



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2021

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In History (1HIA and 1HIB)

Paper P3 Period study (1HIA and 1HIB P3)

Option P3 The American West, c1835–c1895

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Period paper - Introduction

The Period Study focuses on an understanding of the unfolding narrative of a time period, with candidates required to answer three questions targeted at Assessment Objective 1 (Knowledge and Understanding) and Assessment Objective 2 (Analysis of Second Order Concepts).

Question 1 will always focus on consequence, requiring candidates to explain two valid consequences, giving equal attention to both. It is deliberately designed to be accessible to the entire ability range, however some candidates provided more detail than was necessary, leaving less time to address higher tariff questions.

Question 2 focuses on analytical narrative. The analytical narrative will always focus on a period containing events or ideas that can be perceived as a sequence; this could cover a number of years or a much shorter period. Candidates should be clear about the time span of the question to ensure they cover an acceptable range and what it is the narrative is designed to analyse. It is vital they understand the narrative concept, with the sense of a beginning, development and end, rather than produce three paragraphs which do not directly link. These stimulus points serve a different purpose to those on other questions: they will be useful reminders to candidates of sign posts along the narrative and not things they need to develop. Candidates do not need to use these stimulus points but there is an expectation that there will be some depth of knowledge, shown by three aspects of content covered with outcomes, although this does not mean candidates need to identify three different events.

For Question 3 candidates were required to analyse the importance of an event/person/development. The question focuses on what difference the event/person/development made in relation to situations and unfolding developments. They had to answer two topics out of a selection of three. Responses ranged from impressive analysis focused on the appropriate second-order concept (AO2), which were supported with accurate, relevant and good knowledge (AO1), to those from candidates that offered simple comment with limited knowledge for support.

Progression in AO1 is shown by the candidate's increasing ability to select information precisely and to show wide-ranging knowledge and understanding. Progression in AO2 is shown by a candidate's response moving from simple or generalised comments to analytical explanations which show a line of reasoning that is coherent, logical and sustained. Centres are reminded that the indicative content in the markscheme does not imply what must be included in a response nor does it give any expectation as to how candidates are expected to structure their responses.

It is important to recognise that in this series there were responses with handwriting which was difficult to read. It is vital that candidates are made aware that examiners can only credit what they can read.

PE report: Autumn 2021: 1HIOA P3 / 1HIOB P3

Question 1

In question 1 candidates were asked to provide two valid consequences of the concept of Manifest Destiny for migration. There are 4 marks available for each consequence. This implies a link between the stated event and the events or developments that are identified by the candidate. Candidates should make sure that they explain how these events / developments happened as a result of the concept of Manifest Destiny and not merely subsequent to it. This explanation should be supported with specific information showing good knowledge and understanding (AO1). Most candidates understood the second-order of concept of consequence. Those that did well knew specific information, such as movement west was considered a God-given right. However, some candidates failed to focus on the link to migration. Some candidates merely rephrased the same consequence and as such were only awarded marks for one of them.

Question 2

In question 2 candidates were asked to write an analytical narrative of the key events of the range wars between cattle ranchers and homesteaders. The overall structure of a sequence including a beginning, development and end was clearly demonstrated by candidates who attained Level 3. It was clear that many candidates had been taught to use language which demonstrated analysis of links, for example 'consequently', 'which resulted in', which was apparent even if they had more limited knowledge. Candidates at level 3 were familiar with the significance of the open range and the Johnson County War. There were some candidates who talked about relations between Plains Indians and settlers, rather than between cattle ranchers and homesteaders. Weaker answers included the basic events but failed to explain how one event linked to the other.

Question 3

This question is comprised of two 8 mark questions based on the second order concepts of significance and consequence. Candidates had to explain the importance of two of the following three topics: the expansion of the railroads for settlement in the West; gold prospecting for conflict with the Plains Indians; new farming technology for

farming in the West. All the questions were selected equally with no clear preference for any one topic. Candidates who addressed the importance of the factor raised in relation to development produced Level 3 responses when supported by good knowledge and understanding. This was in contrast to candidates who explained the importance of the factor in general terms which normally stayed in Level 2.

In terms of the question on expansion of the railroads, candidates who attained Level 3 recognised multiple implications and were more likely to focus on migration becoming easier and cheaper. Weaker candidates tended to describe details that they knew about examples of settlements, such as the Donner party. The topic of gold prospecting led to responses identifying the importance of sacred land and the displacement of Plains Indians out of traditional lands. However, candidates often failed to provide specific details such as the breaking of the Fort Laramie Treaty. The question on new farming technology produced some good responses at Level 3 with candidates giving a wide range of examples including use of barbed wire and seed drills. Weaker answers often failed to address the impact on farming the new technology had, therefore failing to give sufficient focus to the second-order concept.

Paper Summary

Based on the performance seen on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Write about the knowledge that you have learned: if you are not sure how to answer the question, pick out the topic specified and write down what you can remember about it. Aim to write something for every question.
- When tackling Q1, ensure the explanation shows the link between the event and the consequence and don't simply describe something that happened after the event.
- On Q2, make sure your narrative response has a beginning, middle and end. Don't write it in the first person or as a story – a historical narrative is like a television documentary, as opposed to a drama, and it needs to be clear that the events you're writing about actually happened.
- On Q3, read the question really carefully to make sure you are selecting the correct content for your answer.
- Good answers on Q3 will explain why the development/event/person specified was important, but better answers explain the impact they had on the second development/event/person named in the question. So try to ensure that you can

explain the impact for the second development/event/person, rather than keeping it general.