mark questions, with many candidates identifying responses such as restaurants or laundries.

Question 2

2 Write a clear and organised summary that analyses Irish migration to Britain in the 1800s.

Support your summary with examples.

[9]

Candidates were well prepared and armed with strong knowledge about Irish migration in the 1800s, with this question seeing better responses overall than in the previous series.

Most candidates were able to identify the Potato Famine as a major cause and offered supporting evidence before linking to their move to the British mainland in the late 1840s. It was also notable that many candidates were able to deploy a further, different, second order concept such as 'consequence' and use it to explain the impact of the Irish once in Britain, both from the work they completed as 'navvies' but also the reactions to them from the British.

Assessment for learning



This question requires more than just description to advance beyond Level 1. Candidates need to know how to organise an analytical response around a historical concept such as causation, consequence, change, diversity or significance. Before starting their response, candidates should consider how to organise their response around one or more of these historical concepts, as they are the driver for the response, rather than contextual knowledge. Candidates do not need to use the specific conceptual terms to gain marks, indeed using word such as 'significance' or 'causation' is not a precursor for success on this question.

Question 3

3 To what extent were African migrants welcomed and accepted in British society between 1500 and c.1800?

Explain your answer. [10]

This question received a variety of responses, with some evident knowledge on several different notable individual migrants from the period. Many candidates recalled the story of John Blanke, Henry VIII's African trumpeter, and used the successful request Blanke made for a pay rise, or the wedding gift he received from Henry, as evidence of his acceptance within British society. A number of candidates attempted to focus on the Transatlantic Slave Trade; these remained within Level 2 due to the limitation in effectively linking to the experiences of migrants to Britain. Comments linked to racism were difficult for candidates to place precisely within the period and so also received credit only at the lowest levels.

Misconception



Some candidates focused their responses to this question on the treatment of slaves, with reference to plantations and slave owners, which clearly rooted the experience outside of Britain. Others attempted to use examples of individuals who were born in America and lived outside the 1500-1800 period. Ensuring a solid foundation of knowledge of the course could incorporate reminders to candidates that it is a British course and that responses need to remain focused or clearly linked to experiences in this country.

Question 4*

4* 'Britain was a hostile place for Jewish migrants between 1250 and 1900.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

This question was the more popular of the two essays and was generally well answered, with some good knowledge from candidates on the experiences of the Jewish community in the Medieval Period in particular.

Arguments around 'hostility' were more often rewarded, as some candidates struggled to identify precise evidence displaying the more welcoming periods or events in this long period. Those candidates that did manage the latter, used the experiences of Jewish people welcomed in the Cromwellian period, or even those fleeing Russia in the 1880s who were able to set up businesses, with the most commonly identified being Leeds own Marks & Spencer's through Michael Marks in the 1880s.

A limited number of responses referred to the experiences of Jews after 1900, which was not within the period and therefore not possible to credit.

Weaker responses tended to make vague assertions or provide simple identifications of events that affected the Jewish community, without adding the precise evidence necessary to explain effectively and advance through the levels of the mark scheme.

Question 5*

5* 'Persecution in their home country was the main reason why migrants came to Britain in the period 1900 to 2015.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

Fewer candidates opted for this question, despite there being multiple possibilities for migrant groups to explore within the framework of the question, both regarding persecution and other factors such as war, government encouragement or economic opportunities. Most commonly, candidates used the experiences of Jewish children and the Kindertransport to exemplify persecution, while the Commonwealth migrants and Windrush generation after the 1948 Nationality Act or later EU migrants such as Poles often being cited as examples of alternative factors. Very few candidates used examples from India/Pakistan from partition, or the experiences of Asian migrants from Kenya and Uganda in the 1960s and 1970s.

Many candidates deployed specific and precise evidence about diverse migrant groups within the period but were unable to clearly explain what the causal factor of this migration was, or even choosing instead to focus on the impact of the group once residing in Britain, which was not the focus of the question. A very small minority of candidates selected groups that did not fit the period, such as the Italians and Germans of the nineteenth century, or even the Huguenots; it was nonetheless good to see that this proportion was considerably less than on the essay questions in the previous series.

Exemplar 1

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Exemplar 1 shows the sort of precise evidence and links to the question to move up the levels. It provided some balance with arguments for and against the question, and so was able to move beyond the threshold of Level 4, 12 marks, which is reserved for balanced responses.

