

Examiners' report

GCSE

HISTORY B (SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in
History B (Schools History Project)

J411

For first teaching in 2016

Migrants to Britain, c.1250 to present
J411/17, J411/18 and J411/19
Summer 2025 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 responses 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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Migrants to Britain, c.1250 to present overview

Migrants to Britain, c.1250 to present is one of three thematic units in Component Group 1 British History GCSE paper. The focus of assessment for the thematic paper is knowledge and understanding, and explaining and analysing events and periods. The paper has three compulsory questions and a choice of one question from two optional questions.

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 identify 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.

Specifically, 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.

Many responses displayed a high level of preparedness from candidates, who selected and deployed accurate knowledge, particularly on Medieval migrants in Question 2, EU migrants in Question 3, and to some extent the many different groups available to explore in Questions 4 and 5 (the essay-style questions). With some responses to Question 2, there was a lack of an organising concept to access higher levels, while on Question 3, many candidates focused on material from before 1980, most notably Caribbean migrants and the Windrush Generation. In both Question 4 and Question 5, there were a large number of potential migrant groups that could have constituted a balanced answer, and there was some impressive knowledge from candidates on numerous groups (and in some cases individual migrants with their own migration stories). Again, it was notable that a significant number of candidates did not have a secure understanding of which migrant group fitted into which period, or that African and Indian migrants could not be credited in Question 4 with its European focus.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- recalled at least one valid answer for Question 1 - analysed Medieval migration by organising their answer around one or more historical concepts: most commonly causation, with the reasons for maltreatment of the Jewish population, or contrasting their negative experiences with positive ones for the Flemish Weavers or Italian Bankers, supporting with valid historical examples on those groups - deployed precise evidence to explain why migrants came to Britain from 1980 onwards, for example through EU migration or escaping conflict or persecution, with valid examples as recent as Syria or Ukraine for the latter, or Poles for the former - carefully selected evidence to argue points in Question 4, developing explanations on a range of groups including Huguenots, Palatines, Jewish and Gypsy populations - selected from a significant possible range of groups from across the world in the sizeable 1750-1980 period in Question 5, developing explanations as to whether their experiences were positive or negative (and in some cases both).	- did not recall a valid answer on Question 1 - described Medieval migration but did not organise their answer around a concept, or did not focus on 'attitudes' - did not identify specific groups that have migrated to Britain since 1980, or referred to groups from an earlier period, such as Irish migrants or 1940s Caribbean migrants - did not use correctly selected evidence or sufficient evidence to move beyond Level 2 in Questions 4 and 5, did not identify specific groups and instead discussed migrant groups in general, or did not make clear how the group in question were welcomed and accepted or not - referred to groups that could not be credited for that particular question, such as non-European migrants in Question 4, or pre-1750 or post-1980 groups in Question 5.

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Question 1 (a)

1

- (a) Give **one** example of a job or role typically carried out by Indian migrants who came to Britain in the period **1600–1750**. [1]

This question was answered fairly well, with most candidates gaining a mark with an answer such as 'Ayahs' or 'Lascars'.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) Identify **one** reason why Irish migrants came to Britain between 1750 and 1900. [1]

Candidates found this the most straightforward of the three 1-mark questions, with the vast majority identifying potato blight/famine, while other creditable answers included responses around specific work linked to the industrial revolution in Britain. More generalised responses such as 'for jobs' did not receive a mark.

Question 1 (c)

- (c) Identify **one** way the British government attempted to restrict migration to Britain in the 1960s or early 1970s. [1]

A significant number of candidates did not provide an answer for this question. The main acts of the 1960s and 1970s were often given by those that did respond, including the two Commonwealth Immigrants Acts; it was pleasing to see some candidates were able to provide a specific part of an act, for example the entry stipulation for a father or grandfather to have been born in the United Kingdom, from the 1968 Act. A significant number of responses provided acts from beyond the period in question, such as the Alien Act or Nationality Act.

Question 2

- 2 Write a clear and organised summary that analyses attitudes towards migrants in the medieval period (c.1250–1500).

Support your summary with examples.

[9]

On this question, stronger responses tended to focus on Jewish Migrants and/or Flemish weavers and provided a clear second-order concept around which to frame their response, for example causation of persecution of Jewish migrants due to antisemitism, jealousy of protected status or resentment at paying back loans with interest, supported by a precise example such as the 1255 Lincoln Blood Libel, 1275 Statute of Jewry or the 1290 final expulsion.

