

## Conclusions

In summary, this research indicates:

- On the whole, recognition rates of NSE and production rates of SE were quite high.
- Despite National Curriculum aspirations not to treat SE as the prestige version, the majority of respondents identified the language in the stimulus sentences as of an inferior type.
- There are significant differences in school types (independent versus state) in terms of correct production of SE versions of NSE forms.
- There is a small though significant difference between males and females in correct production of SE versions of NSE forms
- There is some evidence of regional differences in NSE production – in particular for a North-South divide.

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## ISSUES IN QUESTION WRITING

# The evolution of international History examinations: an analysis of History question papers for 16 year olds from 1858 to the present

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## Background

The focus of this article is on international History examinations for 16 year olds from 1858 to the present day and examines the historical/cultural context for, and the setting of, these examinations in the medium of English. Specific reference points throughout this period have been taken and a linguistic analysis applied to the question papers. A variety of archive material has been used to show more general developmental changes to the curriculum throughout the period. The article examines the language used, the candidate base, the regional differences of the papers and the examiner expectations. To put these findings into context, other sources, including examination regulations, examiners' reports and subject committee papers have also been studied.

In 1858 when the Cambridge Local Examinations were introduced, History was a compulsory element of the Junior examination. Candidates had to pass in a whole range of subjects to gain a school leaving certificate and English history could not be avoided. 150 years later there

is no doubt that school examinations for 16 year olds have undergone radical transformation and for History examinations to have remained unchanged would be unthinkable. The interest lies not in the fact that the examinations have changed but in the way they have changed. While the trend is inevitably towards a more familiar, contemporary style, this study also shows that the pace and particular directions of change have been of a less predictable nature.

## Challenges and constraints

The aim of the study is to determine how History examinations have evolved. The selection of History question papers from different periods in time should be based on some assumption that comparisons across time are on a 'like for like' basis. However, this was not found to be the case. The question papers are drawn from different examinations: the Cambridge Junior Local Examination until the end of World War 1,

the School Certificate from 1918, and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) from 1988. There is every reason to expect discontinuities caused simply by changes to the examining system, though there are some notable exceptions. For example, School Certificate still exists as an examination, and History papers are set for it. In effect, there was no universal change after 1988. Rather, IGCSE was developed as an examination for a different target market. Similarly, all overseas centres did not simply continue with an unchanging School Certificate after 1951; rather, School Certificate evolved in a variety of ways to include aspects of the GCE O Level examination.

This raises a second issue – who were these examinations for? Can we at least argue continuity in this respect? In one sense the answer is yes. In the broadest possible way we can regard all three examinations as equivalent to an English 16 plus examination, the level at which some students might leave full-time schooling. However, more specifically there are differences. At first Cambridge Junior was taken only by 297 English boys. By the end of the nineteenth century there were a few candidates from overseas centres (about 370), but this made no difference to the nature of the examinations, and these candidates were largely sons and daughters of British colonial administrators.

After the First World War, the numbers of home and overseas candidates increased rapidly, along with an emerging awareness that an English examination, the School Certificate, might not be entirely suitable for non-British students. This led to the development of History question papers for specific areas, for example Indian History, which were not aimed at British candidates. However, it was impossible to set such papers for all areas so most overseas candidates still took exactly the same papers as British candidates. By then there were examinations twice a year, July for home candidates and December examinations for overseas candidates. This rather hybrid system came to an end in 1951 with the introduction of the GCE O Level. At first this applied only to UK candidates, whilst School Certificate continued internationally.

Between 1858 and 1951, then, the candidature of the December examinations evolved from being entirely British to entirely non-British. The great majority of these School Certificate candidates came from what, with the achievement of independence in former colonies, were known as 'Ministry' areas. In effect they were students from government schools in countries that chose to use Cambridge examinations. Throughout the 1950s regional history papers were developed through the new Regional Awarding Committees – West Africa, East Africa, the Caribbean, Mauritius, Malaya – more often than not the precursor to localisation projects aimed at countries wishing to establish their own examining boards.

By the 1980s, however, the need for further change was becoming apparent. Syllabuses in many subjects, including History, were becoming dated, and a new market of English-medium, non-Ministry schools was emerging. A new examination, the IGCSE emerged which incorporated the kinds of changes included in the GCSE examination introduced in the UK in 1988. These English-medium, international schools were of a markedly different nature to many Ministry schools. They were well resourced, willing and able to innovate, and with students drawn mainly from professional backgrounds whose English-language skills were good enough to cope with the demands of less traditional examinations.

