OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY A (EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD)

J410
For first teaching in 2016

J410/11 Summer 2018 series
Version 1

Contents

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Subject information update

We have amended the Study of the Historic Environment component of OCR GCSE History A (J410) to fix the site studied from June 2019 (Castles) and June 2020 (Urban Environments).

Following consultation with and feedback from teachers, we are changing the way the Study of the Historic Environment will be assessed on GCSE History A. At the moment, the site to be studied changes each year of the qualification. From now on, candidates will study either Kenilworth Castle or an urban environment (South Shields in 2019 and Spitalfields from 2020 onwards).

What this means is that teachers of the Castles option, who are already preparing candidates to be examined on Kenilworth Castle in 2019, will continue to prepare each cohort of candidates for an examination on Kenilworth Castle in all future examination series.

For teachers of the Urban Environments option, they should continue preparing candidates to be examined on South Shields in 2019. For the June 2020 examination, and in future series, teachers should prepare candidates for an examination on Spitalfields.

We hope these changes will make the Historic Environment component of the qualification more straightforward for teachers to plan and teach. The teachers' site packs for Kenilworth and South Shields are already available on the website here: http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/gcse-history-a-explaining-the-modern-world-j410-from-2016/planning-and-teaching/ and a site pack for Spitalfields will be available in Spring 2019.

The OCR set site will be reviewed after three years and may be subject to change. Each OCR set site will remain on the specification for a minimum of three years, unless the review process identifies a necessary change. If an OCR set site is to be changed and replaced with a new set site, centres will be notified in September two years prior to the examination being sat.

If you have queries about any aspect of these changes, please contact the History Subject Advisors at history@ocr.org.uk

Paper J410/11 series overview

This was the first examination of the new 9-1 Specification A Paper 3. The new paper was very different from what has gone before, both in terms of content studied and question styles. All British depth studies were taken from the pre-1750 period, whereas legacy British studies were all 20th century. Thus candidates faced the new challenge of working with a new period and, further still, sources from a new period. There was also a reduced focus on contemporary sources, with just two questions dedicated to this historical skill. There was also a new study of the urban environment, with candidates in this unit being assessed on patterns of migration in Butetown.

Given such changes, centres should be congratulated for their work in supporting candidates. It was clear from the majority of answers that candidates had been well prepared and they were able to deploy their knowledge accurately, especially on the explain-type questions.

Section A overview

It was clear that candidates had been well prepared for their depth study on The Impact of Empire and knew what was expected. The overwhelming majority attempted to answer both of the questions. The range and quality of responses varied a huge amount.

Question 1

1   Explain how English expansion between 1688 and 1730 affected Scotland and Ireland.   **[10]**

This was generally a well answered question on the paper with the vast majority of candidates able to reach Level 3 and above by identifying or explaining one or more way that English expansion impacted upon Scotland and Ireland between 1688 and 1730. Many candidates had impressive knowledge and explained in much greater detail than was necessary to gain full marks. Generally, knowledge was better on Scotland, with the most common impacts identified or explained being economic impacts (both positive and negative – there was much made of the Darien Scheme), the loss of independence through the Act of Union and King William's military occupation of the Highlands resulting in the Glencoe Massacre. With Ireland, discrimination of Irish Catholics via the Penal Laws was most commonly referred to. Some candidates merely described events which were lined to this period (for example war in Ireland or tension between Highland and Lowland Scots) without fully directing their answer at the impact of English expansion. Invariably these responses were placed in Level 2. Other weaker responses focused on events outside the parameters of the question (for example, Plantation in Ireland) and these could not advance beyond Level 1. Finally, the question asked about both Scotland and Ireland and virtually all candidates attempted to address the question of impact on both countries; those that did not attempt both had their mark restricted within the appropriate level.

Advice for Question 1

It is vital that candidates remained tightly focused on the precise question being asked. Knowledge which is overly descriptive, no matter how detailed or extensive, will not be rewarded at the highest levels if it is not used to answer the question set.

