

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

History

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
Included in this report**

History, S. Grade: F, G and C

Statistical information: update

Number of resulted entries in 2003 (Post-appeal)	21,926
---	--------

Number of resulted entries in 2004 (Pre-appeal)	22,234
--	--------

General comments re entry numbers

Unlike many S Grade subjects, the numbers tackling S Grade History continue to increase. This is a pleasing trend and may reflect some satisfaction with the courses on offer.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

Grade 1	25.3%
Grade 2	25.5%
Grade 3	15.4%
Grade 4	14.7%
Grade 5	11.2%
Grade 6	6.3%
Grade 7	1.5%
No award	0.1%

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

2004 distributions are much in line with 2003 at all levels. The high level of Credit awards is pleasing.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Standard Grade History			
Assessable Element – Knowledge and Understanding			
Grade	Maximum Mark	Minimum Mark for Grade	% Mark
1	24	17	70.8
2	24	12	50
3	20	13	65
4	20	10	50
5	14	10	71.4
6	14	7	50

Standard Grade History			
Assessable Element – Enquiry Skills			
Grade	Maximum Mark	Minimum Mark for Grade	% Mark
1	36	24	66.6
2	36	16	44.4
3	30	21	70
4	30	16	53.3
5	21	14	66.7
6	21	10	47.6

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

At KU, grade boundaries were satisfactory and in line with a priori scores at almost all levels. At Enquiry Skills, the Grade boundaries were lower at Credit Level than in recent years and this reflects the attempts to instil more rigour into the examination and make it a slightly more discriminating test of ability. Some account of an unduly testing item at ES Credit was taken when setting the grade boundaries, and it is now considered the challenge of the papers is at an appropriate level. Well-prepared candidates still managed to achieve success – 25.3% achieved an overall Grade 1 as opposed to 18% in 2003. KU grade boundaries were in line with a priori and efforts will continue to bring the ES grade boundaries to the a priori scores.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Foundation: Very few candidates now attempt more than the two Unit Contexts they should be tackling. However, some still try to answer the whole paper and/or attempt to tackle contexts they have not been taught. To further guide the candidate, the 2005 paper will carry the wording: 'Now turn to the one Context you have studied in Unit ..' There was less evidence of candidates simply copying out information from the source and the best candidates used the presented evidence well and brought in some recall. Despite the additional rubric, a sizeable number of candidates still persist in using source content only in an ES1 evaluation. The wording regarding 'findings' in item 6 in Unit I has helped some candidates respond favourably but others are still not aware of what has to be accomplished in this item.

General: A very few number of candidates still attempt more than the three required Unit Contexts. Very few candidates had difficulty in understanding what was required but their ability to respond appropriately was highly variable as is to be expected at this level. Lack of recall still remains the biggest feature of under-performing candidates.

Credit: A rectification in the demands of the examination resulted in a significant number of candidates being presented for Credit level when perhaps they were not fully prepared for its rigour. The range of marks was wider than in previous years. Standards of written English show signs of further deterioration. Handwriting was often poor and some candidates still write in fluorescent pen or pencil despite instruction to the contrary.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Foundation: KU items on housing in Unit I were well tackled. There was some evidence of some well-trained candidates tackling ES1 items more successfully.

General, KU: Excellent responses were given to: Unit IA, item 1; Unit IB, item 1;

General, ES: Item 4 in all Unit I Contexts, was well answered as was Unit IIID item 4.

ES2 (source comparison) responses are improving and more candidates are using developed comparisons.

Credit, KU: A great deal of recalled knowledge was presented in Unit I, Unit IIB and Unit IIID. Unit IC, item 1 was particularly well tackled. There was evidence of many candidates fully grasping the requirements of a KU3 (assess the importance) item and taking other factors into account in their response. There was some evidence of excellent training in the increased demands of the 8 mark essay. Item 1b in Unit IIIC, was particularly well done.

Credit, ES: In Units IB and IC the Suffragette issue was well tackled. ES1 (source evaluation) responses are improving and where they are well tackled they show excellent technique. ES2 items are being tackled better with more candidates using developed comparisons.

ES3 items are being tackled better with more candidates using their own words to demonstrate full comprehension and not simply copying from the source.

