



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	History
Level	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the Examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

As in previous years, the vast majority of candidates opted for Unit Contexts 1B, 11A (11B renumbered) and 111D. A sizeable minority selected options 1C and 111C, with a smaller number of candidates choosing options 1A, 11B (11C renumbered) and 111A. Numbers attempting 111B were minimal.

Marker feedback deemed all 3 papers (C/G/F) to be challenging but fair, with broad sampling of the main aspects of the syllabus. Once again overall performance varied according to ability, especially at the interfaces i.e. good General candidates found the Foundation exam fairly straight-forward whilst genuine Foundation candidates were challenged – a pattern repeated at General and Credit. However, significantly fewer incorrect and/or multiple contexts were attempted this year with reduced instances of candidates attempting KU and ES questions out of sequence. Disappointingly, however, markers reported increased instances, across C/G/F, of poor and almost illegible handwriting-made worse by use of pencil rather than pen. Many typed scripts also proved problematic to read and mark where single spacing was used. (See advice to Centres)

Foundation

The majority of markers felt that the overall standard of candidate responses, both at KU and ES, had improved on recent years: candidates appeared well aware of and better prepared for the Units studied and demonstrated greater understanding of technique, which was reflected especially at ES where candidate performance was markedly better than last year. Most significantly, far fewer candidates were attempting the wrong or multiple contexts with most completing every question. Overall, the 2009 Foundation paper was considered to be well-laid out, accessible and well tackled by candidates, with a high standard of performance at both KU and ES.

General

Most markers felt that candidate scripts were of a good standard, with an improved performance overall: the vast majority of candidates completed the paper, with significantly fewer wrong or multiple contexts attempted. By contrast, the quality of scripts in the Gaelic medium was not as high as in previous years but it was noted that candidates who wrote all, rather than part of, their answers in Gaelic generally did better. Performance at ES continues to improve, with most centres clearly training candidates well in terms of technique and the need to make process clear in their answers. However, many markers felt that recall was not as strong again this year: a significant number omitted the required recall from their answers which were heavily reliant on presented evidence and minimalist, even from C/G candidates. Instead a lot of candidates are “cleverly copying” or proving resourceful and deploying source information from other contexts as recall. This was considered to indicate a lack of study/revision by candidates who had otherwise been well trained to handle ES with confidence. Overall, the 2009 General paper was considered to be pitched at the right level, allowing candidates to perform without impediment.

Credit

Once again, and as usual with C/G candidates, performance was mixed but overall markers considered 2009 scripts to be of a generally high standard and better than 2008 –this also applied to scripts in the Gaelic medium, although it was noted that some candidates preferred to answer in English. The majority of candidates were well-trained, wrote lengthy answers and completed the paper. Very few attempted the wrong contexts. However, whilst fewer very poor scripts were noted, concern still remains about inappropriate presentations. The vast majority of markers commented that overall ES continues to improve and, despite an improved KU performance (including essays) compared to last year, it is almost universally the stronger element at C/G. Clearly centres are training candidates well in such skills but the ever widening discrepancy between ES and KU, particularly at Credit is concerning –especially for progression to “Higher”. Markers highlighted lack of relevant recall due to either lack of revision or misreading of questions rather than any ambiguity inherent in questions. Over-reliance on “strait-jacket aide-memoires” was also cited as a possible factor. Overall, the 2009 Credit paper was considered to be uncontroversial and accessible to the vast majority of candidates, with enough “nuances” or opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Foundation

The vast majority of markers made positive comments about overall performance, noting especially an improvement at ES – in particular at ES 1, 2 and 5 where multiple-choice/layout prompts/ tables with relevant page references have been introduced or improved. It was felt that such changes in approach and layout at ES helped most candidates achieve good scores *if they read the question/ instructions carefully*. Candidates appear better prepared, are writing more than “one-word answers” and achieving marks in the higher range at both KU and ES. Essentially ES 1, 2, 3 and 5 all continue to show improvement, although ES6 remains problematic. To expand:

