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Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

History (4HI1/02)

Level 1/2

Paper 2: Investigation and Breadth Studies

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4HI1/02 Report on November 2020 Examination

General Comments

In general, candidates responded well to the questions on this year's paper, with many well-constructed and well-supported arguments being made. Where candidates were less successful, it was usually as a result of one of the following:

- A lack of detailed knowledge of the topic content. This applied in particular to Section B Question a)
- A failure to provide contextual knowledge to support their arguments in Section A Question C.
- In Section B, failing to appreciate that the focus of the questions is change and the causes of change and, therefore producing narrative answers.
- In Question c), in both Section A and Section B, it is important not to ignore the instruction to explain 'how far' there is support, or change. A consideration of the extent is vital in reaching a judgement and being rewarded at Level 4.

Comments on Specification Questions

Section A

Question 1

A very popular question with some excellent responses. Candidates showed good knowledge of the Sarajevo assassination (though sometimes with excess detail of the actual shooting) but were less secure on the entry of the USA into the war. Similarities and differences between Sources A and B in terms of conditions and the experiences of the soldiers were readily identified. Question c) produced a large numbers of responses condemning Haig but some candidates failed to consider other factors which contributed to the British failure.

Question 2

This question was attempted by only a small number of candidates. Details of the Lena Goldfield strike were not always accurate and several candidates confused the 1917 Decrees with Lenin's April Theses. Question b) produced some very good responses, noting the similarity and differences in attitudes towards and the impact of the NEP. This was also reflected in Question c) where the strengths and weaknesses of NEP were well-explained and supported.

Question 3

A very popular question with a wide range of marks. The majority of candidates elected to answer on Sacco and Vanzetti and knew the features of the case well. Responses to Question b) generally revolved around how violent and how radical the Bonus Marchers were. This theme was picked up by candidates in Question c) but the quality of responses was undermined by a failure on the part of many candidates to bring their own knowledge into their explanations. Candidates must take care that their responses to this question do not become just an analysis of what is said in the sources and extract.

Question 4

This question was answered by a small number of candidates. Almost all answered on My Lai and showed a good understanding of the events and impact in the USA of the massacre. Candidates had little difficulty identifying the similarities between Sources A and B in terms of the poor government of Diem, but differences were less well identified. Candidates were able to explain how Diem's own mistakes led to his downfall, but only a minority were able to explain other factors, such as changing attitudes towards his government in the White House.

Question 5

No candidates answered this question

Section B

Question 1

Only a handful of candidates attempted this question. Their responses suggested that almost of them had not studied the topic.

Question 2

A popular question, but there were some weak responses. Candidates were able to explain reasons for the progress of women in medicine (Question b)), but there was a surprising lack of understanding of the progress in surgery between 1914 and 1945 (Question a)). Most candidates gave very general answers and there were a number of anachronisms, such as suggesting that pain had been overcome by the Second World War, but not the First. There was some confusion about what we mean by 'science and technology in Question ci), though Question cii) was better answered.

Question 3

No candidates answered this question

Question 4

This question was well-answered. Some candidates had difficulty explaining the similarities in opposition to the government in the two different periods, but there was a very good understanding of the reasons for the Agrarian Reform Law (Question b)) and some very well-supported judgements on Mao's impact on the Chinese economy (ci). Question cii) was less popular and less well done.

Question 5

Generally, this question was not well-answered. There were a number of candidates who demonstrated an understanding of the differences between the work of the UN in the Sudan and Somalia, (Question a)) knew why the League was successful in the 1920s (Question b)) and could make judgements on the impact of internal weaknesses and the United States in Question c). Regrettably, a large number of candidates did not seem to have knowledge of the work of the UN in Africa and believed that the League was entirely unsuccessful in the 1920s

Question 6

A small number of candidates produced a spread of marks. Better responses to Question a) understood both the technological advances in submarines and the fact that they were used to support land forces in the Gulf. The reasons for Allied success on D-Day were very well known (Qb)), though changes in aerial warfare (Question cii)) and the significance of the atomic bombs (Question ci)) led to some candidates writing narrative responses, rather than analytical.

Question 7

Candidates displayed a good level of knowledge on this question and, in general, answers were well-supported with contextual knowledge. In Question a) most candidates wrote about both different tactics and different reasons for resistance. The reasons for Britain giving up the mandate were also very well known (Question b)). Whilst some candidates had difficulties explaining the changing role of the USA in the region (Question cii)), the more popular question on the impact of Jewish immigration was very well-answered.