The last issue is perhaps the most fundamental. It is hard to be certain about whether there is any continuity in what these examinations were setting out to assess as until surprisingly recently syllabuses in History did not include assessment objectives. Had you asked the examiners in

1858 what they were testing, they would certainly have replied "History". If you asked them today they would say something like "Historical knowledge and understanding, the ability to construct explanations, and the skills of handling historical source material". During this period there has been a huge change in what is understood as the study of History, and the examination papers reflect this. Even the most superficial scrutiny of the papers from 1858 and 2000 reveals the almost entirely different demands they make on candidates.

An associated problem is whether examinations, with or without assessment objectives, actually test what they claim to be assessing. The traditional criticism of History examinations was that, although they asked questions which seemed to demand explanations or analysis of historical events, they were in fact marked solely on the basis of knowledge of the events. Without marking schemes, it is hard to be certain of the justice of this claim.

## Identifying a methodology for analysing question papers

Twelve History question papers were selected for the study and the period was divided in four:

1. Early Locals from 1858 to 1917
2. Late Locals/School Certificate from 1928 to 1951
3. Post 1951 to 1972
4. IGCSE, 1989 to 2000

A general overview of each period, drawing on Examination regulations and specifications, Examiners' reports and history committee files is followed by a question paper analysis. Analysis includes consideration of the lexical, structural and functional resources used; English provided in the question, in the rubric, the English expected of the candidates and the general instructions to candidates.

### 1. Early Locals

#### Overview

Initially, the candidates were all boys but the examinations were opened to girls on an equal standing from 1865 and the statistics show that the girls enjoyed considerable success from the start. The examiner for the Preliminary Cambridge Examinations for the English History paper commented in 1866 that 'the style of the girls' replies' was 'better than that of the boys. It was more straightforward and to the point, and there were fewer attempts at fine writing.'

The examiners' reports are not noticeably dated. The 29th Annual Report includes complaints about 'vagueness', 'inaccuracy', 'slavish reproduction of the words of text-books' and concludes, 'the best work was done by girls.' But this was written by examiners in 1887, who were predominantly Cambridge Dons and Clerics. The history examiners themselves generally came from the Classics and English disciplines, which makes particularly poignant the criticisms about the candidates' lack of historical perspective. Use of obsolete text books and regurgitation of facts rather than answering the question are also 'modern' criticisms which appear in 1899, challenging the notion that to pass history examinations during this period required only a knowledge of historical facts.

The examiners do not shy away from negative comments but nor do they lack humour. Mistakes in history have long been a potential source

of amusement and J N Keynes' commonplace book includes many comments from history papers. 'Henry VIII was a very waistful king' wrote one candidate in the 1880s. Another, in 1882, 'described Edward the Black Prince as having been present at Hastings, Agincourt and other battles ranging over a period of 300 years and wrote of him being just 16 years of age at the latest of these fights.' There was no discernible improvement during the period, for in 1915 the examiners of the Junior English History paper wrote: 'Many candidates exhibited a hopeless ignorance of chronology.'

At first, the English History part of the Junior Examinations was a compulsory element, along with arithmetic and dictation, but by 1874 History had become an optional part of the English section, naturally entitled English History. Candidates could choose between a paper on the History of England, Roman History, Geography or Shakespeare. During the 1890s English Grammar was introduced into the group and in 1899 a separate section for History and Geography emerged. Junior candidates thereafter could choose one history paper from History of England, Roman History or the new paper on the British Empire and could take this together with the Geography paper if they wished to take Group 3 examinations.

Take up of the optional English History paper among Junior candidates remained high even after the introduction of the British Empire paper. In 1899, over seven thousand candidates out of a total Junior entry of 8,277 took the English History paper and in 1915, fifteen years later, 9,302 candidates opted for English History and just 417 for the British Empire.

The examiners' reports on the British Empire paper are not particularly positive. In 1902 they commented that 'many of the Boys sent up almost worthless papers'. Overseas candidates, who were presumably more likely to take the paper, attracted little specific attention until later in the period but in 1913 received the following encouragement: 'Several colonial centres had evidently paid special attention to the history for that part of the Empire in which they are situated. This is an excellent plan; but care should be taken that it does not involve neglect of highly important occurrences in other parts of the Empire.'