- ◆ ES1: was noticeably much better done than in previous years with the adoption of a “multi-choice” format, making ES1 “How useful..?” questions more accessible, whilst promoting greater standardisation of challenge across contexts. Very few, if any, scored zero with an overall improvement in results, even among weaker candidates, in what has been regarded as a “problem” question. However, candidates are still challenged to achieve full marks here.
- ◆ ES2: additional or enhanced “prompts” in answer “stems” for comparison questions proved helpful and were followed well by candidates, especially in terms of identifying “agreement”, although “disagreement” remains more challenging.
- ◆ ES3: can cause difficulty for some, but most candidates tackled “attitude” well.
- ◆ ES5: the quality of answers elicited for this item was very good and even better than previously when, despite the new tabular layout, some candidates continued to select inappropriately from Source E for the Source D column. Markers considered the inclusion of page references in the tabular headings, designed to direct candidates to the relevant source from which to select evidence, as helpful in improving performance across all Unit 1A/B/C contexts. Although there were still some inaccurate responses, very few candidates selected evidence from the wrong source.

Areas of note regarding very good candidate performance were as follows:

- ◆ Markers felt that, overall, precise language and clear wording presented little difficulty to most candidates.
- ◆ Unit 111D was better done than other contexts.

General

In terms of KU and content areas the following were particularly well done and prompted more relevant recall than elsewhere in the paper:

- ◆ Units 1A/B/C: “Housing”- KU2
- ◆ Unit 11A: “Trenches”- KU3
- ◆ Unit 111A: “Wagons” – KU1
- ◆ Unit 111D was generally better done than the other contexts.

As noted, more and more centres are training candidates to handle the different ES techniques with confidence and this year potentially formulaic question types were done well.

- ◆ ES1: candidates had been especially well-drilled in using the question stem here, with very few providing “content only” answers.
- ◆ ES2: markers were impressed by the overall high standard of performance here, with far more evidence of developed comparisons and well -taught technique.
- ◆ ES5: once again this elicited best responses overall, most candidates achieving high or full marks, especially if tables and bullet points were used.
- ◆ Collectively “Investigation” (ES1/5/6) questions were completed effectively with most candidates picking up a lot of marks – again demonstrating good practice by centres and candidates.

Credit

Overall at KU, candidate performance was much improved compared with 2008. The following were highlighted by markers:

- ◆ Units 1A/B/C: (KU 1 and 2) were generally considered accessible and well done, with most candidates demonstrating relevant KU. It was felt that explaining the fall in the death rate proved challenging but provided the necessary rigour in distinguishing between C/G and G/C candidates
- ◆ Units 11A/B: there appeared to be no issue with the renumbered contexts - any difficulty where centres had not alerted candidates or failed to revise mnemonics having been addressed at General level.
- ◆ Unit 111D: whilst fewer candidates attempted essay 1(a) than 1(b), these were often particularly well-done. Most candidates used both question stems to inform their recall and ensure a balanced answer.
- ◆ 8 mark short essays: it was generally felt that KU3 (“How important...?”) led to balanced responses and allowed candidates to do well. Overall there was a good spread of marks but Unit 111C and D were considered the most accessible contexts. Candidate performance was much improved on 2008 when essays were particularly badly done. Most candidates are now clearly well-trained in providing “essay” structures i.e. introduction, paragraphs and conclusion.

At ES, the vast majority of candidates applied the appropriate process, with the exception of ES4 in Units 11A/B. In particular it was noted that at:

- ◆ ES2: more candidates are becoming well-practiced in providing developed comparisons than previously.
- ◆ ES5: most candidates are well-versed here, almost all achieving high or indeed full marks especially when using a table format as recommended.
- ◆ As at General level, “Investigation” questions (ES1/5/6) were done well collectively.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Foundation

