

## **FOI Request (FOI 24-25 165)**

### **Request:**

All questions submitted by teachers for the Higher History Understanding Standards webinar held in December 2024

### **Response**

Hi,

Can we please point out that it is very difficult to know what questions we would like answered as a dept. without knowing what will be said in the SQA presentation itself. Will there be the opportunity for questions to be posted (and answered) during the webinar, which arise out of the presentation?

We have tried to anticipate as much as possible, and here are our questions:

Paper II

- Will the phrasing of the narrow qs only use the current, published bullet points? The 2024 2SI question for Migration & Empire used the phrasing 'reaction of the Scots' which was supposed to be removed from the narrow bullet points in the changes to descriptors published after the 2023 exam. Should we still be preparing pupils for the 'old' question stems?
- What guarantees are there that the standard won't be changed after the exam, before marking? Even 'tweaks' which occur each year feel like it is undermining our attempts to teach pupils through the year. Surely changes should be issued in a public manner for all, not just markers, to access, and have a year's notice before being applied to marking.
- Can there please be clearer consistency in terms of the of depth of detail required, across different units, but also across the sub-sections. Are names needed for Impact of Scots on other countries (M&E 3)? If so, this is considerably greater depth of detail than in other sub-sections of the same topic, and for other topics.
- The volume of knowledge pupils need to bring to Paper II is significantly higher than other social subjects. Making it more detailed (e.g. names for M&E 3) is making this worse and putting pupils off the subject. What happened to the parity of experience that was supposed to be established between the social subjects?

Many thanks

History Dept.,

Hutchesons' Grammar School

Hi,

I have four questions I would like to ask in advance of the presentation.

**1.** I would like some clarity on the use of course spec for questions. My understanding was that question stems would always relate specifically to the wording of the course spec. This was not the case in the 2024 paper. For Q14, the question read: How much do Sources B and C reveal about differing interpretations of the **reactions of Scots to Irish immigrants?**

However, the course spec doc for Issue 2 for Migration and Empire reads:

- Irish immigrants

- Jewish immigrants
- Lithuanian immigrants
- Italian immigrants

Was this an error in setting the paper, or are we to disregard the updated course spec and use the old course spec (which did include the reactions of Scots as a specific sub heading)?

**2.** Secondly, I would like some clarity on overlap between Issue 2 and Issue 4 in Migration and Empire. The course report specifically states that "*Many gave examples of the contribution of the Irish to Scotland such as building railways, the Glasgow subway, and the creation of Celtic Football Club, which resulted in 0 marks being awarded as the question asked about the reactions of Scots to the Irish.*" Surely candidates could still cover these points, provided they were clearly linked to the question - these are all experiences **and** contributions of Irish immigrants. I look forward to being told why an Irish immigrant would not experience a contribution. What, in the eyes of the marking team, is the difference between a contribution to Scottish society and an experience of immigrants?

**3.** The course report states the following in relation to answers to the explain the reasons questions: *Many candidates gave valid examples but did not comment or explain the impact the Scots had on the empire. Many points were also vague and generic.* This is also vague and generic. There has been a great deal of rumour and speculation about the level of detail required to demonstrate a Scottish impact. Can the SQA provide some detailed and specific examples of the level or recall they expect to see from candidates in this question? We have been told that the MIs were expanded to help markers, and not to reflect an increased level of required detail. But this now means we are lacking clear examples of the level of detail candidates should be aiming to provide for explain the reasons questions.

**4.** Given there is massive uncertainty across the profession in regards to the teaching of Paper 2 this session, which has been exacerbated by delayed reports and an US session scheduled for after many schools have sat prelims, what dispensation will the SQA be implementing to account for the impact of this uncertainty?

