

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/01
Making of a Nation 1754–2000

Key messages

Many candidates were well prepared and able to make a strong attempt at the questions using the required knowledge. There was still a tendency for some candidates to use too much general knowledge in their answers rather than focussing what they knew on the specifics of the question. There were also a number who made rubric errors by answering questions across the two options.

To gain full marks in **part (a)** questions candidates should provide description containing relevant factual material with reference to the date range and focus of the question.

Part (b) questions require that candidates **explain** their ideas in some depth. This will go beyond describing events or issues that relate to the question. The best responses were able to make a pertinent point, explain how it linked to the question and supported it with precisely chosen evidence.

High marks for **part (c)** responses are obtained by providing balanced ('for' and 'against') and developed arguments. The best responses attempted to build an argument in relation to the question; thinking about whether or not they agree with the statement or assertion in the question and building a balanced base of evidence. Good responses were supported with a reasonable range of detailed material; less good responses tended to produce mere assertion.

General comments

Many candidates were well prepared for the examination and could use useful factual knowledge with some precision. This was shown particularly in the **part (a)** questions where some candidates received high marks as a result of sticking to the question and the dates, events or figures included.

With **part (b)** questions some responses were aware of the need to *explain* rather than just describe and this was shown in the way answers were structured into reasons/factors/causes and used language such as 'this showed that' or 'this meant that'. Some responses struggled to gain marks in the **part (b)** questions because they did not demonstrate the requisite knowledge to link general comments to the particular question and were not focussed on explaining.

Some candidates were aware of the need to offer balanced comments in response to **part (c)** questions. Good answers revealed clear exposition, structure, organisation and a good range of supporting material before arriving at a consistent judgement in a conclusion. Such responses invariably started with a clear introduction before moving on to a 'point per paragraph' approach. The balance in such responses was often sign-posted by the second half of the answer starting with 'However...' or 'Although I agree to some extent with the statement I am not totally convinced by it for the following reasons...' It is acceptable, especially with **part (c)** responses, for candidates to write in the first person (i.e. informally) but slang and colloquialism should be kept to a minimum.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Emergence of a Nation 1754–1890

Question 1

- (a) A number of responses were able to offer a sound overview of the measures taken by the colonists to challenge British rule. Stronger responses showed good awareness of the reaction to the Stamp Acts, and boycotts as well as specific events such as the Boston Tea Party. Weaker responses struggled to look at specifics often relying on vague notions of ‘rebellion’ or ‘protest’.
- (b) Many candidates were able to make broad descriptive references to the problems which were created by the Articles of Confederation especially the lack of an army or navy, and the lack of taxation powers. The best answers were able to use these issues to explain the disagreement that were discussed by federalists and anti-federalists. These clear explanatory links helped some candidates reach the top level in this question but many responses tended to describe rather than explain.
- (c) A number of candidates had knowledge of this question (which is central to this part of the specification) and were able to discuss the issues with some ease. The best answers were able to discuss the issues of, e.g. the separation of powers, Jackson’s use of his presidential veto and other specific presidential examples.

Question 2

- (a) Some responses had a good working knowledge of the French-Indian War and were able to provide a sound working description of the events. The best answers were also able to add specific names and dates to the narrative.
- (b) The best answers to this question were able to give a clear explanation of why foreign powers led to an American victory in the Revolutionary Wars using specific examples of, e.g. French and Spanish involvement. Some candidates struggled to move beyond basic description but this question was generally well attempted.
- (c) Better responses were able to select relevant examples of the influence of Mexico on the expansion of the United States, e.g. events in Texas in the 1830s and 1840s, and contrast these with interactions with other countries in the period, e.g. the Louisiana Purchase and France. Many candidates were able to describe some relevant knowledge but found it difficult to explain how these ideas linked to the question asked or form an argument to support either side.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates were able to offer highly detailed descriptions of the terms and consequences of the Dawes Act and this question was often well answered. Some responses did not focus on the specific act but spent time discussing more general policies.
- (b) The best answers to this question were able to use specific knowledge of the Indian Removal Act to explain how this changed the relationship between them, e.g. the move from farming to plains life for some tribes. These candidates were clearly explaining and building an answer to the question.
- (c) Good responses displayed precise knowledge of the Plains Wars period and other areas of conflict between Native American tribes and the U.S. government. Other responses struggled to show a clear knowledge of the Plains Wars and did not have a clear enough chronological understanding of the whole period to tackle the question. This led to many answers being confused or conflating issues.