Were these candidates local or the children of British colonial administrators? The candidate base is not clear as records of entries do not exist so available evidence shows only passes – many of whom appear to have been British expatriates. By 1917, the colonial candidates are of mixed origin and by no means uniform throughout the colonial centres. There are many English names on the pass lists for India, but comparatively few for candidates from Penang and Singapore. Although 'Colonial Centres' were sent their own regulation notices, the syllabus for all candidates, in History at least, remained the same.

The examination regulations for 1917 are remarkably similar to those of 1899 and the set texts books show that the periods selected for examination followed a rather predictable cycle alternating largely between the years 449–1509, 1509–1688 and 1688–1832; indicative of a traditional or unimaginative approach by examiners as well as thorough record keeping.

### *Question paper analysis*

For any examiner with experience of marking a wide variety of late 20th century History examinations, these papers would seem the most distant and different in nature, reflecting a way of studying the subject that has now completely disappeared.

The earlier question papers seem most focused on factual recall – listing, naming, giving dates. In the later papers there is a noticeable

move away from pure recall and towards a demand for explanation – or extended description, with more emphasis on opinion and scope for creativity. Candidates need to be able to produce complex sentences and longer, more cohesive text. Past simple, continuous and perfect tenses (active and passive) would be commonly used as would comparative forms. This is an interesting shift in how the nature of the subject must have been perceived.

The increase in the whole paper time allocations is also an indication that examiners sought more discursive answers. In fact, in these papers it is possible to discern the standard pattern for School Certificate History examinations of the next century beginning to emerge.

The choice of content reflects a mid-Victorian view of History as the study of English kings and queens with later additions of French Monarchy and Constitutional History. Content choice would subsequently emerge as a major issue in History syllabus development, sometimes dealt with by offering alternative papers, and sometimes by offering wide question choice within papers. The optional papers are interesting in showing a concern for Empire, either British or Roman.

Candidates would need a wide range of lexis to answer these questions. Political, legal and historic language might be required to describe methods of legislation, explain political questions, state the chief Privileges of Parliament, or to describe treaties, events and foreign policies. Lexis is not always selected for accessibility: for example, 'What was the issue of their attempts?' and 'the situation of the battle-field'.

The papers are presented in a very formal, impersonal style, the register being maintained by the use of passives and by addressing the third person not the candidates themselves. But there is a gradual change in register – instructions are worded as 'candidates may' as opposed to 'candidates are expected to'. The rubrics appear to become more accessible as they inform candidates that they 'must pass in both parts of the paper' as opposed to 'must satisfy the Examiners in this Paper'.

A greater range of functional language is used across the papers. There could be some duplication of meaning which might cause confusion with different verbs being used to express the same function. For example, verbs include 'describe', 'write a brief account/history of...', 'tell what you know of...', 'shew', 'discuss', 'compare', 'distinguish between', 'mention', 'set forth', 'set down', 'trace', etc. The question structure also changes over time as imperatives are used far less frequently and there are more past simple, present simple passive, and past simple passive questions.

There is no indication of expected output – in terms of length or style, mark allocation, or suggested timing per question. Lack of such information would not help candidates to perform to the best of their abilities in an examination situation. Despite this, the demands placed upon candidates across the papers appear to be similar.

## **2. Late Locals/School Certificate**

### *Overview*

By 1928 the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate had been offered to candidates for ten years and was well established as the first national school examination. As well as the School Certificate, UCLES still offered the Cambridge Junior and Senior examinations to overseas candidates, together with an impressive range of specialist regulations for particular overseas candidates; syllabuses, for example in Urdu and Hindi for Indian candidates. The Junior examination regulations for History remained as they were when they were introduced in 1899 but the school certificate candidates could choose between three different periods of English History or British Empire, Modern European, Roman or

6. Objections have been raised to the Bible, on the ground that some passages are contradictory to Science. Mention any of the passages objected to on this ground. How would you answer all such objections?

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 15, 1858. 10½ to 12.

II. 2. English Composition.

[N.B. Only one of the following Subjects is to be chosen.]

1. GIVE an account of the late Indian mutiny.
2. Contrast the life of a soldier with that of a sailor both in peace and war.
3. Write a letter to a friend in Australia announcing your intention to emigrate, and asking for information.
4. Discuss the change produced in the habits of the people by Railways.

SATURDAY, Dec. 18, 1858. 9 to 10½ A.M.