Question 2

2   Study Sources A–C.

'Resistance to slavery in the period 1688 to c.1730 was based on religious grounds.' How far do sources A–C convince you that this statement is correct? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer.   **[20]**

(🖉) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology **[5]**

This was a source-based question and it was clear that candidates were well prepared for it. There were very few who ignored the sources and just wrote a knowledge-based essay. The vast majority of candidates engaged with all three sources and attempted to relate them to the question being asked. Most candidates ended up being placed in Level 2 or Level 3 for using the content of one, two or three of the sources in a valid way to address the question of whether or not resistance to slavery in this period was based on religious grounds. These comments included: arguing against the statement by using Source A to show that resistance came from slaves themselves who fought back for 'revenge' on the slave traders; agreeing with the statement by using Source B to argue that opposition was religiously motivated given the use of religious language in the extract; and using Source C to demonstrate that some resistance was motivated by criticism of the new slave traders and the corruption they brought. Most commonly, if candidates did not reach Level 2, it was because they misunderstood Source A, overlooking the fact that resistance in the source was being carried out by the slaves; instead they merely argued that the author of the source didn't oppose slavery at all. Other candidates picked out detail from the source(s) but did not relate the content to the statement or the question.

The question also required candidates to consider how 'convincing' they found the sources in relation to the statement. Unfortunately, this was not successfully done by the majority of candidates, with many not even attempting to evaluate the evidence they were presented with. The bulk of attempts that were made fell back on simplistic comments about provenance, such as (with Source A), 'it's biased/unconvincing because it was produced by a slave trader who is racist.' There were also some candidates who used the sources as a 'springboard' for their knowledge and proceeded to recite general information about the context of slavery. Whilst the range and depth of this knowledge was often impressive, rarely was it used to evaluate the source(s) in question.

The most successful candidates examined the precise purpose, motivation or context of one or more of the sources in order to address the question of how convincing they were as evidence about the statement. Typically, these candidates argued that: Source A was convincing because it was typical, usually citing knowledge about other slave rebellions on ships or the case of the Maroons; that Source B was less convincing given that its political motivation was simply couched in religious language; and that Source C was convincing because the author was clearly motivated by resentment and financial losses after the RAC lost its monopoly (although this didn't necessarily make his complaints about pirates convincing, of course). These responses were rewarded at Levels 4 and 5.

Advice for Question 2

Centres need to ensure that their candidates are familiar with handling sources from this time period and that they can use them as evidence in addressing a particular statement/question. Candidates would also benefit from more practice at evaluating how convincing evidence is, but a tailored approach is required here. Responses which evaluate sources in a generic way are unlikely to achieve the higher levels in this question. Getting candidates to consider things such as the context of each source, the purpose/motivation of its author(s), and the other sources in the collection (and critically what impact these factors may have in relation to the statement/question being asked), would be a good starting point.

Section B overview

Again, it was clear that candidates were well prepared for the questions on Butetown and knew the history of the site well. Almost all candidates attempted both questions.

Question 3

3   Explain why there were race riots in Butetown in the early part of the 20th century.   **[10]**

Most candidates seemed to find this question quite straightforward. There was some impressive knowledge on display about the history of the site and the race riots. It was pleasing to see that very few strayed away from the period identified in the question, with most focusing on the riots of 1911 and 1919. A few candidates limited themselves by speaking in terms that were too general and could have been applied to any riot, at any time or place (for example, 'people disliked the migrants'), or by describing events not related to the question, such as Irish immigration or the Aliens Order. Such responses were usually rewarded at Level 1. Others described events which took place during the riots in some detail but did not focus on the causes; these responses were usually placed in Level 2. However, most candidates were able to reach Levels 4 and 5 because they fully explained the specific causes of one or both riots. Typically, candidates referred to the 1911 'Laundry' riots being caused by striking dockers and seamen turning on Chinese seamen because they had not joined the strike; concerns that Chinese women were taking over laundries in the area, putting local washerwomen out of work; and rumours stirred up in the press about opium smoking, gambling and 'white slavery' being linked to these laundries. In relation to 1919, candidates usually explained the riots as occurring as a result of economic hardship, and white sailors believing that the black migrants who had arrived during the war were more likely to be offered work; or as a result of antagonism for the mixed-race relationships between white women and migrants that had sprung up during the war.

