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Modern History

2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

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# 2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

Across all components of the course in 2016 the overall standard of student responses and evidence against the performance standards improved in comparison with previous years. The number of students who studied Modern History in 2016 was 1381.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

**The more successful responses**

* Best task design allowed students to develop and demonstrate a selection of the performance standards in each task, rather than assessing the complete range.
* There has been an increase in the number of creative type tasks being submitted. These tasks were often seen to be accessible for more students and provide them with more freedom to meet the assessment design criteria.
* Tasks that were a change from traditional style assessments included photo stories, biographies, newspapers, speeches, and creating and analysing propaganda.
* It was refreshing to see a number of interesting tasks that required students to conduct an interview with various people from historical periods and analyse different individuals’ motivations and actions. This allowed students to achieve at the higher grade levels of the inquiry and analysis and reflection and evaluation criteria.
* Empathy-type tasks continue to be popular and it was noted that such tasks require a strong grounding in knowledge and understanding to effectively demonstrate reflection and evaluation.
* It is recommended that explicit teaching of how to incorporate multiple perspectives in these types of tasks would probably allow students to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* There were a number of excellent tasks that encouraged students to identify their own historical topic which related to the depth topics studied in class or their individual essays. They also constructed their own sources analysis broadsheet and provided an answer sheet. These tasks often allowed students to demonstrate evidence of learning at the A grade bands of inquiry and analysis.
* Some teachers provided effectively constructed and accessible scaffolding material — specifically to sources analysis type tasks and essay tasks — that helped students to meet the communication criteria.
* Moderators noted that there were some effective tasks that allowed students to draw on their knowledge and understanding of all issues related to a topic, demonstrating an in-depth understanding of continuity and change.
* Teaching all four issues is vital to provide a broad and sophisticated understanding of forces and change over an extended time.
* There were a number of interesting and increasingly sophisticated tasks that included the study of different historical schools of thought and the writing of history. Tasks required students to compare and contrast specific historians such A.J.P. Taylor, Laurence Rees, and Ian Kershaw.
* As in previous years, the knowledge and understanding criterion was demonstrated the most clearly, and generally saw students achieve at the highest grade band.
* Tasks that required a consistent form of referencing and a bibliography allowed students show achievements that met the second communication criteria (C2: use of subject-specific language and conventions).
* Folios that included a range of different types of assessments such as research analytical essays, multimodal tasks, sources analysis, creative and empathy-type tasks were more successful than those that only had a few types of assessment.

**The less successful responses**

* Students were often disadvantaged when teachers assessed too many performance standards in one task. More effective task designs tended to set up conditions and provide explicit detail on how specific performance standards were being assessed.
* Some teachers used formative style tasks that lacked complexity and did not provide enough scope for achieving at the higher grade levels for inquiry and analysis (IA1 and IA2) and reflection and evaluation (RE1 and RE2).
* The criterion of inquiry and analysis was rarely addressed; when it was addressed, it distinguished between the different grade bands and showed evidence at a higher band.
* A number of students at the lower grade bands failed to adhere to the time limits for oral/multimedia tasks or word count for written tasks.
* Oral presentations that simply recorded a student reading a speech or submitted only a transcript tended to achieve at the lower grade bands of the performance standards.
* Open-ended research and report-style tasks do not give students the opportunity to meet the reflection and evaluation, and inquiry and analysis criteria.
* Too much scaffolding that directed students to answer a series of research-type questions did not allow students to achieve at the higher grade bands.
* The study of one case study in depth allows more complex knowledge and understanding to be communicated.
* Tasks that assessed all specific features tended to demonstrate uneven and superficial evidence against some of the performance standards.
* It was noted that in some student samples there was no identification of research undertaken in any task throughout a folio, with no use of referencing or bibliography; this is an important aspect of the folio.
* Poor essay questions set in a way that invited a narrative response — e.g. ‘why’ or ‘what’ — did not allow students to show a deeper understanding of the topic.
* The lack of use and application of history conventions in essays and sources analysis tasks did not allow students to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* When students were not given a variety of task types and conditions, it limited the depth and range of skill and understanding that they were able to show.

**General information**

It was evident during the moderation process that more teachers and students accessed the 2015 Chief Assessor’s report and, where appropriate, amended and improved practices based on the advice provided. As a result, moderators observed an improvement each year in teachers’ overall understanding and identification of the types of evidence of student achievement that should be found at the different grade bands. Evidently, more teachers are demonstrating confidence and a clear understanding of each of the performance standards, and using a variety of methods to clearly identify evidence against these. Teachers used a number of ways to signpost evidence, including annotations on student work, using a colour code system, and providing a breakdown of the student’s work against the individual performance standards being assessed. Moderators again noted as in previous years that the inclusion of written feedback on individual tasks assisted them in confirming standards.

In 2016 it was noted that the majority of teachers arranged and organised their materials following the guidelines outlined by the SACE instructional manual. Moderators once again affirmed that teachers who organised their moderation materials by student — rather than separating each folio task into separate groups for a whole class — used the most effective way to present their material.

It was pleasing that most teachers provided a summary sheet of each student’s overall collated grade for each individual folio task against the performance standards. Additionally, teachers are asked to clearly label each student’s piece of work with their SACE number and name to assist in the moderation process.