II. 2. English History.

A.D. 1485—1660.

1. GIVE the dates of the deaths of the sovereigns of England from Hen. VII. to Charles II.
2. Determine as nearly as you can the dates of the following events, and give the names of the persons principally connected with them:
  - Martyrdom of Ridley.
  - Battle of Worcester.
  - Trial and execution of Strafford.
  - Assassination of Buckingham.
  - The completion of the present authorized version of the Bible.
  - Capture of Montrose.
3. What were the most important events in the reign of Queen Elizabeth?
4. Write a short life and character of Cranmer; and of Oliver Cromwell.

4. What charges were brought by their accusers against Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Earl of Strafford respectively? Where were they executed?

5. In what reigns did the following persons live, and in what way were they celebrated? Shakespeare, Simon de Montfort, Wycliffe, the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton, Lord Chatham.

6. State with regard to the following battles (1) the contending parties, (2) the victorious side, (3) the situation of the battle-field: Flodden, Cressy, Barnet, Culloden, Bosworth, Sedgemoor, Vittoria, the Boyne.

PART II.

TUESDAY, Dec. 14, 1858. 10 to 12.

II. 1. a. Scripture.

1. RELATE the chief offences of Saul, for which he was visited with God's anger.
2. Narrate the circumstances of the death of Saul and Jonathan. How did David receive the news? To whom did David say, "I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake"? How did he fulfil this promise?
3. Which of David's sons rebelled against him? How did these rebellions end?
4. Who were the Jebusites? Where was the seat of David's kingdom at first? To what place was it afterwards removed?
5. What was the first quarrel between the men of Israel and Judah?
6. Describe the numbering of the host and God's judgment on the people in consequence. In what did the sinfulness of David's act consist?
7. In what three ways was our Lord tempted in the wilderness?

Junior English History Paper, December 1858 (Cambridge University Archives Cam.c.11.51.18)

Greek History. This was expanded further to include Indian History by 1938, while the English History options were changed to two periods of British and European History. The Junior Examination was dropped in 1939 as a UK examination but remained as an overseas exam until 1953 during which time it was substantially revised.

Trends towards later periods of history caused fewer and poorer papers to be submitted on the early options, as highlighted in the 1939 examiners' report. Options in social history and American history began to emerge and with them came new comments and warnings from examiners: in 1945, for example, the disappointing results led to the advice that 'a candidate who does not know enough historical facts may be led to "waffle" on the social and economic questions.'

During this period a History Subject Committee emerged to manage the administration of History examinations and the development of the curriculum. The Committee was made up of History examiners, school teachers and senior officers from UCLES and recorded discord, transition and consensus in more or less equal measure. The early minutes show that although it held full discussions about syllabus criticisms, it was rather defensive and made little practical changes as a result. Criticisms were blamed on poor teaching and, in more than one case, on dislocation of schools after the upheavals of war. In contrast, specific requests for particular papers and questions by schools were met favourably, owing to 'book shortages in recent years' or those same upheavals of war. And so, for example, Irish History questions were introduced after a request received in October 1947.

In 1946 the School Certificate paper on the History of the British Empire was changed to History of the British Commonwealth and Empire. Here, too, there was an option on English, Social and Economic History. There was also a new special paper on West Indian History and the regulations draw attention to 'the provision of special History papers for other Oversea areas' which, it states, 'would be considered on application'.

In 1949, preparations for the new General Certificate in Education were finalised and it was decided that applications for specialist subjects would, in future, be refused. But the cultural shift towards greater variation had been made and the 1951 list of specialist subjects includes eight optional special subject papers, which were revised annually. As well as the new GCE O Level, the School Certificate became the new Oversea School Certificate for which there was a syllabus for the West Indies, the Sudan, Tropical Africa and Indian History. The GCE Examinations were not just new examinations but represented a new way of examining sixteen year olds. For the first time candidates could select a single subject without having to undertake a whole range of examinations as they had done in the past. From now on candidates would select History only if it was the right subject for them.

Question paper analysis

During this period we see the emergence of the classic pattern for School Certificate History of five essay questions in 2½ hours. We can be fairly confident that by this time individual questions were marked out of 20 with a paper total of 100.