Question 4

- (a) This question was popular and generally produced responses which were knowledgeable and focussed on the specific ideas surrounding the Freedman's Bureau.
- (b) Many candidates were able to describe the Jim Crow laws that were created in many Southern states in the period after the Civil War. The best answers were able to explain the situation in the South after reconstruction and link this clearly to the creation of Jim Crow laws.
- (c) The best responses to this question were able to provide specific knowledge, within the time frame, that was relevant to the question on Reconstruction. There were some strong answers here with candidates being able to discuss the successes or failures of Reconstruction and how this might differ according to perspective. Some responses did not restrict their answers to the period of Reconstruction and moved a long way out of the timeframe into the twentieth century.

Question 5

- (a) This question was often well attempted with candidates providing knowledge of the Transcontinental Railroad, inventions of the period, or key industrialists. This generally produced well focussed and high scoring answers.
- (b) Candidates who attempted this question often had a general knowledge of political groupings in the late nineteenth century but struggled to use specific knowledge of Populism. Although some candidates knew the word Populist they often did not describe or explain particular policies or events concerning the Populists in this period.
- (c) The best answers were able to use precise knowledge of the impact of the Transcontinental Railroad to compare it to other reasons for economic growth in the period. Some responses did not move beyond basic description and did not engage with the different causes which could be discussed in the question.

Question 6

- (a) Many candidates could generally describe the attitudes and context surrounding the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 but specific knowledge of the act was confined to the best answers. Some answers struggled to focus on this particular period.
- (b) There were some sound responses to this question which had good knowledge of the passing and working of the Homestead Act. The best answers were able to explain why this act encouraged immigration by acting as a pull factor for free white labour.
- (c) The best answers were able to look at economic motivations versus those to do with freedom or religion. These answers often had excellent and precise knowledge of the push and pull factors for different groups of immigrants. Weaker responses did not demonstrate the required knowledge of immigration after 1860. This meant that they remained quite general and did not successfully build an argument in relation to the question.

Section B: Consolidating the Nation 1890–2000

Question 7

- (a) This question often provoked clear and well informed responses with a good knowledge of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire and its impact in the early twentieth century. The best responses focussed on the impact rather than describing the events of the fire.
- (b) There were some good responses to this question which showed a sound knowledge of living conditions at the beginning of the twentieth century and the some were able to explain how these conditions were publicised by muckraking journalists such as Jacob Riis. The best answers were able to use this knowledge to explain how this had an impact on public opinion and government actions.

- (c) Better responses were able to use their knowledge of Progressive ideas in order to form an argument about the significance of the nineteenth amendment versus other policies. For example, some candidates able to discuss the importance of the direct election of senators that was campaigned for by Progressive politicians. Weaker responses did not demonstrate enough knowledge to directly address the question and instead gave only simple descriptions of the suffrage movement.

Question 8

- (a) Some candidates were able to describe the workings of protective tariffs in the 1920s and could highlight the impact on American business and Republican administrations of the period. Some responses to the question could not demonstrate understanding of the basics of tariff operation or enough knowledge of government policies.
- (b) Many candidates were able to give solid descriptions of the lives of some women in 1920s America especially flappers. The best answers were able to use their knowledge to form an explanation of why the lives of women changed by using further contextual knowledge although this was relatively rare.
- (c) This question provoked some thoughtful and considered responses where candidates were able to use clear knowledge to test the assertion, including many who successfully argued both for and against the assertion. These answers included specific historical knowledge, especially of how credit systems worked in the 1920s, which was deployed and explained to build an argument in relation to the question.

Question 9

- (a) Most candidates were able to give a good response to this question and showed clear knowledge of the policies and achievements of President Roosevelt in his first 100 days. Many were able to use the ideas, relief, recovery and reform to show different ways in which the early New Deal policies tried to help Americans. Some candidates were not familiar with the term 100 days and instead gave general descriptions of the New Deal.
- (b) The best answers to this question were able to use specific knowledge of overproduction, often in the agricultural sector, to show how this caused weaknesses in the U.S. economy. Weaker responses did not move beyond general description or explain the links between events and consequences.
- (c) The best responses demonstrated clear knowledge and explanation which formed an argument and tested the validity of the assertion. They were able to use precise knowledge of the causes of the successes and failures of the New Deal to write balanced answers which argued either for or against the assertion. Less successful responses did not move beyond generic answers describing the broad aims of the New Deal without linking them to the question.

Question 10

- (a) Some responses showed an awareness of the Black Panther Movement and were able to offer some description of the ideas and activities surrounding it. Not all responses were able to demonstrate the required knowledge of the specifics of different Civil Rights movements.
- (b) The best answers to this question were able to use their knowledge of the Great Migration as well as conditions in the Southern states to explain why people moved from South to North in this period. There were many responses that made a good attempt at this and had some knowledge of life in Northern cities, e.g. Chicago and New York.
- (c) Some candidates were able to use knowledge of the early activities of the NAACP and individuals such as William du Bois and Booker T Washington to build an argument for this question. A number of responses strayed outside of the period and struggled to gain marks beyond basic description.