As has been the trend over the last few years, more teachers are incorporating multimedia tasks in the folio. This has been seen as a positive development in the delivery and assessment of this subject, with students being able to demonstrate their learning against the performance standards by using more diverse creative and critical thinking tools. The range of digital technology tools being used and types of tasks constructed continues to diversify, including the creation of documentaries, historiographical analysis, podcasts, forums, and radio broadcasts. It was noted that there was a much greater range of highly effective multimedia tasks that allowed students to successfully demonstrate knowledge and understanding and inquiry and analysis at the A grade band. Teachers are reminded that is essential that multimedia tasks are clearly labelled and easily accessible for viewing during the moderation process.

Assessment Type 2: Individual Essay

**The more successful responses**

* Students who attempted to extend themselves and focus on a historical topic that had a clearly defined and specific scope, including time frame and place, were able to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Students who saw the individual essay as an opportunity to construct an independent academic historical inquiry by focusing on an area of particular interest were able to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Formulation of a question that invites reasoned historical argument is critical to allow students the opportunity to achieve at the higher grade bands of knowledge and understanding and inquiry and analysis.
* Evidence of ongoing guidance provided by teachers in the initial stages to help in the formulation of effective historical essay questions allowed students to achieve at the higher grade bands.
* The use of the maximum five sources in their essays and careful consideration of what constitutes a source when students choose their five sources allowed students to achieve at the higher grade bands.
* Students who used carefully chosen sources that constitute a whole work of potential sources — for example, secondary sources such as Orlando Figes’s *Revolutionary Russia 1891–1991*, textbooks like K. J. Mason and Phillip Feilden’s *Republic to Reich 1918–1939*, or carefully chosen websites such as Alpha History or Yad Vashem — can be highly effective
* Students who used a variety of primary and secondary sources — including speeches, diaries, artwork, propaganda, and eyewitness accounts — were often able to demonstrate a critical understanding of evidence and construction of arguments.
* The use of five appropriate sources directly (often several times) within the essay helped to support the development of a reasoned historical argument.
* Students who were evidently passionate about their topic and could clearly articulate and engage in an argument were able to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Extensive background research conducted on topic gave students the ability to write with more depth and comprehensive understanding.
* Some excellent film analysis and literature analysis style questions saw higher achieving students use these texts as historical sources, which enabled them to engage in a reasoned historical argument of reliability and limitations. Most successful essays carefully chose other primary and secondary sources to compare and contrast with these.
* The use of correct conventions of history essay writing, with clearly defined and relevant arguments, enabled students to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Essays that offered a clear counter-argument tended to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* The use of a consistent form of referencing and a bibliography enabled students to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* An increasing trend in successful responses was that they showed a sophisticated use and engagement of historiography and demonstrated a high level of academic research.
* Clear instructions from teachers relating to sourcing and referencing led to more effective essays.
* Those that adhered to the word count were able to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Carefully edited and drafted essays were able to ensure effective communication and enabled students to achieve at the higher grade levels.

**The less successful responses**

* Responses that were only narrative and lacked a reasoned historical argument were less likely to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Topics that were not selected from the time frames preceding 1500 could not produce a successful response.
* Questions that didn’t help students to manage the information — for example, relating them to both the First World War and the Second World War — made it difficult for a student to show in-depth knowledge and understanding.
* Recounts should be discouraged; questions needed to be worded carefully so they did not lead to students simply retelling how events and developments unfolded.
* Topics that were not of a historical nature, such as moral or philosophical arguments, did not meet the assessment design criteria or allow students to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Topics of a contemporary nature did not meet the assessment design criteria, such as an analysis of legal cases or current issues.
* More than five sources used and an over-reliance on secondary sources did not allow students to show the necessary skills and understanding to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* There continues to be an overuse of internet sources, which makes it vital that students are critically evaluating the types of sources they use.
* Students could not achieve at the higher grade levels if engagement with the sources was not clear, or they had relied on non-scholarly websites.
* Some very extensive and generic scaffolding made it difficult for students to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Essays that were too prescriptive and/or used as part of their learning during the course did not produce a successful response.
* Unsuccessful responses often lacked a consistent form of referencing and use of bibliography, or produced essays that used sub headings, or poorly structured essays that lacked a clear topic and closing sentences.
* The lack of a counter-argument made it difficult for students to achieve at the higher grade levels.
* Film analysis style questions were common and were often not completed effectively and relied too heavily on providing a film review; for example: ‘To what extent did *Saving Private Ryan* accurately depict the D Day landings?’. In too many cases, students ended up reviewing the text rather than providing arguments about the history.
* Essays that exceeded the word limit could not achieve at the higher grade levels.

**General information**

The most desirable way to present the essay is to prepare a separate package that contains the essays of all selected students. Each essay should be clearly labelled with the student’s name and SACE number. Essays that provide a cover sheet with the essay question, student’s name, SACE number, and word count are also desirable.

External Assessment Type 3: Examination

**General comments**

The 2016 examination provided opportunities for students at all levels of ability. Students were presented with a broad scope of questions that challenged them to not only demonstrate the extent of their learning, but also to apply the skills they had developed throughout the year.

The questions in both parts required students to show their understanding of the key concepts of history, such as:

* sources and evidence
* cause and effect
* perspectives
* empathy
* significance
* contestability.

This year’s cohort of students demonstrated a wide range of skills and levels of understanding both of the content and the concepts. However, when formulating an argument, too few students demonstrated high levels of skills because many of their answers were overloaded with information and did not establish and develop a coherent argument related to the question.

Markers also made the following general observations.