- ◆ ES1: some markers expressed surprise and concern that, despite a more “user-friendly” “multi-choice” format, some candidates have not grasped the process fully enough to achieve full marks here –for example, although much reduced, a number of candidates still failed to recognise or were confused by the distinction between primary and secondary sources.
- ◆ ES2: again candidates found “disagreement” more difficult than “agreement” but, in addition, some candidates experienced specific difficulty when comparing a pictorial source with text.
- ◆ ES5: whilst the new and improved tabular layout helped elicit better answers overall, some candidates are failing to gain full marks by conflating or running points together rather than identifying discrete pieces of supporting evidence.
- ◆ ES6: whilst candidate performance here was better than last year, a significant number of markers felt that “reaching a conclusion” was still poorly done across all three Unit contexts by many candidates who seemed unclear about what was being asked – even though the wording had been changed from “findings” to “conclusions” to mirror G/C. Inclusion of recall, although not required at Foundation, was also very poor. However, 1A/C conclusions were more successfully attempted than in 1B: candidates misunderstanding “effects”. More specifically there was not enough use of information from the previous question 5(ES5, table) to answer question 6(ES6). Clearly such candidates are confused by what exactly is required, for instead of reaching a conclusion based on historical evidence (presented or recalled), many are just making a holistic point which, albeit appropriate, is worthy of only 1 out of 2 marks maximum.

Areas of note regarding weaker candidate performance were as follows:

- ◆ Units 1A/B/C: KU3 (medical advances)- both process and content proved more challenging here with many candidates describing what medical knowledge was rather than focusing on its importance.
- ◆ Unit 1B: here candidates particularly struggled with ES6 compared with Units 1A/C.
- ◆ Overall, however, Unit 1A was less well done than 1B/C.
- ◆ Unit 111C: ES2 was poorly done – candidates had difficulty comparing pictorial evidence (Source B) with text (Source A).

General

Once again at KU candidates were good at using presented evidence, but were not adding their own recalled knowledge. Markers generally felt that poor and minimalist responses were not determined by the paper which was seen as fair, with a good range of topics, clear sources and wording which provided the required challenge. Rather areas of difficulty had perhaps more to do with misreading or misinterpreting questions, candidates focusing instead on learned or preferred topic headings. To expand:

- ◆ Units 1A/B/C: “Parliamentary Reform” (KU1) - candidates struggled with relevant recall especially in 1A/B, with some candidates confused and writing about the Suffragette campaign in 1C.
- ◆ Units 11A/B: “League of Nations/United Nations” (KU2) – were poorly attempted by a significant number of candidates who focused on “aims” rather than “failures”, the former clearly their preferred revision heading.
- ◆ Unit 11C appeared more difficult for candidates than other contexts, although some markers commented on examples of good recall here.

N.B. with regard to the change of nomenclature for Units 11A/B a relatively small number of candidates were hindered by centre failure to alert candidates and to amend any revision mnemonics employed, despite clear and repeated SQA advice. Even then, the vast majority were not adversely affected, most being aware by the Credit exam which followed.

Concerns remain at ES and markers identified a number of “on-going” issues for centres to address:

- ◆ ES1: whilst improving, there is evidence that a “mantra” approach persists and is usually a centre issue.
- ◆ ES2: although well done overall, a significant number of candidates confused ES2 with ES4 (see below) or with ES5 to provide a tabular response, listing similarities in columns rather than in discrete sentences.
- ◆ ES3: remains worst done, at best a holistic answer and usually not reinforced. Candidates find specific attitudes difficult to identify and although most were better at achieving holistic points, too many were merely rehearsing content thereafter, tending only to quote from the source e.g. “He says that...”. Markers remain sympathetic, regarding this as a particularly sophisticated and challenging question where language skills are an asset.
- ◆ N.B. identifying Stalin’s attitude towards “dealing with Russia’s enemies” (11C) was perceived as especially difficult and badly done.
- ◆ ES4: was poorly done with no recall given for, as noted above, many failed to identify the ES4, misreading the question as an ES2 –thereby encountering difficulties with handling 2 sources here.
- ◆ ES5: whilst eliciting the best responses overall, where this question type was poorly done this was due to a lack of full-enough or explicit quotes.
- ◆ ES6: many markers commented on how this was poorly done, with no recall given (as in ES4) and indeed omitted or not attempted by a significant number.

Credit

Following the highlighting of the disadvantages/bad practice in 2008's PA Report, markers noted a significant reduction in candidates/centres attempting all ES questions first, then all KU questions. Unfortunately, however, where ES and KU are still attempted out of sequence, there remains a higher chance of mis-matching contexts e.g. 1B x ES with 1C x KU.