Question 11

- (a) Many candidates were able to make a good attempt at this question and could give some useful description of the events of the Potsdam conference and the impact of the different leaders there.
- (b) There were some strong responses to this question which were able to combine a strong knowledge of the Marshall Plan with an explanation of the context both domestically and abroad which led Truman to pursuing this policy. Some responses did not have enough knowledge about events in Europe after 1945 and so struggled to explain why this policy was seen as necessary by the Truman administration and Congress.
- (c) There were many good attempts at answering this question and the best responses were able to give a balanced account of both the successes and failures of the war in Vietnam to begin to come to a judgement in regard to the question.

Question 12

- (a) This question was not very popular but the candidates who did choose to answer it had a sound working knowledge of the policies of Kennedy's New Frontier programme which allowed them to describe the aims and some of the impacts.
- (b) Some candidates were able to use knowledge of post-war America to describe some of the main events of the McCarthy era but many candidates who answered this question found it difficult to give specific knowledge about the reasons that it grew in popularity. Good responses demonstrated awareness of context as well as basic knowledge.
- (c) The best responses understood that the question referred to the economic success of the United States after the Second World War and were able to discuss the various influences on the economy, e.g. franchises, federal spending and conglomerates.

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/02
Depth Study

Key messages

- 1 The basis of each answer should be the content of the source(s). Several candidates provide only generalised comment or paraphrased the content. Many candidates regarded the content of the sources as information rather than evidence and, as such, were inclined to accept the content at face value rather than interrogate it or consider its provenance. Critical use of the sources is necessary to access the higher marks, and, in answering the second and third questions on each Depth Study, it is not possible to go beyond Level 2 unless this approach is adopted.
- 2 The final question of the five questions set on each topic carries one third of the total marks available. Candidates should be aware of the need to construct an argument for and against the statement posed in the question. Some candidates grouped the sources by letter in their introduction, which provided a plan and appears to have helped them construct the rest of their answer. Many answers were one-sided, which confined their answers to Level 2.
- 3 Each question states that the answer should use information from outside the sources as well as details from the source. Candidates should aim to do this and, specifically, with information that shows understanding about the content and, when appropriate, to evaluate the quality of the source and the information it contains.
- 4 Except for the first question in each Depth Study, candidates should evaluate the source(s). The nature of the questions is such that a full answer cannot be written without consideration of some of the following: the authorship, the date of the source, the quality of the language, the audience, specific facts and so on.
- 5 Judgements about the utility, reliability and relevance of the evidence strengthen answers. Interim judgements are useful, but a conclusion at the end of an answer is nevertheless most effective. No set answer is expected. (The examples offered in the mark scheme are suggestions about how a question might be interpreted.)

Comments on specific questions

Depth study questions

Questions 1, 6, 11 and 16

Most candidates identified some relevant details from the source so placing their answers in Level 2. Answers where the use of the detail was full and showed good understanding achieved Level 3. To secure the higher level, some knowledge is required. For example, in **Question 1**, candidates might have explained that railroad companies had been given land by the government to build the railways and this was why they were able to sell it to settlers. In answering **Question 16**, most of those candidates who provided knowledge referred to flappers. Rather than treat the detail and knowledge discretely, the better answers integrated details from the source with their knowledge so the link between the content and knowledge was made clear.

Questions 2, 7, 12 and 17

These questions asked, 'how useful is this source to an historian?' Most candidates identified points in the source that provided information on the issue highlighted in the question, few candidates appreciated two important aspects of this question. Firstly, the limitations of the source needed to be considered as well as

the specific points made in the source; this needed to be done to achieve marks in Levels 3 and 4. Most answers did not do this. For example, in **Question 1**, the source only considers one reason for travel to Oregon. Other reasons, such as the desire to escape poverty or a sense of adventure should have been flagged. Secondly, candidates must treat the source as evidence rather than, simply, information. Many were inclined to regard sources that expressed an opinion as not useful when, in fact, they can be very useful. After all, the source might be the view of an individual, but it is, nonetheless, useful as an expression of a view more widely held (as in **Question 12**) or supported by fact (as in **Question 17**).

