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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Level

In History(WHIO4) Paper 1D

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Summer 2022

Publications Code WHI04_1D_2206

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Unit 4: International Study with Historical Interpretations

Option 1D: The Cold War and Hot War in Asia, 1945–90

Introduction

Please note: that it is recommended that centres look at a selection of Principal Examiner Reports from across the different options within WHI04 1A-1D and previous series to get an overall sense of examiner feedback, centre approaches and candidate achievement. It is also highly recommended that centres read the general Introduction and Section A and B introductions in the Principal Examiner Reports for June 2017. These generic introductions outline the assessment requirements for WHI04 and give an indication of the skills required.

Centres may wish to refer to the *Getting Started* guide that is to be found on the IAL History Pearson Edexcel website. It is also useful to take note of the indicative content in the mark schemes.

Further resources that may be of use are the *Applying Criteria* and *Developing Student's Understanding of Historical Interpretations* documents to be found on the Pearson Edexcel History GCE website along with the Principal Examiner Reports for Paper 1 of the Pearson Edexcel History GCE. The *Applying Criteria* document gives guidance with regard to the application of criteria for the different AOs tested at A level. The GCE Paper 1 Reports will be particularly useful for exemplification of AO3 interpretations skills (but please be aware that there are slight differences within the general Level descriptors and that AO1 is assessed for IAL). Exemplification documents are also available on the Pearson Edexcel History IAL website.

General Comments

With two consecutive series having been sat it is possible to make some general comments about series-on-series developments. However, the candidates are still being prepared in challenging circumstances and most of the comments below refer to this specific series. (see below for more specific feedback):

Selection and deployment of knowledge - Candidates, in general, produce interesting responses that it is a pleasure to read and reward. The candidates were usually very well prepared in relation to knowledge of the specification and centres are to be commended for this. Candidates have good, detailed knowledge of the specification content and this is a facet that often stands out. Many responses were well-informed and well-written. However, there does need to be more discrimination in the selection and deployment of knowledge in both Section A and Section B. As in January, some candidates write 'all they know' about a topic without selecting and deploying information and evidence relevant to the question being asked. It was noticeable this series that in Section B candidates often could only be rewarded in Level 1 or Level 2 because they either misread the question and deployed supporting knowledge that was irrelevant to the time period or confused time periods to such an extent that it was difficult to determine whether knowledge of the time period was secure. In Section A, to reach the higher Levels, the use of own knowledge is required to discuss the views being presented in Extracts, not as stand-alone information, and in Section B, to reach Level 5, knowledge should be '*precisely selected*' (L5-BP2). For Q1, candidates often feel the need to develop a 'third' aspect of debate beyond the discussion being 'set up' by the Extracts. This is rarely necessary or relevant and often leads to responses that end up ignoring the Extracts or using them very thinly. The Extracts create the debate for discussion and own knowledge is best used validating the evidence in the

Extracts and showing understanding of the basis on which the Interpretation has been founded by the author(s). There were fewer candidates this series who wrote responses deploying solely own knowledge.

Conceptual understanding and application of skills - Despite good knowledge, candidates were not always able to access high Level 3 marks and above due to a limited understanding of the conceptual focus of questions and the application of analytical skills. Some candidates are still not using the Extracts as the basis of their response in Section A and candidates do need to reach a judgement on the given view to access the higher Levels. Many candidates assume that the debate will be centred around different factors (and here knowledge of other factors could be brought into the discussion if the candidate feels that another factor is more significant) but sometimes the Extracts set up and 'yes-no' debate that looks at argument and counter-argument in relation to the view. Many candidates write an explained commentary of both Extracts linking quotations with information or analytical phrases and then sum up each view in a conclusion. These responses usually are indicative of a Level 3 response and will be higher or lower in Level 3 depending on how much of the Extract is analysed rather than just paraphrased with some connecting word. The bottom of Level 4 can be achieved with a more analytical conclusion but to be rewarded in Level 4 there needs to be an understanding the Extracts are interpretations and it these interpretations that are being discussed. Some candidates are still just writing out the Extracts verbatim or paraphrasing without any hint of analysis or own knowledge. In Section B, lower-Level responses often lack focus on the wording of the question and/or the second-order concept being targeted.

This series it was noticeable that introductions to responses often did not clearly reflect what was later discussed (Section A and B) or provided detailed contextual knowledge that was not always relevant to the question or prevented the candidate from completing the response effectively. The best introductions are those that directly address the question and show an understand of the second-order concept(s) (causation, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference, significance) being targeted, the given focus and the time period. However, this should not lead to a formulaic indication of the question elements (see paragraphs below). In Section A, responses often seem to have a 'learned' introduction to the whole controversy that often bears no relation to the focus of the specification being targeted.

As in previous reports, it is worth noting that the responses are marked using a 'best-fit' process. Each bullet point strand within the generic mark scheme is considered to create an overall sense of Level and a mark applied within the Level. If a response has qualities which exemplify a variety of Levels or a strand is missing then this will be reflected by applying a 'best-fit' Level and mark. For responses which do not address an aspect of a particular strand, for example reaching a judgement in bullet point 3 for Q1, this will be reflected in the mark rewarded.

Some candidate responses reflect the wording of the generic descriptors and the format of the indicative content in such a way that it becomes detrimental to the overall analysis and organisation of the response. The descriptors reflect the qualities examiners would expect to see in an essay answering the question set rather than a scaffold on which responses should be built. It is the examiner who determines whether criteria are valid or if the analysis is sustained rather than the candidate by asserting 'so it can be seen by the valid criteria I have used...' or 'In conclusion, this sustained analysis...'. This does not necessarily add value to the response and can be detrimental if this assertion is clearly not substantiated. The indicative content is also not intended to provide a scaffold and is organised to give examiners an overview of what evidence might be included in a response.

