

## Candidates' Performance

### General comments and recommendations

On the whole, candidates were well prepared for the examination. Most candidates displayed knowledge relevant to the issues and topics covered by the curriculum. However, the performance was not always commensurate with the effort made. To achieve good results in History examinations, candidates need the following skills: identifying the key term(s) / phrase(s) in a question in order to grasp the gist of that question; using relevant historical information to support any arguments made; and presenting logical, coherent and clear answers.

It is imperative that candidates read the questions carefully if they want to produce relevant answers. Candidates too often jumped into answering a question without paying close attention to what it required. This explains why some candidates produced irrelevant answers when dealing with data-based questions: when the question required the use of sources only, they drew on their own knowledge; when the question required the use of both sources and their own knowledge, they used one but not both. Similarly, for essay-type questions, candidates should make sure that they grasp the gist of a question before producing the answer.

It is also important that candidates choose relevant historical information to substantiate their arguments. Some scripts were marred by irrelevancies resulting from indiscriminate use of historical information. Writing down 'model answers' prepared in advance should be avoided.

Finally, candidates should pay special attention to logic, coherence and clarity of presentation. They should organise answers and use facts appropriately in their answers, and make clear arguments. Language and presentation skills are also areas in need of improvement.

### Question Choice Pattern

Question Number	Popularity
Paper 1	
1	89 %
2	85 %
3	93 %
4	34 %
Paper 2	
1	28 %
2	12 %
3	< 1 %
4	83 %
5	16 %
6	54 %
7	8 %

## Paper 1 (Data-based questions)

- Q.1 (a) Performance was good. Most candidates were able to identify and explain the role played by the USA in the Russo-Japanese War with reference to Source A. Some candidates cited the clues in Source A, but lacked an effective explanation and thus lost marks.
- (b) Performance was unsatisfactory. The best candidates were able to identify two characteristics of Japan's elementary education in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and cite relevant clues from Source B to explain their answers. Most weak candidates regarded 'trend' as 'characteristic', or wrongly concluded 'gender inequality' to be a valid characteristic.
- (c) Performance was average. The best candidates were able to provide substantiated points to explain whether Japan could be regarded as a strong and westernised country in the period 1900-26 with reference to the Sources and their own knowledge. Weak candidates only cited clues from the Sources or historical examples without responding to the keywords 'strong', 'westernised' and the period of time '1900-26' in the question.
- Q.2 (a) Performance was satisfactory. Most candidates were able to identify and explain the major change in the economic development of Hong Kong in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with reference to Source C. Some candidates wrongly interpreted the knowledge-based economy as the major change in the economic development in Hong Kong in Source C and thus lost marks.
- (b) Performance was far from satisfactory. Most candidates were unable to give two valid characteristics with effective inference. Weak candidates merely cited data in Source D to explain the trends of the Hong Kong population composition.
- (c) Performance was far from satisfactory. The best candidates were able to give substantiated points on how useful the Sources are in reflecting Hong Kong as an international city in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most weak candidates cited the clues in the Sources without responding to the gist of the question, or inaccurately focused on the reasons for the development of Hong Kong in the period concerned.
- Q.3 (a) Performance was good. Most candidates were able to identify one form of peace-keeping effort adopted by European countries in the period 1900-13 in Source E. Some candidates were only able to transcribe examples of peacekeeping from Source E and thus lost marks.
- (b) Performance was average. The best candidates were able to identify the obstacle hindering an improvement in Anglo-German relations after the Agadir crisis in Source F and cite two clues to support their answer. Weak candidates failed to point out the obstacle or only transcribed examples from the Source.
- (c) Performance was average. The best candidates were able to provide substantiated points with reference to the Sources and their own knowledge. Some weak candidates only mentioned the underlying causes of the First World War, including the alliance system, armaments race and ultra-nationalism, and did not respond to the keywords 'the situation in Europe', 'remained stable' and the period of time '1900-13' in the question.
- Q.4 (a) Performance was far from satisfactory. The best candidates were able to identify the change in the global situation of the smallpox epidemic in the 1960s and 1970s, and cite clues from Map 1 and Map 2 in Source G respectively to support their answers. Most weak candidates only discussed the global epidemic situation in the 1970s, failing to mention that of the 1960s and respond to the keyword 'change'. Some candidates were unable to make good use of Source G, failing to name the continents affected by smallpox as reflected in Map 1; or only citing clues in Map 2 to support their answer.

