
GCSE **HISTORY**

8145/2A/A
Report on the Examination

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General Introduction to the November Series

This has been an unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

Overview of Entry

The entry for this component was very small in comparison with previous years. From their study of the syllabus students had varying levels of relevant knowledge and understanding to use in their answers. Across all questions in this examination fewer overall reached the highest levels of response identified in the mark scheme than in previous years.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Most students recognised the utility of the source to illustrate the crude and barbaric nature of 18th century surgery reaching Level 2. Many students however took the cartoon to represent a real amputation overlooking the exaggeration in it, linked to the provenance of the source. Students explained in a straightforward way the lack of anaesthetics at the time and described the trauma of amputations, again reaching Level 2. Responses achieving Level 3 were developed and included knowledge of surgical techniques developing at the time, and compared what the source showed to the better practice available represented by the work of surgeons such as John Hunter. Some responses linked this to the provenance of the source and made reasoned suggestions regarding its intention to expose barbaric surgical practices often used at that time.

Question 2

There were a number of knowledgeable answers to this question, explaining the significance of the introduction of the NHS. Answers referred to the provision of a medical service for the people which was free at the point of use, and its resultant impact on the quality of life, and life expectancy. Straightforward statements about significance such as government accepting a greater role in the health of the people, were rewarded highly in Level 2. Level 3 was reached where detailed knowledge was deployed to support the points being made. Level 4 answers went further, linking facts with such things as the impact of the NHS on public finance over time, especially in the context of an ageing population later in the twentieth century.

Question 3

Students appeared to find this question more challenging, and knowledge of hospital development before the 20th century seemed basic. Many Level 2 answers referred generally to an ethos of care over cure in both periods. Some responses included simple statements about hospitals in both periods being dirty and having medical practitioners who lacked effective knowledge of the

causes and cure of disease. More successful answers explained such things as the charitable nature of hospitals in the medieval era and the 18th centuries, or their maintenance of dispensaries in both periods. Responses which included deployment of some detailed knowledge related to the question reached the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Question 4

Students showed in their answers to this question that they understand how different factors had affected the development of the fight against disease, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, responses often confused events and individuals relevant to the fight against disease in Britain with those relevant to developments in Surgery, and Public Health.

Nearly all responses addressed the factor named in the question. At Level 1 students identified developments that occurred mainly in the 19th century and showed, in a basic way, some understanding of what those developments achieved. At Level 2 students began to offer simple explanations of developments related to the named factor and their importance, often together with at least one other factor which was usually 'the role of the individual'.

Students made consistent efforts to offer examples of developments from three or more time periods of the thematic study which was pleasing to see. Doing this and offering details of developments and the work of individuals with the influence/importance of factors led to responses reaching Level 3. Responses which linked developments and factors, and made historical judgements related to the importance of them, were placed in Level 4.

Concluding Remarks

Students appear increasingly better prepared for interrogating sources for utility, identifying similarities and explaining the significance of events and developments. They also understand more clearly the nature of a thematic study where examples to support points made should come from across the thousand years plus of the study in question 4. It is advised that it may help students, however, to be clearer when answering, about what developments and which individuals fit with the major areas of medicine, namely the fight against disease, surgery and public health, so that they can apply the right knowledge and understanding to the question they are answering.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.