* There were fewer apparently pre-prepared arguments.
* There is a need for students to learn to develop a clear counter-argument.
* More students used quotes but their effectiveness was mixed.
* Almost all students agreed with the premise of the question they chose.
* Students should clearly articulate what they mean by key words or terms in the question (e.g. ‘their policies’, ‘coercion’).
* More successful arguments addressed the premise of the question first before engaging in counter-arguments.
* More successful arguments contained body paragraphs that started with topic sentences connected to the overall argument, and then supported each point with relevant and brief examples and explanations.
* More successful arguments contained relevant information, examples, and quotes to support the point being made and then connect it to the overall argument.
* Less successful arguments made generalised statements about ‘the people’ or ‘society’.
* Less successful arguments also avoided committing to a position by stating that a particular factor was important ‘to an extent’ or ‘to some extent’.
* Less successful arguments contained body paragraphs that started with a fact or an event and then proceeded to describe it in considerable detail.
* The focus of the question was often left until the latter part of the essay or, in some cases, mentioned in passing or did not address at all.
* More students than in previous years did not write the numbers of the questions they had answered on the front cover of their response booklet which sometimes made it difficult for markers to ascertain which question students were answering.

Only a few students answered more than one question from each part. There were more cases where a student answered each question from a topic. Markers were instructed to read each response and apply a mark to the best one. Due to the brevity of the responses, these students only received low marks. Teachers are encouraged to remind students of the format of the examination so that this mistake can be avoided.

Students found the sources in Question 45 balanced and accessible as they highlighted the achievements of the first woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova, and provided differing perspectives of her qualities and achievements. The combination of primary and secondary print and text sources provided students with opportunities to deeply analyse sources and compare them.

Many students presented sound answers to questions (a), (b), and (c) but their answers to the other questions tended to be simplistic and sometimes poorly structured. This last aspect made it particularly difficult for markers to give students credit for the way in which they engaged with a particular source.

Teachers are advised to spend time refining their students’ senior history skills contained in the subject outline, particularly:

* researching, evaluating, interpreting, and analysing historical materials
* thinking critically about the uses and limitations of primary and secondary sources
* forming judgments and defending them
* communicating ideas and arguments in clear and effective speech and writing.

Those teachers who are not encouraging their students to read relevant sections of the Chief Examiner’s reports from previous years are advised to direct their students to this early in the year. Their students would benefit from highlighting the key points, especially the ones that are consistently made over a number of years, and practise them throughout the year.

It would also be helpful for markers if teachers impressed on their students the importance of reading the instructions on the front page of the examination and writing the numbers of the questions they have answered on the front page of their response booklet.

**Specific comments in relation to the assessment design criteria**

*Knowledge and Understanding*

Overall, students demonstrated a good to high level of knowledge and understanding of the topics they had studied throughout the year. Even more students than last year used quotes, but they were sometimes misplaced or misused. It seemed in some cases that students had memorised some key quotes and were willing to use them even if they did not contribute to their argument.

Many students made relevant points that were not expanded upon, indicating a lack of knowledge or analysis.

Once again, as has been noted for many years, too many students relied primarily on their ability to recall knowledge and provided detailed narratives to answer essay questions. Teachers are advised to help students identify relevant pieces of information and use them succinctly to support their argument. Many markers reported that they could identify a less well-argued response by the first sentence of the body paragraphs. When those paragraphs started with a fact or a piece of information, it was highly likely that the rest of the paragraph would continue to provide lengthy descriptions of an event such as Bloody Sunday or the outbreak of the First World War.

Also, as has happened for a number of years, too many students used prepared arguments, especially when responding to Questions 9, 10, 29, 30, 34, and 35. While some aspects of their prepared argument could have been used to develop a counter-argument, most of those students did not adequately address the premise of the question first.

Finally, many students seemed to have limited or no understanding of key words or terms in the more popular questions, such as ‘concerns of the people’, ‘policies’, ‘mistrust’, ‘innovation’, ‘national interest’, ‘popular support’, ‘coercion of the people’, and ‘unaligned nations’. This made it very difficult for them to select relevant information to support an argument or counter-argument. Instead, they tended to present generalised information which was within the key area of investigation, in most cases, but did not create a clear and sustained argument.

It is recommended that teachers encourage their students to read the question carefully and clearly understand every word contained in it; for example, terms such as ‘cultural superiority’ (Question 5), ‘unwilling’ (Question 9), ‘forced to change’ (Question 10), ‘lasting impact’ (Question 31), and ‘access’ (Question 39). Understanding these terms gives students the best chance of giving a quality response.

*Inquiry and Analysis*

This is where the majority of students struggled as demonstrated by the lack of depth in their responses. In some cases there were only two or three body paragraphs, which made it very difficult to provide much analysis. Many other students attempted to outline an argument in their introduction, wrote everything they knew about that time period, and then finally attempted to write a conclusion that linked back to the question. These responses attracted low marks.

It seemed that many students answered what they hoped the question would be rather than looking closely at the question to determine what they were required to do. Teachers are advised to show their students how to thoroughly address the focus of the question in the opening body paragraphs before detailing any counter-argument.

Better responses clearly identified multiple perspectives on an event, period, or issue and were able to discriminate between different political, economic, and/or social categories of people. Simpler answers tended to describe groups of people (e.g. the government, the people, society, the revolutionaries, radical minority) as a homogenous group that were all affected or responded in the same way.

*Reflection and Evaluation*

This criteria is closely linked with inquiry and analysis. Students who demonstrated good inquiry and analytical skills tended to score well in this criteria. Better answers clearly explained how, when and, particularly, why individuals or groups — such as a national leader or government — acted as they did at that time as well as over an extended period of time. They also showed, or attempted to show, the   
inter-relationship between people, groups, events, and phenomena and how they linked to the focus of the question.