More specifically at KU:

- ◆ Units 1/11/111 all contexts: candidates were mis-reading process which markers had considered “obvious”, with many “listing” in KU1 (“describe”) whilst “describing” rather than “explaining” in KU2 – as such markers were routinely deducting 1 mark for wrong process.
- ◆ Unit 1B: Q2 (KU1)- many candidates confused “objections” (which they revised) with “suffering”(which was asked)
- ◆ Unit 11A:Q2 (KU2) – similarly many focused on *describing the terms* of the Treaty of Versailles rather than *explaining why this caused unhappiness*.
- ◆ Unit 11B:Q2 (KU2) – there was a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis and reasons for tension.
- ◆ Units 11A(ES1) and 111C/D(KU3):many failed to read the questions where dates were clearly specified for the direction of candidates – the common resultant problem being irrelevant recall (“dumper-truck mentality”)
- ◆ 8 mark essays: despite improvement in terms of relevant recall, a significant number of markers reported essays poorly done due to poor English skills (“firstly...secondly...”); identical introductions and conclusions; single-sentence paragraphs; lack of relevant process and recall.

N.B. 111A essays were least well done.

The following problems were identified at ES:

- ◆ ES1: whilst some improvement was noted, this is still one of the weakest items where answers are generally a list of rehearsed “mantras” – essentially a generic template to fit any source/context - with relatively few candidates achieving full marks here. Still too many focus on “content only”, lacking specific recall for accuracy/limitation. Many conflated responses, where the process was difficult to identify/disentangle (e.g. contemporaneity combined with authorship) also reduced potential marks.

N.B. there was an additional issue with ES1 in Units 1A/B/C where the inclusion of a secondary source threw many candidates this year – many are clearly not trained in this question type and simply reverse a primary source mantra. Markers found it very concerning that candidates value historians less than contemporary witnesses – this is clearly a priority for centres to address.

- ◆ ES2: again, as at General, a significant number of candidates confused ES2 either with ES4 (Q5 in Units 11A/B required candidates to use 2 sources following on from an ES2) or with ES5 to provide a tabular response (indeed a number of centres appear to be mistakenly encouraging this practice). In addition where there is a lack of developed comparisons, this makes it difficult for candidates to achieve full marks.
- ◆ ES3: as above this remains worst done – most struggled to identify/express attitudes and at best most achieved 1 mark for an holistic point and another mark for a piece of supporting evidence, usually expressed as “The author says...”(hence 2 out of 4).
N.B. Unit 11D was perceived to be easier than 111C.
- ◆ ES4: as noted in ES2, the use of 2 sources confused some candidates, most reliant on presented evidence and deficient in relevant recall as a result.
N.B. ES4 prompts were omitted at Credit, but in marker feedback no candidate seems to have been disadvantaged, for, although it was noted that a significant number confused ES2 and ES4 question types, this confusion was also noted at General where prompts were inserted.
- ◆ ES5: in Units 1A/B especially, there was much erroneous/irrelevant detail but since a significant number over-wrote this was concealed and compensated for – centres should discourage this practice to ensure better time-management.
Some candidates were also recording “no evidence” which should *never* be the case as all sources are designed to be balanced. As such this is an issue specific to a small minority of centres which are adopting out-of-date practice and disadvantaging their candidates.
- ◆ ES6: across Units 1A/B/C generally there is a significant lack of balance, presented evidence and recall when reaching a conclusion, resulting in an automatic fail here for many candidates – centres need to alert their candidates to the correct process.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General points of advice common to C/G/F