The early question papers appear fairly similar to those at the end of 1917 although the papers at the end of the 1940s include several questions of a much more general nature. Rather than requiring candidates to describe a historical event or reign of a particular monarch, some questions focus on what life would have been like during a certain period, the increasing importance of music, what a typical parish church would have been like, and so on. There is a wider range of questions in the 1951 papers, including such general topics as the life of a colonist, pleasures and pastimes in town and country, the social and economic results of enclosures of the open fields, industry and agriculture.

The questions are the usual mix of describing and explaining though we can be reasonably sure that candidates and markers would not have perceived any essential difference. Point-by-point marking would award a mark for any relevant piece of information.

The English History paper is now clearly at least three papers within a paper, with ample question choice for teachers to cover no more than a single section – the rubric actually forbidding them from covering the entire period.

Most striking is the lack of pattern in the questions. There is, for example, no consistency of numbers of parts to each question or of command words. There is frequent use of either/or questions which serve only to increase the number of questions available. In today's terms this might constitute an assessment nightmare, but are very indicative of how the subject was perceived as a body of knowledge to be mastered, rather than as a set of skills to be acquired.

There exists an increasing expectation for candidates to hypothesise about the past and they would need to be able to produce third conditional structures or perfect conditional forms (e.g. 'would have done') in order to do so. There also appears to be a rising expectation that candidates would need to be able to produce a range of past tenses, active and passive verb forms, and be able to construct complex sentences and longer, coherently linked pieces of text.

The level of formality has been reduced with each paper: instructions are presented using imperatives and in the passive voice. Questions are constructed either using an imperative form or a question word. Past tenses, as well as present passive are commonly used. There is a continuing lack of consistency across the papers in, for example, use of articles and spelling. In one question 'organized' (with a 'z') appears. Candidates could be confused by inconsistencies in instructions such as 'describe in outline', 'outline' and 'describe briefly' and may feel that a different style of response is required for each. Interestingly, the pronouns 'she' and 'her' are used to describe countries. Countries or states within the British Empire are referred to as 'British possessions'.

There is a paper specifically for an overseas area – Indian History – though even in this paper there are questions on British History. Another new option is Modern European History (which in practice means the 19th century), indicative of the continuing trend away from English kings and queens.

Towards the end of this period as the School Certificate becomes, almost by default, the Oversea School Certificate, there is a new, more up-to-date paper on British and European History, but the question format shows no sign of change. This was just before the period of decolonisation which ushered in the processes of localisation of Cambridge Examinations, and brought about a whole range of History syllabuses for different countries and regions.

### 3. Post 1951

#### Overview

Of the 19,471 candidates who took GCE examinations in 1951, over 38% took an O level in History. The two papers on British and European History, 1688–1939 were by far the most popular. The other O level options were British and European History 1066–1714 and History of the British Empire and Commonwealth. School Certificate became the Oversea School Certificate in 1951 and the syllabus included all the options above plus papers on Indian History.

The minutes of the History Committee in October 1952 record that, 'The Examiners' Reports showed that the papers proved satisfactory to examiners and candidates' but there is no evidence from this source that after so much preparation and change the new examination settled into a rut. The committee discussed new options and ideas from schools and regions and during one meeting in October 1955 plans were put forward for a local history paper, an archaeology syllabus and a paper on Islamic History for West Africa. This, of course, was in addition to the annual revision of specialist subjects.

During this period the Syndicate was under pressure to examine later periods in history. A Committee of Secondary Teachers Association and the National Union of Teachers complained in 1968 that there were too few questions after 1918 and the Syndicate responded with the 'possibility of an additional paper which would cover twentieth century history'. The same report claimed that there were 'too many questions on wars and foreign policy' and so began a trend towards a History syllabus that is recognisable today.

The format of the examination was also reviewed during this period and the October 1968 Committee considered an alternative addition to the traditional essay type questions, 'proposing to experiment in the first place with a paper of short answer questions which can be objectively marked and which will provide a different kind of test to the one which is at present administered'. Also considered was 'a project scheme in which the teachers might make the first assessment of the work of their candidates'. An era of coursework had begun.

Despite progressive syllabus development, examiners, it seems, felt that candidates were not keeping pace. One examiner in 1969 claimed that 'many of the answers could have been written in the 1930s', while several others complained of narrow and out-of-date reading. The Report of 1972 covers familiar ground, warning candidates not to attempt questions covering too broad a period and to concentrate on answering the question. It also targets candidates' essay writing skills and 'poor organisation, leading to an ill-balanced arrangement of answers'.