There was more evidence of coherent arguments in which paragraphs were linked and content foreshadowed, often using adverbs and phrases such as ‘furthermore’, ‘additionally’, ‘nevertheless’, ‘on the other hand’, ‘despite’, and ‘therefore’.

The overwhelming majority of responses agreed with the premise of the question and very few challenged it before developing a counter-argument. A typical response would agree that, for example, ‘coercion of the people was the key feature of a dictator’s regime’, explain what this meant, and then argue that there were other factors that characterised the dictator’s regime. Students are encouraged to have confidence in their own line of argument and to argue it convincingly.

Most conclusions summed up the argument quite well or better. However, there were a few conclusions that reflected on the person, event, or issue over a longer period beyond the time frame of the question.

*Communication*

Once again, the large majority of students demonstrated generally coherent or better communication skills in that there was a structure to their responses and their arguments were generally easy to follow. However, there seems to be a large gap between those students with strong written literacy skills and those without. This may be difficult to address within one year and perhaps needs wider attention prior to students entering Year 12.

There were many instances of students using casual conversational language as part of their responses (e.g. ‘things started to go downhill’) which added to the generalised nature of their essays. In other cases, there were common points of confusion over words like there/their, bias/biased, and instances of poor choices of words (e.g. ‘the source is limiting’ instead of ‘limited’ and ‘Batista dictated the country’). As in previous years, there was considerable confusion when answering Question 45 over the use of ‘bias’ (a noun or a verb) and ‘biased’ (an adjective).

**Specific comments about individual questions**

**Part 1: Thematic Study**

*Question 1*

Very few responses.

*Question 2*

Those few students who did respond answered the question in relation to Britain and provided no counter-argument.

*Question 3*

There were a few essays that addressed modernisation in Japan.

*Question 4*

One essay argued strongly against the premise with little detail but did explain other changes triggered by modernisation.

*Question 5*

Students need to be clear on what ‘cultural superiority’ was and how, if at all, it motivated imperial expansion.

*Question 7*

While there were only a few responses, these did not clearly articulate the key aspects of the society studied. Students tended to agree that the aspects were destroyed without distinguishing between other levels of damage.

*Question 9*

This continued to be an extremely popular question but it seems that students are not taking heed of the advice provided in previous Chief Assessor reports. The overwhelming majority of students based their response on the February and October Revolutions in Russia, instead of just one, while most of the others dealt with the French Revolution. Some based their responses on the American colonies, Iran, and Cuba. The quality of many of the Iran and Cuba responses was impressive.

More successful responses:

* clearly identified the ‘pre-revolutionary government’ (regime of Tsar   
  Nicholas II or Louis XVI or the Provisional Government)
* distinguished between different groups of ‘the people’ (e.g. Third Estate, farmers, middle class, factory workers, the Soviets)
* explained how and why the pre-revolutionary government attempted to address the concerns and their degree of success
* discussed the details of attempts at reform by Witte and Stolypin (e.g. October Laws, Dumas)
* discussed why the ‘pre-revolutionary government’ was unwilling to address the concerns (e.g. desire to maintain power to pass on to heirs, ignorance of the seriousness of people’s concerns)
* discussed how the Dumas operated and were prevented from addressing the concerns of the people by the Tsar
* identified the concerns that the government tried to address
* discussed the impact of the First World War on government policies or priorities
* maintained a consistent argument throughout the answer.

Less successful responses:

* did not identify ‘the concerns of their people’
* considered ‘the people’ as one homogenous group or sometimes divided them into peasants and workers
* merged the Tsarist regime and the Provisional Government as a single   
  ‘pre-revolutionary government’
* did not clearly define the ‘pre-revolutionary government’ in France; most claimed it was just the King
* provided general information that lacked historical detail
* included detailed but irrelevant information
* tended to simply agree with the premise of the question
* did not clearly explain why the attempts by Witte and Stolypin (Russia) or the King and his Ministers (France) failed (e.g. over-ruled by the Tsar, insincere, too slow or too little)
* interchanged ‘unwilling’ with ‘inability’ or ‘incompetence’
* superficially mentioned the Tsar taking charge of the army leaving the Tsarina to govern under the influence of Rasputin, without connecting it to the question
* discussed reforms (e.g. freeing serfs) under Tsars before Nicholas II.

*Question 10*

This was also a very popular question. Most answers were based on one of the Russian Revolutions or the French Revolution. Teachers should consider external factors other than war; for example, the growth of Marxism across Europe, the aid given to Lenin by the German government, new political and social ideologies brought back by Lafayette from America, Enlightenment philosophies from Europe, American economic and social influences, and the rise of nationalism in Cuba.

The responses by students who studied Cuba or Iran were more extensive, and showed deeper analysis and reflection on the question.

**More successful responses:**

* discussed other factors (e.g. Provisional Government, public opposition to government policies, economic hardships, Bolsheviks undermining Provisional Government control, crop failures)
* discussed the effect of events between 1905 and February or October 1917
* discussed the interaction between factors that together contributed ‘to the collapse of the old order’ (e.g. for Russia, the impacts of the First World War on life for people at home, labour shortages, food shortages, growing resentment towards the Tsar and for France, the growing national debt, the King’s extravagant spending, and resistance by the First and Second Estates).