The response begins with a threshold explanation about Jewish migrants being persecuted, moving to Level 3. This is followed by a section that remains at Level 2, lacking the sort of precise evidence and development on Syrian refugees and Kenyan migrants to move further up the levels. Following on, a paragraph on economic forces as an alternative to persecution as a reason, incorporating material on both EU and Commonwealth migrants, advances the response to Level 4. The following section explores a further reason – government action – and brings in some new evidence. There is some repetition of material here which limits the final mark, but the point made is valid to move to Level 5. A final section attains only Level 2 with reference to some recent developments.

The response was given Level 5, 14 marks, middle of level due to the limited development in places.

Section B: The Elizabethans, 1580–1603 overview

To do well on the British Depth Study, candidates need to be able to:

- analyse and compare interpretations
- devise historical questions
- recall and apply their knowledge to support and challenge a historical interpretation in an essay-style question.

The depth study on 'The Elizabethans 1580–1603' focuses on the latter part of Elizabeth I's reign when she was faced with dangers both at home and abroad. Topics examined this year included Drake's leadership at the time of the Armada, comparing portrayals of Elizabeth's reign, the extremes of rich and poor during the period and Elizabethan entertainment. This section accounts for fifty per cent of the paper.

There was a wide range of responses with some candidates demonstrating a very good knowledge and understanding of the topics. It was clear from the majority of responses that most candidates had been well prepared for Questions 6 and 7, although many candidates still struggled to think of wider, historical questions or lines of enquiry for Question 6 (b). On Question 7, candidates were able to successfully compare portrayals of Elizabeth's reign.

Questions 8 and 9 produced a wide range of responses. Question 8 attracted more candidates who wrote generalised responses that could belong to any period. These responses showed a lack of specific knowledge about the structure of society often leading to responses that would be valid for any period. There were also some responses of a high quality. Question 9 was very popular and often done very well. These responses were generally of a higher standard. Candidates certainly knew about the Elizabethans' love of entertainment and many responses provided balanced, well-explained arguments.

12

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:

- started with a specific feature from the source followed by two points about the impression this gave of Drake; alternatively, they began with a more general point followed by an example and details of how this gave the impression that Drake was an impressive leader (Question 6(a))
- selected an historically valid investigation that would enable them to analyse and understand England's war with Spain, for example the reasons for the war or its outcome (Question 6(b))
- compared the portrayal/message/impression of Elizabeth I's reign supported with relevant quotations from the sources and in many cases also explained the purpose of Interpretation B; such responses selected their

Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:

- did not go beyond producing a quotation from the source, usually the one that stated that there was time to finish the game of bowls and beat the Spaniards too – and a few simply paraphrased the text rather than focusing on the question (Question 6(a))
- chose investigations that were not historically valid or related to England's war with Spain (Question 6(b))
- tried to compare specific points referred to in the interpretations but often did not compare like with like - some just focused on the provenance of the interpretations or attempted to compare their purpose (Question 7)
- wrote brief descriptions about various aspects of the lives of the rich and poor, often not specific to the period and struggled to produce

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:

support carefully to produce valid comparisons (Question 7)

- demonstrated a sound understanding of the topic allowing them to give detailed explanations to support the fact that Elizabethan society was characterised by the extremes of rich and poor; were able to provide a counter-argument with reference to the middling sort or by using religion or gender (Question 8)
- produced well argued responses with explanations on why Elizabethans loved entertainment, balanced with explained reasons for Puritan opposition and that of the London authorities; demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of entertainment during the period and were able to use specific examples to support their response (Question 9).

Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:

- a balanced argument as they lacked knowledge of the middling sort (Question 8)
- had some knowledge of Elizabethan theatre but were unable to provide specific examples regarding feasts and festivals and other aspects of entertainment (Question 9).

Question 6 (a)

6

(a) In Interpretation A, the book depicts Francis Drake as an impressive leader.

Identify and explain one way in which it does this.

[3]

Many candidates were able to start with a specific feature and then make two points of development about it or make a general point, give an example, and explain how this showed him to be impressive. Most candidates focused on his game of bowls and him saying that there was time 'to finish his game and beat the Spaniards too'. Confident and calm were the usual choice of adjectives to describe him.

Points for centres to consider

There are still some candidates trying to focus on more than one feature of the interpretation, which is not required.

Question 6 (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 England's war with Spain.

[5]

Candidates who did well made sure they selected a valid historical enquiry and that their question was framed around a second order concept. Such questions usually involved investigating why the Armada was defeated or what its impact was on England. Other questions involved comparing the tactics of the two sides or investigating the English ships and the role they played in the victory. There were still some candidates who are choosing an investigation and then answering it themselves instead of explaining how it would help us analyse and understand England's war with Spain.