One supporting example with a clear concept would be given Level 2 (4-6 marks). Two supporting examples with a clear concept were required in order to progress to Level 3 (7-9 marks). A different but nonetheless successful way candidates successfully achieved this was by providing an example on positive attitudes, and a further one on negative attitudes.

Answers that remained in Level 1 (1-3 marks) did not identify a second-order concept or did not provide evidence that was either precise enough or that could be linked to attitudes.

Exemplar 1

2		In the medieval, many Jewish migrants arrived and had a fairly positive attitude towards them because they were money lenders and they could get around usury which was forbidden in catholic faith. This meant many liked them and often went to them allowing Jewish migrants to prosper.
		However, medieval attitudes towards Jews began to change into suspicion and ignorance because they were prospering causing many to become violent which was shown when over 400 jews were massacred at the ¹²⁶³ 1263 Palm Sunday Parade and a further 150 the following year. These anti-semitic views continued to grow so large that in 1290

2		Jews were expelled from England completely showing very negative attitudes towards them.
		However, one medieval migrant group which had an experience with overall very positive attitudes were the Flemish which can be seen through King's action because when they arrived in 1331 they were offered denizenship status but also they were allowed to create their own weaver's guild and this shows positive attitudes to medieval migrants because it highlights how they were valued and welcomed into society.

In this exemplar, the candidate clearly organises their answer around second-order concepts and gives concise specific examples.

The first two paragraphs focus on the Jewish Medieval migrants; the concept of 'causation' is present when the candidate says, 'attitudes began to change into suspicion and ignorance because they were prospering causing many to become violent', consequently supporting with the precise examples of the Palm Sunday Massacre and 1290 expulsion.

The final paragraph, in focusing on the Flemish Weavers, provides specific support around denizen status and guilds to exemplify that, diversely, they received positive welcoming attitudes.

This response was given Level 3, 9 marks.

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 commencing their answer, 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 Why have migrants moved to Britain since 1980?

Explain your answer.

[10]

A large number of candidates did well on this question, reaching at least Level 3 and many attaining Level 4 or Level 5 with full explanation(s). Most commonly, these centred on the growth of the EU and subsequent Eastern European migration (some candidates even managed to weave in the context of the fall of Communism in the early 1990s to help develop the context specifically), while there were also many references to recent civil wars and conflicts such as those in Syria or even Ukraine, both of which were creditable within the timeframe. Those attaining Level 3, but not progressing further, most often had identified a reason, linked this to the question but did not provide precise supporting evidence.

There were a rather significant number of responses that focused largely or entirely on the Caribbean migrants to Britain following the Second World War. This shows the importance of having a secure chronological appreciation of the course in its entirety, as it was not possible to credit these responses.

Misconception



This question had the date '1980' as the start point. While migration from Empire countries has continued and strong links with families clearly exist, this 'legacy' migration needed to have been made clear in responses to attain some credit. Instead, many answers remained firmly rooted in the 'rebuilding Britain after the Second World War' context which was not creditable for a post-1980 question.

Question 4*

4* 'European migrants were welcomed and accepted in Britain during the early modern period (1500–1750).'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

With a good range of possible migrant groups to incorporate, this question saw candidates able to argue effectively both for and against the 'welcomed and accepted' phrase in the question, most commonly referring to the Huguenots and Palatines, but also the returning Jews and the Romany Gypsies. Stronger answers supported identifications of these groups with specific evidence about their welcome and acceptance, for example Charles II's granting of denizen status for Huguenots or Henry VIII's Egyptian Act of 1530.

It is worth mentioning that a significant number of candidates would assess the experience of groups, making comments relating to both sides of the question; yet only by supporting each side with specific, precise evidence would they be able to get credit for explanations – many ended up with just one credit for explanation or indeed remaining in Level 2. Many candidates focused on the cause of the group's arrival, or indeed their impact, but without linking back to the question, to explain whether they were welcomed or accepted.

It was all too common to see candidates write about African or Indian migrants, which were not rewardable in a question about European migration.