**Less successful responses:**

* lacked detailed knowledge of external and internal factors
* did not explain how the different factors contributed to the collapse of ‘the old order’
* only discussed the effects of the First World War (Russia) or wars (France) as external factors
* did not clearly define ‘the old order’
* were unable to explain the influence of external and internal factors on each other
* concentrated on Bloody Sunday or the 1905 ‘Revolution’
* mentioned the Russo-Japanese War without connecting it to the question.

*Question 11*

Most responses focused on Russia, France, China, and the United States.

**More successful responses:**

* clearly identified who the revolutionaries were
* clarified the revolutionaries’ original policies
* clearly explained which of those policies were changed, why they were changed, the degree to which they were changed, and the length of time the changes lasted
* discussed whether new policies were implemented in order to consolidate power (e.g. creation of the Cheka or for another reason) and the response from others within and outside the revolutionary group
* clearly connected particular reasons for any changes
* clearly explained which policies remained unchanged and why.

**Less successful responses:**

* did not discuss the reasons for any policy changes
* made generalised statements that were either unsupported or contained too much narrative.

*Question 12*

Most of the more successful responses were based on the French Revolution.

**More successful responses:**

* identified what the military forces (internal and external) were and were able to weigh these up against the other threats (e.g. public opposition)
* discussed how those forces threatened the revolution.

**Less successful responses:**

* ignored ‘greatest threat’ and did not address other factors that may have threatened the revolution
* did not clearly articulate who the ‘military forces’ were.

*Question 15*

One response that contained content more relevant to Topic 3.

*Question 19*

One response that mentioned Syria and showed some understanding of the issues.

*Question 21*

Few responses.

**Less successful responses:**

* lacked detail explaining reasons why the society was established
* made no reference to how and why forced labour was established
* simply described how forced labour was used to benefit society.

*Question 22*

Few responses.

**More successful responses:**

* considered conditions for serfs and labourers in Russia up to 1905.

**Less successful responses:**

* generally described the lives of forced labourers without connecting that knowledge with the question
* showed a limited understanding of the meaning of ‘independent decisions’
* generally presented a one-sided argument.

*Question 23*

Few responses.

**More successful responses:**

* argued the case clearly
* explained the role of other factors that resulted in emancipation.

*Question 24*

Few responses.

**More successful responses:**

* considered the effects of emancipation on different aspects of life in the North and South of the United States
* considered the effects over the short and long term.

**Less successful responses:**

* did not distinguish between groups or individuals whose lives were improved by emancipation and those who were not
* agreed with the premise that ‘everyone’s lives were improved’
* lacked detail in how the lives of groups and individuals were improved or not.

**Part 2: Depth Study**

*Question 25*

Few responses.

**Less successful responses:**

* presented a very general response
* lacked relevant details and examples.

*Question 28*

Few responses.

**Less successful responses:**

* simplistically argued that technological changes did reduce opportunities for working women but lacked specific and relevant examples
* provided no or limited counter-arguments.

*Question 29*

This was quite a popular question. It provided students with the opportunity to compare the role of mistrust between national leaders with other traditional causes of the First World War (e.g. nationalism, militarism, imperialism, alliances). It also allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of the development of those factors over time (1870–1914) and how they affected national responses following the Sarajevo assassinations. One aspect that wasn’t considered by many students was that in some way there was too much trust by some national leaders: for example, in the size of their military as a deterrent to war, and in the way that they trusted their allies to respond in a certain way, and trusted that diplomacy would resolve a crisis like the July Days. All responses agreed that mistrust was a factor which is unusual because it has rarely, if ever, appeared in responses in previous years.

**More successful responses:**

* compared mistrust with other causes
* examined mistrust in different settings (e.g. between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, Germany, and France)
* explained how in some cases mistrust caused other factors (e.g. alliances, arms race) or resulted from other factors (e.g. imperialism, decision to mobilise)
* provided specific details (e.g. names of politicians, particular events) and how they contribute to the outbreak of the war.

**Less successful responses:**

* disregarded mistrust as a factor and then described the traditional causes in apparently prepared answers
* described why mistrust developed between nations
* described crises (e.g. Morocco) without connecting them to the question.

*Question 30*

**More successful responses:**

* discussed the changing roles of aircraft over the course of the war
* explained the use of the tank and how it changed the nature of tactics
* discussed the scale of the war and the use of tactics and technology over different locations
* discussed other factors that contributed to the nature of the war (e.g. large-scale industrial production, railway networks).

**Less successful responses:**

* considered innovation to simply mean new weapons rather than the way they were used
* considered that machine guns, trench warfare, dreadnoughts, land mines, and government censorship were innovations of the First World War. All of these had been used in earlier wars.
* did not clearly indicate what they meant by ‘the nature of the First World War’
* argued that stalemate or attrition were innovative military strategies
* described innovations without explaining how they impacted on the nature of the war.

*Question 31*

There were only a few answers to this question.

**More successful responses:**

* examined a range of positive and negative changes in post-war society (e.g. the role of women, industry, government regulation, caring for wounded returned soldiers) in detail with relevant examples
* clearly understood the term ‘Home Front’
* discussed political, social, and economic impacts
* recognised that some impacts (e.g. the number of women working in traditionally male occupations) did not continue beyond 1918
* discussed impacts in more than one country and recognised that there were differences in the types and scope of those impacts
* clearly stated how long the effects lasted and why they lasted so long.

**Less successful responses:**

* made broad, generalised comments over a limited range of social, economic, and political aspects of postwar society.

*Question 32*

**More successful responses:**

* clearly defined what they meant by ‘national interest’
* clearly articulated the motives of each of the leaders
* discussed the changing attitudes of national leaders over time and why those changes happened
* explained why different leaders had different motivations
* discussed the different features and outcomes of other treaties
* discussed other motivations (e.g. public opinion, economic recovery).

