



Course Report 2014

Subject	History
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

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 assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Question paper

The N5 question paper has two elements: Knowledge & Understanding (KU) and Source Handling Skills (SH). There are three different types of KU question: KU1 (Describe...); KU2 (Explain the reasons why...); KU3 (To what extent...). There are also three different types of SH question: SH1 (Evaluate the usefulness...); SH2 (Compare the views of sources...); SH3 (How fully...). KU questions are worth 34 marks across the paper, and SH questions are worth 26 marks across the paper. There is therefore a greater emphasis on KU (and thus recalled knowledge) in comparison to a Standard Grade Credit Paper, for example. Some candidates had difficulty providing adequate recalled knowledge in their KU responses. Lack of adequate recalled knowledge was also an issue in SH3 responses to some extent, but the question most candidates had real difficulty with was SH1 (Evaluate the usefulness...).

There was evidence that suggested that candidates had found it difficult to complete the question paper within the allotted time. Appropriate adjustments were made to the grade boundaries to ensure that no candidates were disadvantaged as a result.

The new arrangements for item writing (setting) ensured that a good range of the syllabus was covered in each of the three sections of the Question Paper — a maximum of three out of four issues of mandatory content will be sampled in each context.

Component 2: Assignment

The Assignment performed as intended, allowing most candidates to access an added value component that could improve their overall grade. The 20 marks available are divided into seven stages (explaining, references, knowledge, evaluating, organising, concluding and supporting a conclusion).

The N5 History Assignment expects candidates to select an appropriate issue and write an extended response under controlled conditions within a period of one hour, and most candidates took this opportunity to showcase their best work (most centres built on the good practice already established by the Intermediate 2 Extended Response). However, some candidates did not perform well because they did not select an issue that was appropriate. Many markers reported instances of poor and almost illegible handwriting — made worse by the use of pencil rather than pen. Some centres did not supply resource sheets with candidate responses (or did so but did not make the candidate's actual question clear).

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Question paper

The majority of candidates were entered at the correct level. Feedback from centres and markers indicates that the N5 examination paper was considered to be demanding but

reasonably fair and provided enough opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Most markers commented on the lack of recalled knowledge and/or the correct answer technique (process) in particular types of question, and also commented that some candidates had difficulty in completing the question paper within the allotted time.

Component 2: Assignment

The Assignment allowed candidates who selected an appropriate question to improve their overall grade considerably. It is suggested that centres should therefore consider likely performance in the Assignment before submitting estimates in future years.

Some candidates did not perform well, mainly because they selected an inappropriate question and/or made poor use of their resource sheet.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Most candidates knew how to answer KU1 (*Describe...*) questions correctly. This was by far the most accessible KU question for candidates, who were well rewarded for good historical knowledge.

Most candidates also knew how to answer SH2 (*Compare the views of sources...*) questions correctly. This was by far the most accessible SH question for candidates, who benefited greatly from being awarded marks for making an overall comparison as well as simple and developed comparisons in this type of question.

Component 2: Assignment

Most candidates selected an appropriate question, and provided adequate knowledge and good organisation in their responses. Topics selected, in most cases, allowed candidates enough scope to research successfully and submit their best work.

Most candidates used the resource sheet sensibly, and looked on it as a prompt to write what is essentially an essay for 20 marks. Clearly these candidates were well-supported by their teachers.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Most candidates had difficulty with SH1 (*Evaluate the usefulness...*) questions. An evaluative comment is required for each aspect of the source and most candidates found

this very challenging. It is not enough for candidates to write ‘The source says [x] which is useful’ when trying to achieve a mark for content, for example. Instead candidates should use the phrases ‘...this is useful because...’ or ‘this is less useful because...’ and supply a good reason to support their evaluation of each aspect of the source (see exemplification in Marking Instructions).

Many candidates had difficulty with SH3 (*How fully...*) questions, and had to be penalised for their lack of recalled knowledge. Candidates can only achieve a maximum of 2 marks in this type of question if there is no recall and/or judgement in their answer.

Some candidates had difficulty with KU2 (*Explain the reasons why...*) questions because they did not supply reasons in their answers, only facts, which, although acceptable in KU1 questions, can only achieve minimal credit in KU2 questions. Candidates must carry out the correct process (supplying genuine reasons) in this type of question to be successful.

Component 2: Assignment

Some candidates had difficulty accessing the full range of marks available because they selected an inappropriate question (eg *Describe...* or *Why...?*). This meant that evaluation marks could not really be awarded and the overall mark awarded for the conclusion had to be low. Even when an appropriate question was selected, some candidates still did not address the issue they had set themselves, only providing a descriptive or narrative response instead of trying to explain and evaluate consistently.

Many candidates attempted questions that were too ambitious — they tried to cover five or more factors and did not attempt a conclusion. Since there are six marks available for conclusions this was therefore quite damaging.

Some candidates did not make use of any references in their response so could not be awarded either of the two marks available for this.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

Centres should ensure that candidates are fully prepared to answer SH1 questions (*Evaluate the usefulness...*) correctly — an evaluative comment is required for each different aspect of the source (see exemplification in Marking Instructions).

Centres should ensure that candidates are prepared to answer KU2 questions (*Explain the reasons why...*) correctly — these answers require reasons and not just facts (see exemplification in MI). This is particularly important going forward as there is a KU2 question in every section of the N5 examination.

Centres should liaise with Invigilators to ensure that incorrect and/or multiple contexts are not attempted.

Centres should encourage candidates to use black or blue ink only to ensure greater legibility.

When candidate scripts are being typed, please use a large enough size of font and double spacing to allow markers enough room to use correction codes and annotate marks.

Candidates should be trained to read all questions and instructions carefully to avoid misinterpretation and/or irrelevance — candidates must do what the question actually asks and not what they would prefer to write about.

Candidates should be discouraged from attempting sections out of sequence as this can be to their disadvantage.

Centres should note that all areas of the syllabus can and will be sampled.

Component 2: Assignment

Centres should ensure that candidates do not self-penalise with an inappropriate choice of question. Ideally questions should be KU3 in style (eg How important...? or To what extent...?) so that candidates have an issue to evaluate overall.

Centres should ensure that candidates are prepared to provide adequate balance within their responses, by trying to provide balance within a factor and a relative judgement in their conclusion in particular (see exemplification in Marking Instructions).

Centres should however ensure that candidates do not attempt questions that are over-ambitious (eg by trying to cover too many factors).

Sources must be referred to clearly and directly within the actual response — a list of sources at the end of the response is not acceptable.

Resource sheets are not marked but they are referred to by markers.

No marks will be awarded for directly copying extended pieces of text/narrative from the Resource Sheet. It must not be used by candidates to pre-write their assignment.

Centres must ensure that all the relevant documentation is sent in for candidates (eg resource sheet, flyleaf/marking sheet, candidate response).

Centres should encourage candidates to use black or blue ink only to ensure greater legibility.

It would be helpful if candidates were asked to number the pages of their assignment (if using A4 lined paper) and write out their actual question at the beginning of their response.

Where candidate scripts are typed, please use a large enough size of font, and use double spacing to allow markers enough room to use correction codes and annotate marks.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	0
Number of resulted entries in 2014	13430

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 80				
A	39.0%	39.0%	5243	51
B	23.2%	62.2%	3111	43
C	20.0%	82.2%	2692	35
D	5.9%	88.2%	799	31
No award	11.8%	-	1585	-