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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In History (WHI02)

Paper 2: Breadth Study with Source Evaluation

Option 1A: India, 1857–1948: The Raj to Partition

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## **Introduction**

It was pleasing to see a range of well-informed and well-written responses from candidates on IAS Paper WHI02 1A which covers the option India, 1857-1948: The Raj to Partition. The paper is divided into two sections. Section A contains a compulsory two-part question for the option studied, each part based on one source. It assesses source analysis and evaluation skills (AO2). Section B comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting five second order concepts - cause, consequence, change/ continuity, similarity/difference and significance.

In common with the previous series, candidates found Section A more challenging than Section B. Some candidates were still not clear on what was meant by 'value' and 'weight' in the context of source analysis and evaluation. Performance in Section A was also affected by the absence of the detailed knowledge base required to add contextual material to support/challenge points derived from the sources. Most candidates did use their time effectively and, although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer questions both sections. The ability range was diverse, but the design of the paper allowed all abilities to be catered for. Furthermore, in Section B, most responses had an analytical focus and there were very fewer that were wholly descriptive essays which were devoid of analysis and, for the most part, responses were soundly structured. The most common weakness in Section B essays was the lack of a sharp focus on the precise terms of the question and/or the second order concept that was targeted. This meant that some candidates wrote at length on topics that were only peripherally related to the question or which did not cover the whole time period.

It remains important to realise that Section A topics are drawn from highlighted topics on the specification whereas Section B questions may be set from any part of any Key Topic, and, as a result, full coverage of the specification is enormously important. There was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer questions from Sections A and B.

The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

### **Question 1 (a)**

The majority of candidates produced answers that achieved level 2 and level 3. Most candidates understood the question and were able to comprehend the source and comment on what it revealed about the reasons for the decision to partition India in 1947. Candidates were able to draw out valid inferences from the source evidence, including the evidence of the growing gap between Hindus and Muslims and the picture of a segregated nation that was emerging. The best answers developed the inferences with well-selected context to establish their validity. Candidates would do well to remember that contextual knowledge does need to be used to explain and develop the inferences drawn from the source and not just to provide free-standing knowledge. Lengthy passages about Jinnah's career, for example, that were not used to develop and explain inferences could be rewarded in level 2 but not in level 3. Some candidates did not use any contextual knowledge and this did depress their achievement within the levels. Some candidates were able to use the attributes of the source effectively to develop their ideas about the value of the Jinnah's speech, with a particular focus on Jinnah's credentials in speaking for the Muslim population. Those candidates who discussed the limitations could not be rewarded for that part of their answer as it is not the focus of part a responses.

### **Question 1 (b)**

Candidates understood the source material and were able to select from it to develop some inferences about General Dyer's handling of the protests at Amritsar. Most candidates achieved in level 2 and level 3 with few accessing level 4. There were some effective answers that weighed up the strengths and limitations of the source and used this as a basis to reach a judgement about the weight that should be attached to the source for the enquiry. However, many candidates still approach the consideration of weight by writing about adding and subtracting weight rather than considering the strengths and weaknesses of the source material and then reaching a judgement about the weight that the source would bear in an enquiry. There was a noticeable trend this summer for some candidates to use the structure of the generic mark scheme to write their answer. Whilst this meant that they addressed all three bullet points, it did mean that they did not integrate the ideas in their answer so that, in particular, knowledge was free standing and not used to develop and explain inferences. This technique would be best avoided for candidates who wish to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

### **Question 2**

This question had the least answers in this series. Those candidates who did answer the question showed some awareness of the second order concept – change– and were able to draw on evidence of a range of developments that improved the living standards of the Indian population during the period specified, including the employment provided by the investment in railways, the development of irrigation systems that encouraged the growth of cash crops and changing taxation policies that reduced the taxes paid by Indians. These were contrasted with the cost of building the railways to the Indian taxpayers and the famines. There were many good responses with the majority of candidates achieving higher marks in level 3 and

access marks in level 4. Candidates who were awarded marks in the lower levels of the mark scheme tended to lack the knowledge needed to address the question, or lost focus on the time period set for the question and wrote more lengthy responses about a single event within the period such as the Mutiny or the 1876-78 famine.

### **Question 3**

This was the most popular question on the exam paper and prompted many good answers with most candidates scoring in level 3 and level 4. Most candidates displayed secure knowledge of the key developments in the government of India and were able to analyse the extent of change by considering the way that Britain strengthened control through measures such as the Royal Proclamation 1858, the Royal Titles Act 1876 and later reforms such as the Ilbert Bill and the Indian Council Act 1909. These measures were contrasted by considering limitations to British control in the formation of the Indian National Congress the Indian Councils Act of 1892 and the Morley-Minto reforms. The most common errors in answering this question included lengthy responses on the Indian Mutiny which meant that candidates did not have time to address the full question, and a failure to take note of the date range which meant that some candidates wrote at length about events in the 1920, 1930s and 1940s which could not be rewarded.

### **Question 4**

This question prompted a number of effective responses. Most candidates demonstrated some knowledge of Gandhi's role during this period and the best responses were able to consider his contribution to independence by examining the evidence for and against the proposal. Most candidates considered Gandhi's role in the Round Table Conferences, the Salt March and the Quit India campaign. The best responses established clear criteria for judgement. The most common error in addressing this question was a failure to pay attention to the dates set in the question. A significant number of candidates wrote at some length on Gandhi's campaigns in the 1920s and looked at his role in the period 1945-47. These periods were not set in the question and material offered here could not be rewarded. It remains very important that candidates focus on the question that is set.

## **Paper Summary**

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

### **Section A**

#### **Value of Source Question (1(a))**

- Candidates must be more prepared to make valid inferences rather than to paraphrase the source
- Be prepared to back up inferences by adding additional contextual knowledge from beyond the source
- Move beyond stereotypical approaches to the nature/purpose and authorship of the source e.g. look at the specific stance and/or purpose of the writer
- Avoid writing about the deficiencies of the source when assessing its value to the enquiry.

#### **Weight of Source Question (1(b)/2(b))**

- Candidates should be prepared to assess the weight of the source for an enquiry by being aware that the author is writing for a specific audience. Be aware of the values and concerns of that audience.
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to use contextual knowledge to support/challenge statements and claims made in the source
- Try to distinguish between fact and opinion by using your contextual knowledge of the period
- Knowledge should be integrated with the source evidence, to discuss the inferences drawn and their validity in the light of the contextual understanding of the period.
- In coming to a judgement about the nature/purpose of the source, take account of the weight you may be able to give to the author's evidence in the light of his or her stance and/or purpose
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to assess reliability by considering what has been perhaps deliberately omitted from the source. However, simply stating that a source is limited because it does not cover certain events or developments does not establish weight since no source can be comprehensive.

### **Section B**

#### **Essay questions**

- Candidates must provide more factual details as evidence. Weaker responses lacked depth and sometimes range
- Take a few minutes to plan your answer before you begin to write your response
- Pick out three or four key themes and then provide an analysis of (for e.g.) the target significance mentioned in the question, setting its importance against other themes rather than providing a description of each

- Pay more careful attention to key phrases in the question when analysing and use them throughout the essay to prevent deviation from the central issues and concepts
- Pay careful attention to the date range in the question. Plan the answer with a focus on this range and avoid lengthy exploration of events outside of the time period set
- Try to explore links between issues to make the structure flow more logically and the arguments more integrated.