The 1972 syllabus options are considerably more diverse than those for 1951. As well as the three British and European History O Level syllabuses and a syllabus on the History of the British Empire and Commonwealth, there were new or newish syllabuses on English Social and Economic History, World Affairs since 1919, and History of Europe, 1902–1964. Although entries had risen, the proportion of candidates for History had slumped to 13.5% or 20,786 entries with British and European History 1688–1939 still the most popular. For overseas candidates, however, History was still a popular subject: in Uganda and Kenya, only English Language and Geography attracted more candidates and, in Malaya, only Malay and Economics had higher entry figures. By 1971 the School Certificate syllabus included eleven options including specific papers on the History of India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Singapore and Central, Southern and East Africa.

### Question paper analysis

Apart from differences in course content, candidates in 1962 could have sat the 1934 question papers and seen nothing unfamiliar. The layout of the papers remains very similar during this period, with the same style and register of instructions and there is still no visual input or supporting text. One of the biggest changes in this period is the number of question papers available, and the wide range of topics included in the questions.

The thinking about curriculum change in History during this period focused almost entirely on what was to be taught rather than on how. As far as School Certificate was concerned, this meant new papers for different areas of the world, but the structure of these papers, and the nature of the questions on them, was almost always unvaried. The classic five essays in two and a half hours still held sway – all the more remarkable in that many candidates were not well equipped, particularly in their levels of English, for being tested in this manner.

The availability of papers in British and European History, first noted in 1940, continued with just minor date changes. They comprised enormous question choice so as to enable teachers to pick and choose whatever content they wished.

In the UK a new examination for those not able to take O Level, the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE), was introduced in 1965. This

gave examining boards the chance to explore new techniques for examining the less able. No such examination was available overseas, where candidates of all abilities were entered for the School Certificate (i.e. the same standard as O Level). This had implications for History which involved writing five essays, a demanding requirement for genuine O Level candidates, but perhaps impossible for those awarded School Certificate grades 7 or 8 (below O Level), or the even greater numbers who failed outright. Perhaps there was some recognition of this in the design of new syllabuses for African candidates where the assessment was split into two compulsory papers, each of one and a half hours, although candidates still had to answer three essay questions on each paper.

Overall the papers have a very similar feel to earlier ones both in style and linguistic terms. There is, however, increasing evidence of informality with instructions using imperatives and the second person, although the use of prepositions at the start of questions: 'Of what importance was China...', continue to indicate a more formal style. The active and passive voice is still used as is a range of verb tenses. Adverbs, with the old-fashioned collocation 'Write shortly' are still in evidence. However, more modern English is also in evidence, as the auxiliary 'did' has been used in a question with the verb 'have': 'What influence did West Indian planters... have on the British government...'

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III

68. Write shortly on **three** of the following: (a) Peterloo; (b) Daniel O'Connell; (c) the Adullamites (1866); (d) Lord Shaftesbury; (e) the Liverpool and Manchester railway (1830); (f) the Fabians; (g) the Taff Vale judgment (1901); (h) the Royal Commission on the Poor Law (1909); (i) Mazzini; (j) the Frankfort Parliament (1848–9); (k) the Carlist wars; (l) the Schlieffen plan.

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**BRITISH AND EUROPEAN HISTORY (1871–1939)**

(Two hours and a half)

Answer **five** questions.

SECTION I

1. Give an account of Disraeli's imperial policy and show what effect this had on Gladstone's policy during his second ministry 1880–85.
2. Explain Ireland's failure to obtain Home Rule down to 1920.
3. What were the main achievements of Lloyd George between 1906 and 1922?
4. What opportunities for education were there at the beginning of this period? How had they been extended by 1918?
5. Give an account of the advances and setbacks of the Trade Union movement in the period 1899–1927.
6. Why was a National Government formed in 1931? How did it try to improve the country's financial position?
7. What changes took place in the relations between Great Britain and the Commonwealth between 1897 and 1939?

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SECTION II

8. (a) Explain the establishment of the Third French Republic. (b) What difficulties did it surmount between 1875 and 1890?
9. Give the main reasons for the continued decline of the Turkish Empire between 1878 and 1914.
10. What were the main causes of rivalry between Great Britain and Germany from 1890 to 1914?
11. Show how events in Russia after 1906 led to revolution in 1917.
12. What were (a) the aims of the victors at the Versailles peace conference in 1919 and (b) the chief terms of the settlement with Germany?
13. Explain why a republic was set up in Spain in 1931 and how it was overthrown by 1939.
14. Why did Mussolini come to power in 1922? What had he achieved by 1939?