Assessment for learning



The key phrasing of the question – here, 'welcomed and accepted' or, as in Question 5 'positive experiences' needs to be engaged with by candidates. Rather than choosing to focus on causation or consequence specifically, these questions asked candidates to analyse the migrant experience in a particular way – it shows just how vital it is to read the question carefully in order to engage with what has been set.

Exemplar 2

		one reason why some historians may agree with this statement and say that European migrants migrants were welcomed and accepted in Britain during the early modern period is due to the Hansa Merchants becoming very successful. The Hansa Merchants were welcomed into Britain as they were protestant. One Hansa Merchant called 'Hans Holbein' was very successful, he painted portraits of men of high status statuses such as King James Henry VIII. This proves that Hansa Merchants were not only accepted but even the King favoured them, he gave them their own sort of town, which was called the 'steelyard'. This shows they were welcomed and accepted in early modern Britain.
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Another

Another reason why some historians may agree is due to the Huguenots and their ~~cont~~ contribution to Britain's economy. ~~The~~ The Huguenots were French protestants, and which meant they were very skilled ~~working~~ workers, especially ~~at~~ with wool. The wool trade was very significant in the Early Modern Period and Britain welcomed the Huguenots in as they could be of good help because more sheep = more wool = more trade = more money = more power. Britain wanted to be powerful and so accepted and welcomed the Huguenots in. The Huguenots ~~me~~ had a lasting impact on Britain's wool trade, wool-trade, economy and industry. Therefore, this is why European migrants and some historians may agree with this ~~statem~~ statement.

However, one ~~reason~~ reason why some historians may disagree is due to the experience of the Palatines. The Palatines came from Germany and were poor farmers, they weren't seen as anything valuable as they couldn't contribute to Britain's growth. They were treated poorly, facing discrimination and essentially were not welcomed or accepted at all in Early Modern Britain, this is shown as the Palatines came in 1700 and left the same year, this shows

		just how negative their experiences were, they did not last in Britain, which is why some Historians may disagree with this statement.
		Another reason why some Historians may disagree is due to the African Slave trade which took place in the Early Modern Period. Slavery was illegal in Britain and yet there were still African slaves who were brought to Britain on ships. These Africans faced racial discrimination and were seen as less than human. Africans were not accepted, they were treated poorly and were seen as animals. Hence, why some Historians may disagree with this statement as Britain was not welcoming at all, there was always racial prejudice.
		In conclusion, I disagree with the statement because every single European migrant had faced discrimination, including the Huguenots and Hansa Merchants which shows that British society did not fully accept them.

This answer was given Level 5, 14 marks.

The answer first focuses on the Hansa Merchants, where a threshold explanation was awarded to move the answer into Level 3 (Level 1 being for general assertions, Level 2 for identified but not explained points). A clearer and stronger explanation follows on the Huguenots, linking their impact to acceptance. A third explanation on the Palatines sees the answer move into Level 5, as the Palatines' lack of acceptance means the answer is balanced, so can go beyond Level 4. The candidate then moves on to talk about African migrants, which received no credit within the stated confines of the question. The conclusion cannot be given a clinching argument mark as the answer has not attained Level 6.

Question 5*

5* 'Between 1750 and 1980, migrants to Britain had positive experiences.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

There were a multitude of different groups that fitted the period and were therefore potentially rewardable in this question. Some very interesting and diverse responses allowed examiners to credit specific knowledge from candidates which was only seen in a very few answers, including reference to individual migrants they had either discovered themselves or been taught by their teachers, with a real sense of enthusiasm for the topic coming across.

Many stronger responses focused on groups such as the Poles during and after the Second World War, the Kindertransport of Jewish children, the Windrush Generation and the nineteenth century Irish migrants. Candidates were keen to talk about the Italian contribution of ice cream but sometimes did not link this to how they might have had a positive experience themselves, although a number did refer to the negative experience of blame for cholera being laid at the door of the Italians and their supposed dirty ice cream glasses.

Fewer candidates chose to focus on the Eastern European Jews escaping Russian pogroms, or the German migrants who often successfully migrated to Georgian Britain.

Many answers were able to progress beyond Level 4 as candidates seemed proficient at arguing for both positive and negative migrant experiences.

Less successful responses often did not provide sufficient precise evidence to support their arguments, although again in this question there were a significant number of responses that focused on groups from outside the period, that may have been credited in the other essay option.

