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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In History(WHI03)

Paper option 1D: Civil Rights and Race Relations in
the USA, 1865 - 2009

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Principal Examiner Report WHI03 D

WHI03 1D is divided into two sections. Section A comprises a compulsory source based question and assesses source analysis and evaluation skills(AO2). Section B consists of two essay questions of which the student is expected to answer one of them. They will assess the knowledge and understanding of the period in breadth (AO1). Questions, in this section, will be set so that they connect two or more of the key topics in the specification and will target a range of concepts such as cause, consequence, significance, similarity/difference and change/continuity.

The time available for the paper did allow students the opportunity to plan their work and many took advantage of this as evidenced by the plans included. However, this was not the case with all and it would be advisable for candidates to spend a short while getting their thoughts in order before writing their answers. This would be relevant to both sections of the paper.

In general, it was section A that continued to present the greater challenge to the students as they had to consider two primary sources and their use to the historian in investigating an historical issue. Difficulties were encountered in moving beyond surface comprehension of the sources and evaluation which was little more than either stereotypical judgements or, at best, questionable assumptions drawn from the sources. Those that were more successful drew inferences from the sources and interrogated the evidence with support from relevant contextual knowledge. It is to be hoped that the publication of a study guide shortly, with examples of responses from students, will help centres with regard to this.

Section B responses generally scored higher marks as there was much greater focus and engagement with the stated issues in the questions. Many responses showed good knowledge of the periods studied and were able to develop arguments which crossed the key topics being considered. However there were some that showed more limited knowledge of one of the periods being questioned on compared to the other. This led to unbalanced answers that, if they were seriously so, could not reach the higher marks available. Although some essays remained predominantly narrative they were in a minority.

Comments on Individual questions.

Question 1

For question 1 stronger responses showed a clear understanding of both sources and were able to draw out inferences from them which related to the impact of the Ku Klux Klan during the period of reconstruction. Both sources were replete with possibilities to draw inferences and to link these to the utility of the sources to the historian in the context of the investigation. Moreover the best answers produced thoughtful observations concerning the provenance of the sources to help judge how far the historian could make use of them to consider the investigation. Good contextual knowledge was deployed to discuss the strengths of the evidence and some consideration was given to interpreting the material in the context of the values and concerns of the society from which it was derived. The very best interrogated the evidence and made clear supported judgements which weighed up the strengths or otherwise of the material in relation to the investigation under consideration.

Weaker responses appeared in a number of different forms. There were those where paraphrasing of the sources dominated and very few, if any, inferences relevant to the stated issue were made. In these types of responses contextual knowledge was often limited and, if evident, used to simply expand, confirm or challenge matters of detail in the sources. However, in some responses there was considerable knowledge displayed and focused on the specified enquiry but with almost no or exceptionally limited references to the sources. As this question is targeting AO2 (analysis and evaluation of source material) these kinds of responses cannot score highly. Moreover in a number of cases knowledge displayed didn't relate to the reconstruction period but to later time periods and so could not be credited. In other instances, where utility was addressed through the provenance it was often based on either stereotypical judgements or questionable assumptions. This often took the form of general comments such as all newspaper articles are trustworthy (Movements of the Mystic Klan Source 1) or as he is a politician we cannot trust what he says (Butler Source 2).

Question 2

This was the more popular of the two questions. The question considered how far the policies of President Lyndon Johnson were more effective in addressing the problems facing black Americans than those of President Franklin Roosevelt. Stronger responses clearly established criteria for identifying what problems they faced and displayed good knowledge of both the attempts made by Johnson and Roosevelt to address them. Some very detailed answers outlined the different contexts in which they operated but still mostly maintained focus on judging effectiveness. Key policy areas such as the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s and the New Deal were explored and discussed using valid criteria to judge effectiveness. Key limitations to

effectiveness and obstacles to doing more such as the influence of southern Democrats for Roosevelt and socio- economic difficulties faced by black Americans in the 1960s were often discussed well.

Weaker responses tended towards either narrative or generalisation. If analysis was present the support offered tended to be limited in both range and depth. Weaker responses also found it harder to outline clearly the nature of the problems that Johnson and Roosevelt faced as president and so struggled to make supported judgements relevant to the question.

Question 3

There were very few responses to this question in which students had to consider whether changing patterns of black settlement were the biggest influence on the lives of black Americans in the years 1933-2009. The hope was that there would be good knowledge of the impact of changing patterns of settlement which could be weighed up against the importance of other factors such as the role of various presidents, supreme court and civil rights activists. The responses produced didn't quite manage to accomplish this as in many cases the responses were either disconnected narrative or brief and assertive in approach. Many were ill focused responses. Also there were instances where only a very short period of time was considered thereby limiting the judgements made and therefore the marks that could be awarded.

Students are offered the following advice for the future:

Section A

- Students need to draw from the sources inferences that are relevant to the enquiry in the question. These inferences should be developed through the use of contextual knowledge which is relevant to the enquiry in the question and focused on the time period in question.
- Students need to move beyond stereotypical judgements or assumptions that are questionable and unsupported when engaging with the provenance of the source. References to the biased nature of sources must be explained and supported in the context of the enquiry in the question.
- Students need to consider the weight the evidence has in helping them reach judgements relevant to the enquiry.
- Students should consider the stance or purpose of the author of the source and be aware how this might be affected by the values and concerns of the society from which it is drawn.

- Sources should be interrogated with distinctions being made between such things as claims and opinions
- Students must avoid engaging with the enquiry simply from their knowledge. The answer needs to be focused on how the sources help the historian and knowledge used to discuss the inferences or points arising from the sources.

Section B

- Students need to read the question carefully so as to fully understand the time periods being considered and the full range of issues that they are being asked to consider
- Students would benefit from taking some time to plan their answers. As the examination is quite generous in its time allocation this would still allow plenty of time to write the answers.
- Students should consider what criteria might be used to shape or reinforce the judgements being made
- Students need to avoid description and develop analytical responses which make clear and supported judgements relevant to the question
- Students should try to establish links between the arguments being made and, if relevant, weigh up the relative importance of them.

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