SECTION III

15. Write shortly on **three** of the following: (a) Cardwell's Army Reforms (1871), (b) Cecil Rhodes, (c) the Parliament Act (1911), (d) the Dardanelles expedition (1915), (e) the Zinoviev letter (1924), (f) the Triple Alliance (1882), (g) Port Arthur, (h) the Law of Separation in France (1905), (i) the Mandatory System, (j) the Anglo-German Naval Treaty (1935).

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**HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH (1558–1939)**

(Two hours and a half)

Answer **five** questions. Candidates may select these from either or both of the sections.

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## 4. IGCSE

### Overview

During this period the move towards more modern history gathered momentum and became more pronounced. By 2000 the core curriculum for the GCSE included no papers on pre-twentieth century history. Other new elements included the 'in depth' part of the syllabus, and the coursework. The coursework in the 1989 paper carried 30% of the marks. But this trend was reversed during the period and by 2000 the coursework element had dropped to 25%.

Historiography, the discussion and analysis of original source material, had become a feature of the examinations, but was revised in 1987 on the advice of teachers concerned that the language in primary source material used for GCE O Level was not suitable for use at GCSE.

The 1989 and 2000 GCSE History syllabuses were made up of a compulsory core and optional papers. The 1989 syllabus options all comprise two papers and coursework, with source-based questions included in all papers. The syllabuses for 1989 continued to follow periods in history in all cases except the School History Project. By 2000 however, theme-based study had filtered into all the History options which had been rationalised to just three: the Schools History Project, Modern World and British & Social Economic History. But the new type of syllabus does not lack diversity. It includes a range of thematic studies from which candidates could choose, such as, Medicine through Time and Germany, 1919–1945.

These changes were made through a substantial consultation process. In 1987 the History Subject Committee asked that Examiners' Reports include 'additional guidance to schools on how most effectively to prepare candidates for examinations', a sharp contrast to the attitude towards teachers in the 1940s. A Consultation Document for MEG GCSE History Syllabus 1990 proposed amendments to all but the School History Project syllabus, commenting 'it is felt that the revisions to the core will introduce an element of flexibility and choice which will amount to a significant reduction in the content burden faced by candidates.' It included the abolition of short answer questions, introduced in the 1960s, which perhaps reflects the crisis felt at the falling number of A Level History candidates during this period.

As the overseas examination, the IGCSE followed the same pattern of a compulsory core and, in this case, a regional optional paper. The preference for Modern History was more pronounced in the IGCSE right from the start, focusing on periods after 1919. The regional options included papers on Southern Africa, the Americas, Western Europe, USSR & Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia or Middle East & Eastern Mediterranean. Additionally, candidates were obliged to submit a school-based assessment or take an alternative to coursework paper – a topic from the core content which involved a series of questions on a collection of source material.

The June 1989 report on IGCSE shows that the new examination was doing well. Entry figures had doubled from the previous year, bringing in 'more centres where candidates had properly studied the course and understood what they were attempting'. Examiners, too, praised the 'surprisingly high' quality of writing. In 2000 the IGCSE also underwent revision to break up the elements of factual material and the use of sources, which had previously existed together in one paper. The focus for the core content and depth studies remained with the twentieth century and the response to these changes was greeted positively in the examiners' reports.



A cartoon printed in the 'Daily Express' in 1943.

- (a) Look carefully at the cartoon.
- (i) Why is W. Beveridge described as the 'architect' of Social Security? [1]
  - (ii) Explain the term 'Social Security' as used in the cartoon. [3]
- (b) When the war ended in 1945, why was the idea of a 'welfare state' so popular amongst the British people? [6]
- (c) How successful were the Labour Governments of 1945–51 in creating a 'welfare state'? [15]

IGCSE History Paper 0470/4, June 1989 (1989/2/2)

### Question paper analysis

IGCSE gave an opportunity to consolidate curriculum developments of the previous decade and move into the mainstream for candidates of all levels of ability. For History, this meant the adoption of ideas pioneered by the Schools Council History Project, which stressed a skills-based approach to the subject and to History examinations.