**Less successful responses:**

* made generalised comments about the reasons for the leaders’ treatment of Germany and other nations
* claimed that all leaders had the same or similar motives
* considered revenge not to be part of ‘national interest’
* ignored the word ‘solely’ in the question
* simply focused on the Treaty of Versailles.

*Question 33*

**More successful responses:**

* focused on one society, usually the United States, but some based their answer on Germany
* considered the impacts of the Depression on different social groups (women, workers, farmers etc.) and different regions of the country
* discussed groups who were only slightly affected by the Depression
* discussed the different types of impacts over the course of the Depression (e.g. government responses).

**Less successful responses:**

* compared the impacts of the Depression across countries such as the United States, Britain, Russia, Japan, Italy, Germany, and Sweden
* made generalised and often superficial comments
* developed a simplistic argument (e.g. everyone was equally affected)
* did not provide detailed evidence to support their argument.

*Question 34*

This was an extremely popular question and the vast majority of responses used Hitler as their case study.

**More successful responses:**

* used relevant details effectively to support their argument
* discussed changes in factors during the 1920s and early 1930s
* provided evidence of his growing support (e.g. election results)
* explained the role of Hitler’s organisational skills, the fear of communism among influential groups (e.g. industrialists, Freikorps), and the failures of other politicians (e.g. Ebert, von Papen, Hindenburg) in his rise to power
* explained the effects of other causes on Hitler’s popularity
* demonstrated a thorough understanding of the political crisis that resulted in Hitler being appointed Chancellor and assessed the role of popular support in contributing to this
* distinguished between individual groups when discussing his level of support.

**Less successful responses:**

* were too generalised and simplistic
* described the use of propaganda, violence, economic depression, weakness and lack of support for the Weimar government, the Treaty of Versailles, and Hitler’s oratory skills, without explaining how they contributed to his rise to power
* did not identify the time period in which Hitler rose to power
* described Hitler’s actions and policies when in power.

*Question 35*

This was an extremely popular question but, disappointingly, there was only a small proportion of outstanding responses.

**More successful responses:**

* discussed the use of coercion and violence against opponents of the regime
* distinguished between different means of achieving compliance such as the use of fear and propaganda, the development of a cult of personality and positive programs which increased employment and rewarded workers with holidays
* discussed changes to the nature and extent of any coercion during the war years as well the pre-war years
* discussed the indoctrination of the young through organisations like Hitler Youth
* contained a strong counter-argument.

**Less successful responses**:

* seemed unclear about the meaning of ‘coercion’
* did not explain the different types of coercion used at different times
* discussed other aspects of the regime such as ideology, propaganda, and militarism
* engaged in generalised discussions of propaganda and the Holocaust
* did not identify a feature as the ‘key feature’ in a counter-argument
* discussed features of the regime up to 1945 and how those features may have altered in response to changing circumstances during the war
* referred to factors that applied to the dictator’s rise to power.

*Question 36*

**More successful responses:**

* contained a strong counter-argument
* discussed the strengths and weaknesses in a range of factors on both sides, including their airforce
* maintained the focus of their response to one theatre of war.

**Less successful responses:**

* were simplistic
* discussed both theatres of war
* focused solely on airforce superiority as the reason for victory
* did not compare the role of the airforce with other factors (e.g. control of the sea, national and military leadership, troop morale, numerical superiority, technology, espionage, Underground forces, supply of military materiel, land battles, and availability of and use of resources).

*Question 37*

This was the most popular answer in the topic but the quality of the responses varied considerably.

**More successful responses:**

* demonstrated a clear understanding of attitudes on both sides and the military and political situations in Europe, Russia, and the United States
* Clearly explained how other factors (e.g. animosity between the United States and Russia prior to 1945, differing and conflicting ideologies, mutual mistrust, differing views of decisions made at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences, US fear of Soviet expansion further into Europe, Soviet fear of US attack using nuclear weapons, political perceptions and responses) contributed to causing the Cold War
* explained how the lack of experience of American and Soviet leaders on the world stage contributed to the start of the Cold War
* discussed how and why the United States and Russia emerged as superpowers during the 1940s and how that contributed to the start of the Cold War.

**Less successful responses:**

* ignored the premise of the question and discussed other causes
* did not state when they believed the Cold War began (e.g. dropping the atomic bombs, the Truman Doctrine, NATO, the Berlin Blockade, and the Korean War)
* lacked clear planning
* provided a narrative of the origins of the Cold War
* lacked a cohesive argument
* made generalised statements without referring to specific and relevant examples
* did not explain the rise of the United States and Russia from relatively obscure nations on the international stage in the 1920s and 1930s, to superpowers by 1945
* did not explain how and why previous superpowers (Britain, France, Germany, and Japan) had lost their status
* mentioned Cold War events (e.g. the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War)

*Question 38*

This question addressed an aspect of the Cold War that had been overlooked in previous years and so may have deterred some students from answering.

**More successful responses:**

* demonstrated a clear understanding of a range of features of the Cold War (e.g. proxy wars, propaganda, espionage, alliances, arms race, space race, and media)
* named some of the unaligned nations
* explained how (e.g. trade deals, supplying weapons and funds to government or rebel forces, covert operations) and why (e.g. to improve the national economy, provide military bases, spread the ‘benefits’ of their ideology and lifestyle, prevent the other superpower from gaining influence) unaligned nations were pursued by each superpower
* explained the responses of one or more unaligned nation to superpower advances (e.g. accepting aid from both, playing one superpower off against another, refusing to align with either superpower) and their reasons for doing so.