Many candidates limited themselves to Level 1 from the outset. Too many chose to investigate why Drake decided to finish his game of bowls or why he was so confident. They then unsuccessfully proceeded to try and explain how this would help to understand England's war with Spain.

Candidates are clearly still struggling with this question and are finding it difficult to construct a historically valid question. As far as this interpretation was concerned, the most obvious questions could have gained them full marks. They are trying to make everything too complicated and some of the investigations would not have been feasible.

Assessment for learning



This question does not require candidates to answer their own enquiry, nor does it require them to use their contextual knowledge to develop the enquiry. It is expected that candidates will be familiar with the concept of historical enquiry, but there is no requirement that they use particular conceptual words or phrases – indeed it may not work effectively in this question to simply name those words. Instead, focus on the framing of a genuine historical question is more likely to gain reward.

Question 7

7 Interpretations B and C both make judgements about the reign of Elizabeth I.

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

[12]

Candidates who did well were able to adopt a more holistic approach to each interpretation to compare the message, impression, or portrayal of Elizabeth I and/or her reign. They carefully selected their support. Some successfully reached Level 4 by considering the purpose of Interpretation B, emphasising that it was to mark the 400th anniversary of the queen's death and that it was produced for celebratory reasons. They realised that the interpretation was not designed to be negative given its purpose. The focus tended to be on the comment that 'her reign created a sense of national identity that had not existed before', her 'best qualities' and the reference to 'the greatest prince this country has produced was a prince in skirts'. This was contrasted in Interpretation C with 'there is not much sign of a golden age' and 'she was not a political genius who got everything right'. Successful comparisons were also made based on England's military achievements and on the religious situation at the time.

Less successful responses often quoted from the interpretations but did not compare like with like. There were some very long responses to this question, but they often lacked organisation and candidates were trying to compare every point rather than responding to the question as a whole. Some just concentrated on the purpose of the interpretation which confined them to Level 2. Responses that did focus on comparison were often incomplete with candidates stressing that it was to mark the 400th anniversary of her death and then not explaining that it was meant to be celebratory and not critical.

Question 8*

8* According to the history website 'BBC Bitesize', Elizabethan society was 'characterised by extremes of rich and poor'.

How far do you agree with this view of the **structure** of Elizabethan society between 1580 and 1603?

Give reasons for your answer.

[20]

Strong responses demonstrated a clear knowledge of the class structure of Elizabethan England and candidates organised their answers well. They produced four clear explanations reflecting both sides of the argument and have clearly been well taught on how to structure their response. Responses tended to emphasise the extreme differences in the lives of the gentry and the labouring poor, especially focusing on housing, entertainment, and diet. Such candidates used the middling sort to argue against the view. Some candidates also made a distinction between those labourers who did not live in abject poverty and those were forced into vagrancy, also making reference to the passing of the Poor Law of 1601. A few chose to argue successfully against the view by, for example, maintaining that Elizabethan society was divided by gender or religious divisions.

Candidates who did less well often wrote about the gentry, the middling sort and the labourers without referring to the question. Such responses tended to be descriptive limiting candidates to Level 1.

Others clearly only had a very general knowledge of the topic and many responses were not specific to the period. Again, candidates were aware of the need to produce a balanced response but in striving to produce four explanations often ended up with a series of Level 1 responses. This is a reflection of insecure knowledge of the topic but it also demonstrates the fact that they are driven by quantity rather than quality.

Question 9*

9* According to the website 'www.elizabethan-era.org.uk', 'Elizabethan people loved entertainment'.

How far do you agree with this view of Elizabethan **pastimes**, **festivities and theatres** between 1580 and 1603?

Give reasons for your answer.

[20]

Many candidates opted for this question and in general there was a good knowledge of the topic, especially where the theatre was concerned.

Strong responses provided balanced answers considering the popularity of the theatres supported with full explanations, as well as considering other pastimes. Both the Puritan and London authorities were used to provide the other side of the argument and there were some good responses that demonstrated a sound understanding of the reasons for opposition.

Candidates who did less well wrote brief responses without the specific knowledge required for an explanation. Some candidates produced responses where they stated they partially agreed and combined opposition to the theatre and its popularity in one explanation. This often resulted in a brief response to each side of the argument and did not end up being a full explanation – which often made the question more difficult than it needed to be. Clear explanation on agreement or disagreement tended to be a better approach for the majority. Some responses were only awarded Level 1 as they were not specific to the period. One example of this was to state that the police were opposed to the theatre.

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