Exemplar 3

5	migrants essay
	I partially agree that migrants to Britain between 1750 and 1980 had positive experiences as it depended how each group were viewed by the British people at the time. Groups seen as hard-working and valuable were viewed as 'good refugees' in both the industrial and modern periods, whilst those seen to be less valuable - often more foreign - and endured much harsher experiences between 1750 and 1980.
	Among industrial migrant groups that was seen as valuable and hard-working (and so had a more positive experience) were the Chinese. Although they were 'foreign' to the British people, the Chinese migrants were viewed to be non-violent and hard working as they didn't drink and their family was important to them. Although they were abandoned in Britain from there working on ships, the Chinese soon found strong communities and set up businesses in leisure places like Chinatown. They created successfully created restaurants, laundrettes and hotels. By the 1880s,

there were hugely thriving Chinese communities in cities like Liverpool and London. This shows that, due to being viewed as hardworking and honourable by the British, Chinese industrial migrants endured a largely positive experience. The British also valued Chinese culture, the upper class specifically ~~even~~ saw their porcelain and tea as 'must-haves'.

Another group that had a largely positive experience between 1750 and 1980 were the ~~Polish~~ ~~migrant~~ modern Polish migrants. The Poles contributed heavily to the WW2 war effort - proving themselves to be hard-working and valuable to the British. 14,000 of 160,000 Poles that came to Britain in 1939 worked as pilots, shooting down $\frac{1}{7}$ of the German enemy planes in the Battle of Britain. The Poles also helped to break the German enigma codes, ultimately ending the war. In 1947, the Polish Resettlement Act was passed by the government, allowing the Poles to ~~have a choice on~~ either return to communist Poland, or stay in England and work in designated jobs. 140,000 chose to stay, showing their experience was largely positive.

A migrant group, ~~however~~, that had a more negative experience were the industrial Irish. They were viewed by the British to be dishonourable, liars and cheats. We can see from songs of the time that they were portrayed as thieves, and people

would have signs outside their establishments that stated 'no blacks, no dogs, no Irish', likening them to animals. The industrial Irish were in poverty after fleeing the 1846 Irish famine and lived in unsanitary, cramped urban slums. Many worked as 'Navvies' in harsh manual labour, building things like railways and bridges. ~~For~~ such jobs had poor working conditions, ~~and~~ frequent industrial accidents and low pay. This shows that, the industrial Irish experienced a negativity continually in Britain between 1750 and 1980 - they had a bad reputation and were also hated for being Catholic.

~~Another~~ Another migrant group between 1750 and 1980 that had a negative experience were the Commonwealth migrants from 1948. ~~By 1948, the British Nationality Act was passed~~ Commonwealth migrants did have British passports due to the 1948 Nationality act, but this automatic right was revoked in the ^{first} Commonwealth Immigrants act in ~~1948~~ 1962. Commonwealth migrants were hated by British people, there ~~was~~ was continuous discrimination and prejudice, as well as frequent violent attacks - like the 1959 murder of a young black boy, Kelso Cochrane. We can see that their experience was extremely negative as the government had to pass the 1965 race relations Act - stating that ~~xxx~~ it is illegal to refuse service to someone on the grounds of race. This shows that, Commonwealth migrants were hated by British people, ~~even~~ as well

		often or being in poverty, causing them to endure a very negative experience.
		overall, whether migrants to Britain between 1750 and 1980 had a positive experience depended hugely on their reputation in British people's eyes. If migrants were viewed as invaluable or dishonourable - their experience deemed to be extremely negative.

Here the candidate begins with a less common example - that of Chinese migrants - but nonetheless attains Level 3, before moving on to the Polish migrants in the era of the Second World War, gaining another 'positive' credit for Level 4. A section on the Irish is brought together at the end of the paragraph (notably taking elements from different periods such as the navvies of the nineteenth century with the 'no blacks, no dogs, no Irish' signs of the 1950s) with an understanding of the negative experiences over a large proportion of the period. The answer now has balance, consequently accessing Level 5. A further, negative experience is developed on the Commonwealth migrants with a very specific example of Kelso Cochrane given to illustrate. The final paragraph was not clear enough for a clinching argument. The answer therefore attained the top level, Level 6 and was given 17 marks.

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