**Less successful responses:**

* focused on the causes of the Cold War
* ignored the premise of the question and discussed other features
* didn’t seem clear about the term ‘unaligned nations’
* included Germany, Eastern bloc countries, the United States, and Russia as unaligned nations.

*Question 39*

There were few responses to this question. The key to successfully answering this question was for students to understand and discuss ‘increased access to the media’ rather than the media itself.

**More successful responses:**

* demonstrated a clear understanding of ‘access to the media’ and how and why it increased, especially in the United States or the developed world during the postwar period
* discussed the consequences of that increased access (e.g. changing attitudes to war, women, governments, environmental issues, youth, increased consumer spending) on other features of the postwar world
* compared that feature of the postwar world with other features (e.g. welfare state, consumerism, technological advances, feminism, emergence of youth culture) to determine which was ‘the most significant’
* explored the evolution of different media (e.g. film, television, mobile phones, social media, print, and online newspapers) and how they changed individuals and groups.

**Less successful responses:**

* did not address the ‘most significant’ aspect of the question
* treated it as a pop culture question
* discussed social media with no reference to countries or events.

*Question 40*

There were only a few responses to this question.

**More successful responses**:

* demonstrated a clear understanding of ‘access to the media’ and how and why it increased, especially in the United States or the developed world during the postwar period
* discussed the consequences of that increased access (e.g. changing attitudes to war, governments, environmental issues, youth culture, acceleration of the consumer culture)
* compared that feature of the postwar world with other features to determine which was ‘the most significant’
* explored the evolution of different media (e.g. film, television, mobile phones, social media, print, and online newspapers).

**Less successful responses**:

* did not address the ‘most significant’ aspect of the question.

*Question 41*

There were only a few answers to this question. The responses addressed the premise but provided little counter-argument.

Most responses were successful and showed an understanding of what this question was asking.

*Question 42*

While there were relatively few students who attempted this question, most responses lacked a coherent argument outlining how and why there was a struggle between supporters and opponents of violent protest.

*Question 43*

There were few answers to this question.

**More successful responses:**

* focused on the United States or South Africa.

**Less successful responses:**

* did not clarify what the ‘united vision’ was
* provided a brief and narrow description of ‘power structures’
* did not explain why, how, and when that lack of a unified vision hindered the struggle.

*Question 44*

There were only a few responses but those attempted were quite detailed and demonstrated a clear understanding of the political and social aspirations.

**Part 3: Sources Analysis**

*Question 45*

It was noted by many markers that too many responses made simplistic or inaccurate references to primary and secondary sources. In some cases, students stated that some sources were primary when there were in fact secondary or vice versa. Even more concerning was the continuing view that primary sources are more useful and important than secondary sources. Students need to recognise that both primary and secondary sources have their advantages and disadvantages and that, most importantly, together they provide historians with a more complete picture of the event, person, period, or phenomenon being studied. One type of source can also highlight flaws in the other type of source.

1. Generally this was answered very well. Students identified qualities such as resourcefulness, calmness, being observant. Some responses contained unnecessary detail for a question worth 1 mark.
2. Students need to be clear about what a conclusion is; in this question, they were asked to identify two conclusions from the source and support it with an example from the source. A conclusion is an impression the viewer gets from what they see or read.

**More successful responses concluded that:**

* Tereshkova’s achievements were recognised outside of Russia because the exhibition was held in London
* Tereshkova’s achievement in space was significant because it is still being celebrated over 50 years later
* her space achievements were more important than her later achievements because this exhibition is solely about her venture into space
* supported their conclusions with evidence.

**Less successful responses**:

* concluded that she was cramped inside Vostok 6 because it was so small
* focused on her rather than her achievements
* repeated facts instead of drawing their own conclusions.

1. Many students focused on the magazine article and the magazine in the source which limited their responses. Students should read the whole question including terms like ‘such as’.

**More successful responses:**

* looked at the contemporary nature of magazine stories like this one
* noted the accessibility of the language and that the article provides an American perspective of an international event
* noted that magazine articles lack specific detail and academic appraisal
* observed that potential bias could be a problem
* quantified the extent to which magazines are useful acknowledged the limitation of a magazine as a source.

**Less successful responses**:

* responded only to the article in the source
* did not state ‘how useful’ magazines are as sources
* stated that magazines are useful to ‘an extent’, ‘some extent’, or ‘a certain extent’
* simply paraphrased or repeated the content.

1. This response was generally better done than in previous years.

**More successful responses:**

* made a statement at the beginning or end of their response that quantified the extent to which Source 4 supported Source 5 (e.g. ‘to a strong/considerable/slight/minor extent’)
* provided quotes from each source to substantiate their position
* explained examples of the ways in which Source 4 supported Source 5 in one paragraph
* explained examples of the ways Source 4 did not support Source 5 in another paragraph.

**Less successful responses:**

* described similarities and differences between the sources
* did not state the extent to which Source 4 supported Source 5
* made a non-committal statement that one source supported the other to ‘an extent’, ‘some extent’, or ‘a certain extent’
* provided a substantiation that did not support their position
* presented their response in the form of a table containing dot points
* described ways in which Source 4 supported Source 5 but omitted describing the ways that it did not support the other source.

1. Responses to this question were generally better than in previous years. Teachers should clarify the matter of bias in both primary and secondary sources. Unintentional bias exists in all sources and does not necessarily weaken the value of that source. Where there is obvious and deliberate bias, it is simply a feature that needs to be taken into account when analysing it. Every source has value to a historian despite the fact that it is biased in some way and to some degree.