- (b) Performance was average. Most candidates were able to use Source H to identify and explain the two purposes of the World Bank President's speech in 1989. Weak candidates wrongly interpreted the purpose as asking the governments to be solely responsible for the financial burden of national family planning programs.
- (c) Performance was far from satisfactory. The best candidates were able to use the Sources and their own knowledge to discuss how successful the United Nations was in tackling international social and cultural problems in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most weak candidates wrongly cited the population projection of the United Nations in Source H to explain the effectiveness of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in addressing population issues. Also, some candidates failed to provide relevant historical examples as their own knowledge to explain their answers.

## Paper 2 (Essay-type questions)

- Q.1 Performance was average. This question required candidates to illustrate the different explorations of political modernisation attempted by China in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The best candidates displayed well-substantiated arguments to discuss different explorations of political modernisation attempted by China, supported by solid historical examples over a considerable period of time. Some candidates displayed one or more of the following flaws: focusing on reform programmes in other aspects carried out by China or a description of the political events that happened in China in the period concerned.
- Q.2 Performance was average. This question required candidates to examine the impact on Japan of its foreign policy from 1931 to 1952. The best candidates displayed an excellent and comprehensive analysis of the impact on Japan of its foreign policies, supported by solid historical examples over a considerable period of time. Some candidates only focused on the impact on Japan of its foreign policy before 1945. Weak candidates merely discussed the foreign policies of Japan or the impact on Japan, without mentioning their cause-and-effect relationship.
- Q.3 Performance was far from satisfactory. This question required candidates to discuss the characteristics of different stages in regional cooperation in Southeast Asia since 1967. The best candidates could undertake a balanced and well-substantiated discussion of the distinctive characteristics in the different stages. Weak candidates misunderstood the command words in the question.
- Q.4 Performance was satisfactory. The question required candidates to discuss the relative importance of the failure of peacekeeping efforts and the Great Depression in causing the outbreak of the Second World War, with reference to the historical development in the interwar period. The best candidates were able to present a logical analysis of the relative importance of the two factors in causing the outbreak of the Second World War. Some candidates displayed one or more of the following flaws: the inaccurate understanding that the Great Depression led to the rise of Mussolini; separately narrating the two factors without making any comparisons; focusing on one factor only; producing separate accounts of the two factors with very rough comparisons or under-developed arguments in a short paragraph at the end. Some candidates only analysed factors other than the two required in the question which were thus irrelevant.
- Q.5 Performance was average. The question required candidates to analyse the factors that facilitated economic integration in Europe in the period 1946-2000. Candidates were generally able to point out some valid factors, and some of the best candidates demonstrated substantial and coherent analysis of the cause-and-effect relationship between different factors and the economic integration facilitated in Europe. Some factors given by candidates were quite general such as 'French factor', 'British factor', etc. Some candidates only discussed the historical background of economic integration in Europe, without citing any organisations of economic cooperation as supportive evidence. Besides, some weak candidates gave a limited discussion in the part of economic integration in Eastern Europe, or only narrated the development of economic integration in Europe.
- Q.6 Performance was average. The question required candidates to examine the roles played by the USA in the development of the Cold War in the period 1946-91. The best candidates demonstrated an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the roles played by the USA in the development of the Cold War. Some weak candidates only discussed one or two roles, or merely focused on a certain period of time in the development of the Cold War. Also, they did not further illustrate how such roles affected the development of the Cold War.

Q.7 Performance was far from satisfactory. This question required candidates to discuss the relative importance of the ideas of the individual selected and other factors as the main driving force in bringing about historical changes. The best candidates were able to undertake a balanced and reasonable analysis of the relative importance of the ideas of the individual selected and other factors in bringing about the achievement of China's economic modernisation or the end of apartheid in South Africa. Weak candidates confined their answers to a narration of changes that took place in China or South Africa.