

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel International
GCSE in Pakistan Studies
(4PA0/ 01)

Unit 1: The History and
Heritage of Pakistan

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General comments

The standard of work presented this year by candidates was broadly comparable to last year and there was another pleasing increase in the entry figure compared to 2015.

All candidates answered the required three questions with few rubric errors. It was noted that the majority of candidates had been well prepared for the examination. The highest scoring candidates were the ones who answered questions 1, 2, and 3. There was a good level of accuracy and relevant detail was produced with genuine attempts at explanation in candidates' answers. However there were still a large number of candidates who produced descriptive answers, especially with response to questions 4, 5, and 6 that failed to explain the importance, development and degree of success of the given factors.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

This was a popular question but many candidates scoring highly. The question focussed on the decline of the Mughal Empire. Many candidates were able to describe the factors involved but could go little further in explaining how these factors contributed to the decline of the Empire. In particular many candidates dismissed the reforms of Aurangzeb as a contributory factor and as a result a large number of candidates were unable to score more than half marks especially since explanation was required for the higher level marks. However there were some excellent answers from a substantial number of candidates that demonstrated that good planning could bring just rewards in high marks by focussing on the demands of the question.

Question 2

This question on the reasons why the War of Independence of 1857 failed brought some excellent answers and many candidates scored very well with clearly stated knowledge. However it is important to note that candidates must read the question carefully and not just focus on the phrase 'War of Independence' with often-dire results. A large proportion of candidates misunderstood the question or misread it and wrote erroneously about the causes of the War. This brought no marks and it was only through good fortune that many of these candidates did eventually move on to the failure. Centres must ensure that candidates read the question paper carefully before they launch into their answer.

Question 3

This question was popular and many candidates knew much about the contributions of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in attempting to improve relations between Muslims and the British. However there was a minority of candidates who were unable to explain the importance of these contributions, and as a result many only scored half marks or less. Again it is important that Centres ensure that candidates fully understand the importance of how each question is phrased and that they make every attempt to answer the question as set.

Question 4

This was also a popular question that considered how successful was the partition of Bengal in 1905. Again most candidates knew their facts on this topic and wrote extensively. However these candidates tended to describe the reasons for partition and then the reasons why it was reversed in 1911. Again, it is so important that candidates take their time to look carefully at the question and answer it as set.

Question 5

This was also not so popular a question that required candidates explain the degree of success enjoyed by negotiations aimed at Indian independence during the Second World War. Candidates' knowledge of these negotiations was often good but few were able to relate these facts to the question posed. As a result, marks were often low for this question.

Question 6

Again this was not a popular question. Depth of knowledge was generally sound but again most candidates were unable to show how successful Pakistan has been able to establish an Islamic State since 1947. As a result many candidates were unable to score more than half marks for this question.

Question 7

This question was popular to some candidates but and there were good answers on the relationship between Pakistan and China. Generally answers to this type of question asking 'how successful have been relationships' tend to be chronological and descriptive and as a result do not attract high marks. However answers to this question this year were very promising with explanations of success and failure. Many answers thus scored highly.

Question 8

This was a popular question to some that required candidates to explain the reasons why Nawaz Sharif fell from office in 1993. Again candidates knew their facts and were able to describe the factors involved but many were able to relate these specifically to the downfall of Sharif. As a result marks tended to be limited to no more than half marks.

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