

## 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 historical information 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	64.8
2	58.5
3	87.7
4	89.0
Paper 2	
1	29.0
2	4.1
3	60.3
4	79.1
5	1.1
6	3.8
7	22.6

**Paper 1 (Data-based questions)**

- Q.1 (a) Performance was good. Most candidates were able to identify and explain one change in China's relations with Western countries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with reference to Source A. Although some candidates cited the clues in Source A, they lacked an effective explanation and thus lost marks.
- (b) Performance was unsatisfactory. The best candidates were able to identify one difference between the views from Extracts 1 and 2, and cite relevant clues from Source B to explain their answers. Weak candidates were not able to identify the difference between the views or cite the relevant clues.
- (c) Performance was average. The best candidates were able to provide substantiated points to explain whether the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a new look of China with reference to the Sources and their own knowledge. Weak candidates only cited clues from the Sources or historical examples without fully responding to the keyword and the period concerned.
- Q.2 (a) Performance was good. The best candidates were able to cite relevant data and describe the trade performance of Japan in comparison to any two other countries listed. Weak candidates identified the trends of Japan's trade performance only.
- (b) Performance was good. Most candidates were able to identify and explain the problems faced by Japan in terms of its economic development with reference to Source D. Weak candidates identified the economic condition of Japan only.
- (c) Performance was unsatisfactory. The best candidates were able to provide substantiated points to discuss how well Japan's economy was from the mid-1960s to the end of the 1990s with reference to the Sources and their own knowledge. Weak candidates only cited clues from the Sources or historical examples without fully responding to the keyword and the period concerned.
- Q.3 (a) Performance was good. Most candidates were able to identify and explain the attitude of the US towards the establishment of the League of Nations with reference to Source E. Although some candidates cited the clues in Source E, they lacked an effective explanation and thus lost marks.
- (b) Performance was average. The best candidates were able to identify two points of importance of the Locarno Treaty in contributing to world peace and cite relevant clues from Source F to explain their answers. Weak candidates confused the achievements of the Geneva Protocol with the importance of the Locarno Treaty.
- (c) Performance was average. The best candidates were able to provide substantiated points to explain whether the 1920s was a period of stability with reference to the Sources and their own knowledge. Weak candidates only cited clues from the Sources or historical examples without responding to the keyword and the period concerned.
- Q.4 (a) Performance was excellent. The best candidates were able to identify and explain whether the cartoonist was optimistic towards an agreement being reached between the US and the USSR in 1979 with reference to Source G. Although some candidates cited the clues in Source G, they lacked an effective explanation and thus lost marks.
- (b) Performance was average. The best candidates were able to cite clues from Source H to explain how effective the US-led boycott the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980 was. Weak candidates only cited clues from the Source without responding to the question word.

- (c) Performance was average. The best candidates were able to provide substantiated points to explain whether US-Soviet relations from the 1970s to the 1980s featured more confrontation than cooperation with reference to the Sources and their own knowledge. Weak candidates lacked balance and did not fully respond to the period concerned.

## Paper 2 (Essay-type questions)

- Q.1 Performance was unsatisfactory. The question required candidates to analyse the two phenomena, periodise Hong Kong's economic development and urbanisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and explain the cause-and-effect relationship in each sub-period. The best candidates were able to analyse the two developments in different stages with relevant historical examples to explain their cause-and-effect relationship. Some candidates analysed the two developments without providing solid historical examples. Weak candidates lacked balance by analysing one development in a certain period only.
- Q.2 Performance was below average. This question required candidates to examine China's efforts to strengthen its relations with other Asian countries since 1978. The best candidates were able to examine the efforts made by China in various aspects, supported by relevant historical examples. Some candidates only narrated China's development in the period concerned, or discussed China's relations with other Asian countries beyond the period. Weak candidates only discussed China's efforts to strengthen its relations with one country in Asia.
- Q.3 Performance was satisfactory. The question required candidates to discuss the tremendous changes brought about to Japan by the end of the Second World War. The best candidates demonstrated an in-depth and multi-faceted analysis of these tremendous changes. Candidates were generally able to examine some changes but their discussion was marred by roughness. Although weak candidates narrated the development of Japan in the period concerned, they were not able to discuss the changes.
- Q.4 Performance was average. The question required candidates to analyse the relative importance of the rise of totalitarianism and other factors in undermining the decisions made in the Paris Peace Conference. The best candidates demonstrated an in-depth analysis of the relative importance of the rise of totalitarianism and other factors. Weak candidates only discussed the factors for the rise of totalitarianism or focused on the decisions made in the Paris Peace Conference.
- Q.5 Performance was below average. The question required candidates to examine the factors that influenced Arab-Israeli relations after 1945. The best candidates were able to examine various factors influencing Arab-Israeli relations in the period concerned, supported by relevant historical examples. Weak candidates only narrated the events that happened in Arab-Israeli relations and lacked analysis.
- Q.6 Performance was unsatisfactory. The question required candidates to analyse the obstacles to international social and cultural cooperation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The best candidates were able to focus on the obstacles to international social and cultural cooperation. Weak candidates misunderstood the gist of the question and only described the development of the Cold War without analysis.
- Q.7 Performance was average. The question required candidates to illustrate the historical development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in terms of progress from hostilities to collaboration. The best candidates were able to examine the changes and continuity in the progress from hostilities to collaboration in the period concerned, supported by relevant historical examples. Weak candidates only narrated the development of the Cold War, the conditions of a specific country/region and lacked analysis, or misunderstood the question word and keywords.