ES5 items were done well, especially where candidates used a table, attributed the selected evidence and, where appropriate, explained their choice of evidence.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Foundation: ES 1 (source evaluation) items are not answered well, with a majority of candidates still using content only in their answers. In IIB, Source B, some candidates mistook the dirigible for a shell being fired and this led to some unusual answers. ES5 items in Unit I often elicited one piece of evidence instead of two.

General, KU: Lack of recall throughout penalised some candidates. Unit IB, item 2 and Unit IIB, item 1 were particularly poorly done – many candidates thinking that Japan was in Europe. In Unit IIB, the League of Nations seemed unfamiliar territory for some candidates. Item 3 in Unit IIIA was challenging for some candidates.

General, ES: A worrying number of candidates, largely from particular centres, were still unaware of the correct techniques required to respond to a particular Enquiry Skill, particularly ES1 and ES2 items. ES6 still presents problems for weaker candidates who do not provide recall in the answer – thus often losing 2 marks. In Unit IIB, item 5, some candidates did not pay attention to the requirement to concentrate on ‘new weapons’.

Credit, KU: Too many candidates are answering their own question and not addressing the item as set. More items were omitted by under-prepared candidates than in previous years. Listing, copying and running several points together in one simple sentence were all penalised.

In Units IA and IB, item 1, some candidates read the item as referring to people’s ‘lives’ not ‘working lives’. In all Unit III Contexts, in answering item 1, many candidates failed to read the question, and/or did not pay attention to the given time frame. In their responses to Unit IA, item 2, many candidates failed to make a judgement. In Unit IIB, item 2, many candidates did not seem to understand the word ‘economic’. In the 8 mark essay, 1 mark was awarded for each relevant point of evidence – up to 6 marks. 2 marks were then awarded for the correct essay process: a clear introduction; paragraphed main body of evidence; a well-stated conclusion. Most candidates did attempt genuine process although a worrying number of candidates appeared not to know how to construct a paragraph. Some made only a token gesture towards an introduction and a conclusion. Unit IIIA, item 1 was either done very well or very badly.

Credit, ES: Many candidates are still not addressing an ES1 evaluation item in an acceptable manner. Too many responses are very vague. Many candidates still do not adapt a formula learned in school and/or copy out large parts of the content of the source.

Too many candidates are not aware of the usefulness of a secondary source.

Unit IIB, item 3 was mistaken by some candidates as an ES1 item - and by others as an ES3 item. Essential recall was not always present in this item or in Unit IIC, item 3.

In their responses to item 5 in Unit I, too many candidates failed to provide a judgement, a balanced conclusion and required recall – thus failing the question. Others did not refer to previously selected presented evidence and also failed the item.

Many candidates found difficulty in displaying adequate proof of comprehension of Source A in all Unit III Contexts. Candidates must do more than quote from the source.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Candidates must write in blue or black ink and not in pencil or other coloured pens.

Foundation

Candidates must be made fully aware of what is required in an ES1 (source evaluation) response.

Candidates should be trained to use the evidence in the sources and not simply to copy out the presented information.

Candidates should present separate points of evidence and not run two or more points together. Candidates must be trained to recognise the instruction in an ES1 item to ‘use more than source content’ as an indicator to refer to such features as authorship, date and purpose.

General/ Credit

Candidates must read each item carefully and respond appropriately. A question which asks a candidate to assess **how far** sources agree requires an appropriate judgement.

In a KU3 (how important) response, the best candidates consider additional evidence in addition to the presented factor. Candidates should not write lists or combine points within the one sentence. A chart/table is only acceptable in an ES5 (evidence selection) response and is not appropriate on any other occasion.

Candidates must be trained properly in all Enquiry Skills. A source evaluation (ES1) formula must be adapted and used to refer to the chosen source and not simply be a previously learned response. At Credit level, the evaluation that ‘a source is useful as it is a primary source written at the time’ or ‘written at the time of the topic under consideration’ gains zero marks.

Candidates score more highly when they respond to an ES2 (source comparison) item by using developed points of comparison as laid out in the Marking Instructions.

In an ES3 item, candidates must show understanding of the source by evaluating the attitude of the author in their own words – only using short extracts from the source to illustrate their answer, if required. An introductory ‘holistic’ statement of the author’s point of view is good practice — and is duly rewarded.

Centres are reminded that in 2005, the ‘investigation’ in Unit 1 will have a source evaluation item focusing on one source only.