As in January, despite the ongoing challenges faced by candidates, very few failed to attempt both Sections, and most were able to produce two balanced responses, so enabling them to show their ability across AO1 and AO3 skills.

General candidate performance on each Section and specific performance on individual questions for Paper 1D are considered below.

Section A

Q1. Question 1 required candidates to analyse and evaluate the two Extracts provided while deploying knowledge related to the issues raised in the Extracts to determine how far they agreed with the view that China's decision to intervene in the Korean War was mainly due to Soviet persuasion. The author of Extract 1, Niu Jin, put forward the view that Chinese intervention was as the result of Stalin's encouragement and commitments made by the Soviet Union to China as part of the Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty. The author of Extract 2, D Rees, suggested that the decision to intervene came from China itself for both defensive and offensive reasons.

Candidates were well prepared for discussion of major themes raised by the Key Topic controversy. Most candidates were able to explain the context of the interpretations and some were able to show clear understanding of the basis of the views being outlined in the Extracts. For Extract 1, responses referred to the claim that Stalin manipulated China's contribution to the Korean War and his use of Mao's vulnerability at the time to engineer China's intervention. There was also reference to Stalin's use of the terms of the Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty in encouraging Chinese intervention. For Extract 2, responses referred to the role of perceived US aggression and the threat to China's internal security. Some responses also referred to the final paragraph which indicated that, despite claiming to intervene in Korea specifically to defend North Korea, the Chinese also had the intention of using the situation to increase its interests in Asia.

Candidates were, in general, able to deploy contextual knowledge to underpin the discussion of the interpretations in the Extract. For Extract 1, candidates were able to use their knowledge of Stalin's initial desire to limit Chinese involvement in the Korean War, the vulnerability of the CCP in the early years of the PRC, Mao's need to secure his own position in China and the terms of the Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty. For Extract 2, candidates referred to the US naval decisions in the Asiatic sphere, anti-communist influence in the US, the role of MacArthur and the potential for the expansion of Chinese influence in Asia.

Section B

In section B, Q2 was much more popular than Q3.

Q2. Candidates were required to determine the extent to which the support of the US public for US involvement in the Vietnam conflict changed in the years 1965-73. Candidates were expected to cover the time period from the decision to send ground troops to Vietnam to the final withdrawal of US troops.

There was some excellent knowledge shown by candidates. Most candidates were able to show a decline in public support over the period related to events on the ground and the role of the media in presenting the conflict in the US itself. Some responses measured this by popular support for Presidents Johnson and Nixon, while others focused on the extent of protest. Some of the best responses were able to chart both the increased protest and

the continued significant support for US involvement. Some candidates were aware of the 'hard hat' phenomenon. A few candidates were able to discuss the nuances of increased protest against the presence of US troops in Vietnam under Nixon with support for Nixon's Vietnamisation and 'peace with honour' policies. There was also some interesting discussion of the impact of the Phoenix program during the Nixon presidency. The majority of candidates referenced the Gulf of Tonkin impact, the introduction of ground troops, the Tet Offensive, My Lai, student protest against the draft, the impact of Walter Cronkite and Kent State.

At Level 2 and Level 3, responses often described or explained the attitudes of the US public across the time period rather than exploring the extent to which attitudes changed. Lower level responses, despite have some good knowledge and understanding, often confused the chronology of events and this could also be found to some extent at low Level 4. Higher-Level responses were able to measure the extent to which support changed over the period, indicating the flash points when protests began to increase and when support from the general public began to change, as opposed to students or activists. There was some excellent analysis of the impact of the Tet Offensive, while some candidates were aware that the impact of Kent State on public support was divisive. Overall, there were many interesting responses to read.

Q3. Candidates were required to determine whether the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia as the most important reason for the ongoing confrontation between China and Vietnam in the year 1979-89. There were only a few responses but these candidates were able to discuss the given factor in relation to other factors such as Soviet influence, border disputes, traditional tensions and the geopolitical aims of China and Vietnam in the region.

Paper Summary

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

Section A (AO3/AO1)

- Candidates should use the time available to read both extracts carefully all the way through before planning their answer; the information in the extracts should be the foundation upon which the answer is constructed
- Candidates should aim to interpret both extracts by analysing the issues raised and showing an understanding of the arguments presented by both authors
- Candidates should use their own knowledge of the specification content to validate and discuss the interpretations being presented.
- Candidates should come to an overall judgement with regard to the view stated in the question; it is not sufficient just to summarise the views presented in the extracts.

Section B (AO1)

- Candidates should provide more precise contextual knowledge as supporting evidence. Use knowledge to provide evidence to support a sustained evaluation in relation to the conceptual focus of the question. Secure chronological knowledge enables candidates to produce a logical and coherent answer.
- Read the wording of the questions carefully, particularly if the time period of the question is stated; responses that refer to the wrong time period deploy irrelevant

and inaccurate knowledge that does not directly address or only implicitly addresses the question.

- Introductions do not need to reflect a large amount of contextual detail; use introductions to establish the foundations of the argument you are about to present and to show that you understand the focus of the question.
- Use conclusions to state the judgement reached clearly and to show the relative significance of or the inter-relationship between key issues discussed in the main body of the essay; leave the examiner in no doubt as to what your judgement is and why.