**More successful responses:**

* identified the nature of each source (i.e. contemporary Czech poster and a later British online newspaper article) and addressed their strengths and limitations
* described the context of each source
* briefly explained why certain features were a strength or a weakness
* provided specific evidence and examples from both sources to support their judgments
* used quotes from Source 7
* identified flaws and benefits of both primary and secondary sources
* explained how an example of propaganda can be both a strength (e.g. illustrates the nature of the society or period in which it was created) and a limitation (e.g. an exaggeration of a person or event) for a historian researching Tereshkova.

**Less successful responses:**

* described the content of each source
* presented their response in the form of a table containing dot points
* simply stated that a source was biased without explaining how that characteristic affected the source’s strength or weakness
* dismissed a source as having no strengths simply because it was secondary (i.e. written long after the event)
* claimed that a source has severe limitations because it may have been altered without indicating where, how, and why it had been altered
* claimed that the poster was Soviet when it was clearly identified as Czechoslovakian
* claimed that a source had purpose and provenance without saying what they were
* claimed that a source was relevant, reliable, and/or representative without explaining how it was these things and to what degree, and therefore whether this was a strength or a limitation.

1. There seemed to be an even balance between those students who supported the proposition and those who opposed it.

A surprising number of students did not attempt or complete their answer to this question. Given that it is worth more marks than the other questions, perhaps students should consider answering this question before questions (a) to (e) if they are running short of time.

**More successful responses:**

* clearly evaluated the statement
* made detailed reference to all sources
* justified their evaluation in detail with relevant and brief quotes or references to visual sources
* supported their evaluation in one paragraph
* included a brief introduction and/or conclusion
* recognised that in at least one source Tereshkova showed features of both qualities
* clearly demonstrated an understanding of the term ‘pioneer’.

**Less successful responses**:

* explained how each source described her as either a ‘powerful pioneer’ or a ‘propaganda puppet’ in brief paragraphs
* lacked clearly separated paragraphs
* lacked a clear understanding of the meaning of ‘pioneer’ (one student claimed Tereshkova was a pioneer because she used her finger instead of a toothbrush to clean her teeth while another claimed she was a pioneer because she survived the voyage to space).

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

* It was pleasing to see that teachers have followed the guidelines and amended practices in relation to all aspects of preparing materials for moderation.
* Most teachers are preparing and clearly labelling their materials.
* The trend in 2016 was that the majority of teachers are now sorting and organising their moderation materials for the folio component by individual student samples, where each task is clearly labelled, all marking sheets for all tasks and an overall summary of student’s evidence of achievement against the performance standards
* Moderators appreciated when packages include a student’s name and SACE number because this aids in identification.
* Most teachers included an approved learning and assessment plan (LAP).
* Any amendments made to tasks must be clearly recorded on the learning and assessment plan on the space provided. This should include the reasons why changes have been made.
* Teachers are reminded to include in their package a complete set of unmarked task sheets.
* The inclusion of sources analysis broadsheets and a suggested answer sheet was appreciated by moderators.
* Importantly teachers are reminded that they must complete the variations sheet when applicable. This also includes being careful when choosing the correct codes for the reasons for the variations.
* This helps moderators to match evidence of student achievement
* Teachers must ensure they submit the correct student’s work sample required for moderation.
* Teachers are reminded to include word counts and recording times on tasks.
* This year the trend continued where more teachers set oral presentations or multimedia assignments as part of the folio.
* More teachers are submitting audio or visual recordings to provide evidence of student achievement, which is the preferred type of evidence rather than simply submitting scripts.
* More teachers are providing work on USB drives which is a more accessible way for work to be accessed.
* Teachers should test the USBs being submitted on several devices to ensure that they are accessible for moderation.
* Teachers should avoid using plastic sleeves or placing work in individual sleeves in a folder.
* Dividing Assessment Type 2 into a separate single plastic or cardboard folder that contains all students work for assessment type is highly desirable.
* Both Assessment Type 1 and Assessment Type 2 samples for each student selected for moderation need to be submitted.
* When teachers include feedback, annotations and the performance standards assessed for each task, it helps moderators in locating evidence to support teacher’s judgments.

## General Comments

It was pleasing to see that more teachers and students are seeing the benefit of accessing the Chief Assessor’s report, and where appropriate took measures to amend and improve practises based on explicit feedback provided. This was specifically evident in the folio. There was some excellent evidence of high quality teaching taking place to provide students with a clear understanding of conventions and concepts related to the course. In 2016, task design and evidence in students’ work suggested there was a growing emphasis by teachers to focus on teaching the historiography of topics and also to focus more explicitly on the historical context of topics. Teachers are reminded to teach all four key areas of inquiry in each topic, regardless of whether the student chooses not to specialise in that area in the examination.

Task design remains a critical component in giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning against the highest grade level of the performance standard. There were a number of examples of folios where teachers clearly gave students the opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the content being taught in class. In comparison, tasks that were too heavily scaffolded lead to a generic set of student evidence being presented.

The underlying philosophy of the moderation process for school assessment is to confirm the teacher’s judgment. In the majority of cases, this is a straightforward process. However a number of issues can make it difficult for moderators to confirm grades. These include poorly designed tasks, missing work without a completed variations form, poorly chosen types of evidence against levels of performance standards, and lack of differentiation between students in terms of level of achievement.

Modern History

Chief Assessor