



## External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	<b>History</b>
Level	<b>Intermediate 1</b>

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

The majority of candidates appeared to be entered at the right level. There were a small percentage of candidates achieving an upper A suggesting that the best candidates were entered for Intermediate 2 while, at the other end of the scale, there were relatively few very weak candidates.

Almost all Markers commented on the amount of copying from the sources and on inventive ways they attempted to conceal this — ie ‘shuffled’ copying. This was penalised as before.

A very few candidates attempted to work their way through the entire paper.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

The majority of candidates attempted three contexts and answered all four questions in each one.

Candidates performed well in Wallace and Bruce and Free at Last.

Most candidates handled the ‘describe’ and ‘explain’ questions well. In particular, the photograph used in Free at Last drew some very competent answers from candidates.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

There was a general absence of recall in ‘describe’ and ‘explain’ questions, except for a few instances in the Wallace and Bruce and Free at Last Units.

For the majority of candidates the ‘how useful’ question remained the most challenging part of the examination. Many resorted to simply copying the rubric in attempting to provide comment of origin and authorship of sources. In addition, candidates used ‘fixed sentences’, eg ‘The source is a primary source from the time we are studying’ and ‘it was written by . . . who was an eyewitness’. In doing so they gave the impression that they were simply repeating a mantra rather than applying their skills to particular sources.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

As has been emphasised in previous years, Centres should give attention to the following:

### 1 ‘How useful’ questions

In ‘how useful’ questions, candidates do not gain marks for simply copying the rubric or question, they must also show evaluation. The response should:

- (a) identify author and explain why he/she is good or weak as a source
- (b) identify as the source as primary, from the time, or secondary, written much later
- (c) for content, identify one major point; the response does not have to rehearse the entire source
- (d) comment on the possible purpose of the source
- (e) identify a relevant piece of information which is not included in the source and therefore limits its value

## 2 Copying

Centres are reminded that copying of an entire source, complete with distracters, gains no marks.

Where the source is copied even without the distracters (even if the order of sentences is transposed — ‘shuffled’ copying) or additional phrases such as ‘the source says’, ‘the source also says’ have been included, the maximum mark for information from the source is 1 mark.

While it is preferable that candidates show understanding by putting the points in their own words, it is recognised that many candidates find this difficult. It is therefore acceptable that candidates quote direct phrases from the source — but not entire sentences.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	1604
Number of resulted entries in 2010	1773

## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark — 45				
A	14.6%	14.6%	259	31
B	28.9%	43.5%	512	25
C	26.8%	70.3%	476	20
D	11.0%	81.3%	195	17
No award	18.7%	100.0%	331	–

### General commentary on grade boundaries

While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Each year, therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Head of Service and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related as they do not contain identical questions.

SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as Arrangements evolve and change.