- ◆ Centres should be reminded that since the original Unit 11A (1790s-1820s) of International Cooperation and Conflict has been removed from the exam at all levels, the remaining two contexts have been renumbered, with 11B becoming 11A and 11C becoming 11B respectively – please adjust any mnemonics accordingly.
- ◆ It is permissible for Centres to liaise with Invigilators to directly *instruct* candidates on which contexts to answer, to ensure that wrong or multiple contexts are not attempted e.g. at C/G candidates should highlight the correct options displayed on the front cover page and at Foundation candidates should tick the appropriate boxes on page 3. (Please see page 55 of Invigilators’ handbook)
- ◆ Centres should advise candidates against writing in pencil or red pen: only black or blue pen should be used. This should ensure greater legibility.
- ◆ When candidate scripts are being typed or transcribed on laptops, please use double spacing to improve legibility and allow markers enough room to employ correction codes.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged and trained to read all questions and instructions carefully to avoid misinterpretation and irrelevancy: candidates should do what the question *asks* not what they *prefer*.
- ◆ Candidates should be trained to make full use of pictorial sources both at KU and ES.
- ◆ Centres should note that all areas of the syllabus can be sampled. Areas that are sampled at one level will not be sampled at an adjacent level.

At Foundation, centres need to train/direct candidates to:

- ◆ Differentiate between primary and secondary sources.
- ◆ Follow ES2 prompts for agreement (Source D says... *and also* Source E says...) and disagreement (Source G says... *but* Source H says...).
- ◆ Make the connection between Investigating questions ES5 and ES6 i.e. use the information in the preceding table to reach a conclusion.
- ◆ Select evidence from both sources, as directed, and avoid combining points to achieve full marks in the ES5 table.
N.B. centres should avoid using past or commercial papers with out-of-date ES1/2/5/6 items to ensure that candidates are properly prepared and not confused by exam format: this is also imperative to ensure that centre evidence is valid for any potential appeals procedures.

At General, centres need to train/direct candidates to:

- ◆ Provide recall at KU and, where required, at ES (ES4/6)

In terms of KU at G/C, centres need to train/direct candidates to:

- ◆ Know that all areas of the syllabus can and will be examined, including less “popular” topics.
- ◆ Pay close attention to the timeframe of the context for which questions have been set e.g. Berlin *in* 1917 (11B:1890s-1920s) and Nazi rise to power *in* January 1933 (111D: 1918-1939)
N.B. evidence beyond the timeframe will not be credited as relevant.

In terms of ES at G/C, centres need to train/direct candidates to:

- ◆ ES1: avoid “mantras” which are not supported with relevant presented/recalled evidence and be aware of the value of a “secondary source” as well as the limitations of a “primary source”.
- ◆ ES1/4/6: cite *specific* examples of presented/recalled evidence rather than generalised statements (such as “it is useful because of the detail it gives/when it was written” etc) to support a judgement
- ◆ ES1/5: avoid conflated responses, making discrete rather than combined points.
- ◆ ES2: provide developed comparisons by adopting the following structure:
Both sources agree that...because Source A says that...and Source B also says/agrees that...
OR
The sources disagree about...because Source A says that... but Source B says/disagrees that...

N.B. Candidates should be discouraged from presenting comparisons in lists, bullet points or tabular form. Such responses will be marked out of half marks.

- ◆ ES3: look for a *precise* attitude and avoid continually copying out quotes to support an initial holistic point e.g. “He says that...”
- ◆ ES4/6: read and follow the instructions about using evidence “from the sources and from your own knowledge” to achieve full marks –and be aware that 2 sources may be used here.
- ◆ ES5: use tables as a preferred structure here and avoid the unnecessary and time-consuming practice of “quote and explain” – remember that this was designed as a note-making exercise to prepare for reaching a conclusion in the ES6 which follows.
N.B. Direct/verbatim quotes are perfectly acceptable here as long as they are explicit, avoid over-use of ellipsis and can “stand alone”.
- ◆ ES6: include balance, presented evidence and recall to achieve full marks.

N.B. Candidates should *not* be taught or encouraged to answer all ES questions before attempting KU as they are endangering their time-management and may inadvertently mix and match contexts which may result in a Grade 7 being awarded for KU.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	20980
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	20057
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Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	24.6%
Grade 2	27.4%
Grade 3	17.2%
Grade 4	11.8%
Grade 5	15.0%
Grade 6	2.7%
Grade 7	1.2%
No award	0.0%

Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
KU	24	17	11	20	14	10	14	10	7
ES	36	25	17	30	19	15	21	15	11