I look forward to seeing these questions answered

Thanks,



Hello, these are my questions for the Higher event:

Which one of these answers gets a mark for an Higher explain question on the contributions of Scots abroad:

1- Scots were prominent in the development of political life in Canada. A Scot, John A. Macdonald, was the first Prime Minister of Canada; he had helped guide Canada to independence in 1867. His successor was Alexander MacKenzie, also a Scot. (marking scheme 2024)

2- Scots were prominent in the development of political life in Canada. For example a Scot was the first Prime Minister of Canada. (no named Scot)

3- Scots were prominent in the development of political life in Canada. A Scot, John A. Macdonald, was the first Prime Minister of Canada. (same but with named scot)

4- Scots were prominent in the development of political life in Canada. A Scot was the first Prime Minister of Canada; he had helped guide Canada to independence in 1867. (no name but a date)

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For Evaluate the usefulness of Source A as evidence of the push factors which contributed to the emigration of Scots, 1830–1939 which one will get a mark?

1- Finally, we must admit that we are in poverty, and suffering hardship and hunger of a nature to which the bulk of our countrymen are strangers. Useful as it shows that crofters knew that, compared with other people in Scotland, their suffering from poverty and hunger was acute, pushing them to leave Scotland. (marking scheme)

2- Finally, we must admit that we are in poverty, and suffering hardship and hunger of a nature to which the bulk of our countrymen are strangers. Useful as it shows that crofters knew that tthey were suffering from poverty and hunger was acute so they left Scotland

3- Finally, we must admit that we are in poverty, and suffering hardship and hunger of a nature to which the bulk of our countrymen are strangers. Useful as it shows that poverty was a push factor which contributed to the emigration of Scots.

For timing marks:

1- Timing: 30 May 1883. Useful as it dates from the middle of the ‘Crofters War’ and not long after the setting up of the Highland Land League, a time when many people in the Highlands were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Condition of Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands (the Napier Commission) highlighting their distress and the grievances causing them to emigrate. (marking scheme)

2- Timing: 30 May 1883. Useful as it dates from a time when many people in the Highlands were leaving scotland due to the harsh conditions in the highlands which forced them to emigrate

3- Timing: 30 May 1883. Useful as it dates from a time when many people in the Highlands were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Royal Commission highlighting their distress and the grievances causing them to emigrate.

For Author

1- John Morrison, a crofter. Useful as he is a crofter who has worked the land in Loch Eport, North Uist and was well informed about the misery that forced people to move abroad.  
(marking scheme)

2- John Morrison, a crofter. Useful as he is a crofter who was well informed about the misery that forced people to move abroad.

Thank you in advance

[REDACTED]

Hello,

Please see below for the questions in advance of December 12<sup>th</sup>'s event.

Thank you

1. In the Migration and Empire topic the course spec for Issue 4: Impacts of Migration and Empire on Scotland has two description of content points that lack clarity. One is ***“Impacts of immigrants on society”*** and the other is ***“Impacts of immigrants on culture”***. Looking through past paper questions on these the knowledge seems interchangeable for these two topics. Can you please provide some clarity on how to know what falls under culture and what falls under society? If an evaluate the usefulness question or two source question comes up on either of these specific points, I want the students to be sure they are utilising the correct knowledge. See below for examples from the past two years marking schemes that shows a lack of clarity on the content on two points of knowledge used for both description of content bullet points (Catholic schools and Orange Order).

- a. From the 2023 paper- Evaluate question on Scottish **society**

- Irish immigration had a lasting impact on Scottish **society**, reflected in the creation of separate Catholic schools across most major urban centres in Scotland

- Irish immigrants also impacted on Scotland through the Protestant Orange Lodge Order (question about **society** so implied this is a society impact)

- b. From the 2024 paper- How Fully on full issue

- Irish immigration had a lasting **cultural** impact on Scottish society, reflected in the creation of separate Catholic schools across most major urban centres in Scotland

- Irish immigrants also contributed to the **culture** of Scotland through the Protestant Orange Lodge Order

2. The 2019 Understanding Standards documents are still available on the website. The 2019 exemplar is questions 13-16 Migration and Empire topic. In speaking with numerous markers from this year (8 to be precise), the answers that were given marks would absolutely not have been awarded marks this year. If this is the case- can you explain why these documents are still available to view as students have been utilising them to get an understanding of how they can gain marks. Alternately, as they are still available- can it be confirmed that this is the standard the SQA is looking for from candidates?