IGCSE papers are quite different to those seen in previous years particularly with the extensive use of visuals and supporting text. The use of high-level input information to set the scene for questions suggests that emphasis is being placed on the top-down processing model of language or reading comprehension. This is a model based on the belief that readers make sense of discourse by moving from the highest units of analysis to the lowest, and that comprehension is achieved by firstly activating background knowledge or schemata and setting the context. There are plenty of examples of structurally complex input including: cleft sentences – 'It was the election of Lincoln as President that made war certain'; organisation in terms of desired thematic prominence rather than for accessibility or simplicity of structure; and reported speech using a range of verb tenses.

There is now a markedly different layout to earlier papers. The main difference is visuals in the form of photographs, maps, graphs and other illustrations which are included with many of the questions. There are quotes from speeches, extracts from books and newspapers and statistics, all used to set a context or give support to questions which follow. This means that questions are much longer than they have been previously, some taking up a page of space.

There is also metaphoric use of language in some questions reflecting the radical change in approach to history study and teaching at all levels and ages, that is, a move away from the recall of facts and study of definitive works to a more historiographical approach.

Optional questions are all set to a standard pattern, marks available are printed on the question paper, essay questions are structured into three parts to help the less able, and stimulus material is used, again as an aide-memoire for the less able.

Underpinning all this is an explicit statement of assessment objectives in the syllabus document. Everyone knows what is being tested and where. In the structured essays, for example, part (a) tests recall, part (b) tests understanding of causation, and part (c) tests the ability to construct an argument. This is considered crucial to the study of History today. Perhaps most radical is the inclusion of a section of the paper testing skills of handling historical sources.

The demands made on candidates by these papers are very different from those on the old School Certificate papers. To reflect this, the method of marking was also changed so that marks would be awarded according to the quality of explanation, or the level of skill shown in the answer, and not because of the amount of factual knowledge demonstrated. It is now appreciated that giving less able candidates materials with which to work, like a collection of sources, helps to provide them with a basis for their answers. The most difficult questions are those which give them no such structure, such as essays.

No fundamental change in the IGCSE History examination had occurred by 2000, though the papers had been slightly reformatted. Source evaluation was given a paper in its own right, and the structured essays were all consolidated into a single paper. The options within the syllabus had been increased slightly, most notably to offer a 19th Century path through a syllabus which formerly had been exclusively drawn from 20th Century World History.

Although the input material in these IGCSE papers is significantly more complex and of a higher level, the instructions and rubrics are much clearer and more accessible and there is evidence that the rubrics and instructions in the later paper have been simplified further, so the questions themselves are very clear and easy to understand. Despite the lexical input being of a higher level than seen previously, the output would not necessarily need to be different. Candidates would need to produce a wide range of lexis throughout.

The expected output is made much clearer by indicating the total number of marks available for each section: this would enable candidates to judge more effectively how much time and effort to invest in each part.

## Conclusions

There are huge differences between the earliest 1858 question papers and those from 2000, in terms of length, topics tested, presentation, level of formality, and linguistics. Looking at the papers in the intervening years, these differences appear gradually, with the most dramatic change taking place between 1972 and 1989. The inclusion of visuals and supporting text from 1988 means not only that it is considered important to set the context and activate candidates' background knowledge before focusing on specific details, but also that the level of linguistic input is much higher than previously seen.

The changes in the papers over the years reflect the style of teaching methodology that was popular at that time:

- from rote-learning in the mid-19th century,
- to a focus on interpretation and opinion in the early to mid 20th century,
- and the belief that discourse is interpreted using top-down processing strategies in the late 1970s/1980s.

Linguistically, the biggest change is in terms of the complexity of language used in the stimulus material. Although the lexical level of questions is high throughout the years, the last two sets of question papers are undoubtedly more complex and candidates would need a higher level of comprehension in order to cope with some of the authentic extracts from speeches or printed texts. Conversely, the level of

lexical and structural input in the instructions has been steadily simplified and made clearer. Although the level of linguistic input has definitely changed, the expected level of output seems to be fairly constant.

From the papers selected for inclusion in this study one would conclude that the nature of the Syndicate's History examinations changed surprisingly little in the century after 1858. For the earliest papers it is now hard to infer accurately what the marking processes were but by the 1920s a model of testing History had been established that then lasted, essentially unchanged, for more than fifty years. Whilst it would be prudent to exercise some caution about the idea that IGCSE changed everything overnight, at no other time since 1858 has the nature of History as a school subject been so fundamentally rethought, with consequent changes in the processes of its assessment.

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