Advice for Question 3

A clear understanding of the chronology of the area really benefitted candidates here. It is important though that they are able to link their knowledge to the question being asked: the best answers were those that picked up on the fact that question was about the causes of the riots rather than events that occurred during the riots. In addition to this, careful attention to the wording of the question benefitted candidates: as the question said 'riots', the best responses understood that they needed to refer to more than one, and organised their response coherently, for example by explaining the causes of one riot and then the other.

Question 4

4   Study Sources D and E.

Which of these sources is more useful to a historian studying the reasons why people moved to Butetown in the 19th century?   **[10]**

Most candidates performed well in this question, which was about source utility, and thus it was expected that candidates would make inferences from the sources about why people moved to Butetown during the period in question. Most valid inferences (credited at Level 3 and above) referred to Source D revealing 'push' factors driving Irish immigrants to Butetown (famine, starvation and the government exporting its problems); and Source E showing us the 'pull' factor of the employment on the docks. Some candidates came up with some excellent inferences, such as D revealing attitudes towards immigrants, which could not be rewarded, unfortunately, as they did not answer the question set. Weaker responses lifted detail from the source and asserted its utility, e.g. 'it's useful because it shows us the Marquis of Bute built the docks' (Level 2), or made simplistic comments about the provenance of the source, e.g. it's not useful because 'it's racist and anti-immigrant so we can't trust it' or 'it's from a newspaper so it's biased' (Level 1). Usually where candidates struggled to go beyond Level 1 it was where they were arguing the source(s) were not useful. Again, some candidates simply saw the sources as a way in to narrating everything they had learned about the Irish Potato Famine and the Marquis of Bute and did not focus on the sources or the question being asked.

Advice for Question 4

Inference from sources is a difficult skill, and candidates might also benefit from practising with contemporary sources and being given prompts, e.g. asking candidates to consider whether particular sources could be used as evidence of (for example) reasons for migration, impact of migration, or responses to migration. Or perhaps the sources might provide evidence about the experiences of migrants, or how particular events affected the area. The guidance in the specification provides a helpful set of prompts to help candidates consider the ways in which sources might be useful as evidence.

Supporting you

For further details of this qualification please visit the subject webpage.

Review of results

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our review of results services. For full information about the options available visit the OCR website. If university places are at stake you may wish to consider priority service 2 reviews of marking which have an earlier deadline to ensure your reviews are processed in time for university applications.

activeresults

Active Results offers a unique perspective on results data and greater opportunities to understand students' performance.

It allows you to:

- Review reports on the **performance of individual candidates**, cohorts of students and whole centres

- **Analyse results** at question and/or topic level

- **Compare your centre** with OCR national averages or similar OCR centres.

- Identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle and help **pinpoint strengths and weaknesses** of students and teaching departments.

http://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/support-and-tools/active-results/

CPD Hub
Your route to OCR's teacher training

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear exam feedback directly from a senior assessor or drop in to an online Q&A session.

https://www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk

We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the 'Like' or 'Dislike' button you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR, or are considering switching from your current provider/awarding organisation, you can request more information by completing the Expression of Interest form which can be found here: www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest

OCR Resources: *the small print*
OCR's resources are provided to support the delivery of OCR qualifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by OCR. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this small print remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

Our documents are updated over time. Whilst every effort is made to check all documents, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, therefore please use the information on the latest specification at all times. Where changes are made to specifications these will be indicated within the document, there will be a new version number indicated, and a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource please contact us at: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content:
Square down and Square up: alexwhite/Shutterstock.com

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk

Looking for a resource?

There is now a quick and easy search tool to help find **free** resources for your qualification:

www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/find-resources/

www.ocr.org.uk

OCR Customer Contact Centre

General qualifications
Telephone 01223 553998
Facsimile 01223 552627
Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

OCR is part of Cambridge Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge. *For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.*