Questions 3, 8, 13 and 18

Some answers confused reliability with utility. Those that were restricted to content might have achieved a low Level 2 but further development was required. Essentially, some consideration of the provenance (see note 4 in Key Messages above), however light, was required for a high Level 2 answer. Indeed, if the provenance was examined thoroughly, Level 3 may have been merited. For example, in **Question 3**, the reliability of the source might have been challenged on the grounds of exaggeration, but, if undeveloped, Level 2 would have been appropriate. However, this feature of the source was extensive and, if fully explored, would have merited Level 3. In **Question 18**, the reliability of the source was more effectively tested by the application of knowledge, and candidates who gave evidence about the film industry and the popularity of the cinema provided a developed response.

Questions 4, 9, 14 and 19

The contrast between the two sources was clear so most candidates highlighted the differences between them. Many treated the sources discretely and looked at one, then the other, often concentrating on the content of each source. Often, candidates stated that one was positive and the other negative, or for and against. As such, most candidates wrote about how the sources differed. A minority of candidates addressed the question directly and attempted an explanation for the difference. As the mark scheme indicates, answers need to 'explain points of difference' to qualify for Level 4. Candidates did this by analysing of the provenance. In all the fourth questions, for each Depth Study, the most obvious means of explaining the contrast is to consider the authorship of the sources. For example, in **Question 9**, one author might be considered moderate compared with the other more radical author given her link to the magazine, 'Revolution'. However, the context might be important as a way of explaining the difference, as in **Question 19**. Here, the fact that one author is defined as an anti-imperialist explains his position, but the view of the author of the other source is best explained by the context of social Darwinism.

Questions 5, 10, 15 and 20

Most candidates wrote some valid argument. Only by presenting a two-sided response can the higher marks be awarded. Even a strong one-sided answer can only be awarded a maximum of eight marks. Given that some sources will always challenge the view stated in the question, candidates wrote about only one side of the argument will, inevitably, be ignoring several sources. Those who ran through the sources sequentially and, in doing so merely stated, how each source confirmed, or otherwise, the view in the question, were not credited with having provided a two-sided answer and were marked at Level 2. As pointed out above, better answers made it clear in their introduction how the sources might be grouped. Having done so, they then considered both sides of the argument in turn. As such, they gave themselves the chance to access Level 3 but, to improve on this standard, some analysis of the sources, and knowledge, is needed. Many candidates did not do this. Candidates who explained how specific source evidence linked to their comments the validity of the sources scored most highly. The mark scheme provides a detailed breakdown of how the sources might have been used, the knowledge that might have been applied and the way the sources might have been evaluated.

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/03
Personal Study

Key messages

Several candidates expressed a positive response to studying the history of their own locality. Candidates were most successful in AO2 where they recognised that historical significance relates to the concept of change and continuity, rather than simply the impact of the topic under consideration. Candidates need to evaluate suitable first-hand source material and consider the reliability, typicality and purpose of these sources.

General comments

Most candidates demonstrated sound understanding of the topic studied. They selected appropriate evidence from the materials provided to produce relevant description. Most candidates understood the need to assess the significance of the topic, and tried to reference their sources and evaluate their study.

The selection of a suitable topic for the study is critical in allowing candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the two concept areas assessed. Specifically, where candidates cannot be provided with suitable first-hand source material, they cannot demonstrate higher level thinking in AO4. Source evaluation remains a weak aspect, including in the best scripts. Many candidates fall back on techniques learned for assessing contemporary sources, such as considering credibility, expertise and the need for publication to retain reputation. Candidates need to recognise that historians often use sources for a purpose other than the one intended by the writer, and that the source can only provide evidence when the historian interrogates it. Historians are unlikely to go to first-hand sources to find out basic factual information. Sources are not evaluated based on what information they do or do not contain. Historians are seeking evidence to help them answer questions about concepts such as cause and effect, change and continuity and significance. Hence when using a source, the historian considers the typicality, purpose and reliability of the source evidence. One route into evaluation lies in seeking to explain contradictory or conflicting evidence and this was found in a number of the topics, such as the experience of students at Indian Schools.

Candidates should distinguish between what historians have written about a topic and the sources they have used to create their version of the past. There is no requirement to evaluate historians' accounts.

For AO2, it is important to distinguish between impact and significance. Impact (or consequence) can only represent part of significance as it does not take into account what difference the subject of the study made. Significance means how much changed: for what proportion of the population, how far afield, and for how long. Significance may change over time.

Lastly, considering annotations, it is helpful in understanding how the marks have been awarded if the marker indicates on the script where particular qualities are considered to have been demonstrated. It is not enough to write AO2 or AO4, as often this simply indicates that the candidate has mentioned significance or referenced a source. In order to demonstrate understanding of significance, candidates need to provide evidence of before and after, and assess how much changed. Use of sources may involve accepting evidence at face value, and analysing or assessing the value of the evidence. Annotations should indicate the level at which the candidate is operating.