- Example: from question 15 (evaluate the usefulness about impacts of Scots on Canada) a source omission point was granted for “Scots contributed to the

economy of Canada as they were crucial to developing the fur trade” - this clearly would not have gained a mark based on the current marking standards but we have been told that the standard did not change.

3. In Issue 2 of the 2024 paper, the question for Migration and Empire topic was “How much do Sources B and C reveal about differing interpretations **of the reactions of Scots to** Irish immigrants?”. This is not one of the description of content points for this topic which is focused on the experiences of immigrants. The question should read “the experiences of Irish immigrants in Scotland”. Although we teach the students about the way the Scots treated immigrant groups, the focus (as it should be) is on how this shaped the experiences of that immigrant group. After going through the issue 2 questions for every topic, this was the only ones not specifically from the wording in the course spec. How are we to know how to frame these topics if the SQA is able to phrase the questions any way they like. Also- what was done in the 2024 marking period to rectify the disparity for those who did M&E and those who did the other topics (where the questions were worded properly) as this clearly put certain candidates at a disadvantage. This was brought to the attention of the senior team at the Paper 2 markers meeting therefore was not an unknown during the marking period.

Good afternoon,

Here are some questions for the event that the team may wish to try and address in the webinar.

1. Given there was only a small drop in attainment in other subjects, why do the team think the young people in this cohort performed so poorly in Higher History? A dramatic drop in literacy standards could be part of the answer, but Higher English passes only dropped by 1%, as opposed to the 13% drop in Higher History.
2. Would the following example from the 2023 marking instructions still be awarded a mark in a question asking candidates to 'Explain the reasons why there were arguments for and against a union with England'?

'One reason why there were arguments for a union with England was that many felt the union ensured the security of Scotland. This was a reason for there being arguments for a union with England because Scotland would become part of a powerful country.'

3. Was consideration given to significantly moving the grade boundaries, given the drop in paper 2 marks from 20.6/36 to 15.1/36?
4. How much information would need to be given to gain a mark for a point of omission or an explanation? Do we need to give a date, a name or a statistic now?
5. Why are some of the examples in the marking instructions now so detailed. Up to this point, we have always understood that each point, with its description, was designed to give us an indicator of how much information candidates need to include in their own points. However, there now seems to be a suggestion these are just a list of various things you could use in your descriptions. Is it possible that some markers continued to think that you needed an explanation with as much detail as the marking instruction's examples?
6. Can we be given an indication of what changed so dramatically in the answers this year? Was there evidence of some national shift in the way we taught paper 2 that could explain the dramatic fall in attainment?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Balfron High School

Good Afternoon

I'd like to submit the following question.

Is it possible that a context can be narrowed in two ways within a question rather than the previous one? For example, can pupils be asked about the impact of Scots on the economy and enterprise of Canada? Rather than the previous impact of Scots on Canada or Impact of Scots on the economy and enterprise in places the settled?

There was a question in the Migration and Empire section this year which was narrowed in 2 ways which was a surprise to us all.

Kind Regards  
[REDACTED]

Good afternoon,

Please see below my questions:

- Can you provide clear exemplification of the level of detail required to access a mark in the Explain question?
- Can you confirm that either a named Scot or Scottish example (Thomas Lipton, Vissochi's etc) is required, rather than "tea plantations in Ceylon" or "ice cream parlours in Edinburgh" for example?
- Is the level of detail now expected for the explain answer also the same for recall marks in the other questions?
- Can the SQA now admit that the issue with the drop in grades was indeed due to a shift in marking standards, rather than learners or teachers overnight becoming worse?

Yours,

Good evening,

Can the following question please be submitted for the Higher History QP2 Webinar.

"Within the Migration and Empire topic (Section 4 - impact of Migration and Empire on Scotland), can illustration be given between the difference for the impact on Scottish society and the impact on Scottish culture? Also, would it be possible for knowledge to fit in to both categories as long it was developed sufficiently. For example, could sporting contributions come under both categories?"

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Afternoon,

Please find below a couple of questions re: Higher History (Paper 2)

- The course report states recalled knowledge 'should' be introduced to develop source points. Is this required? Are pupils able to access a source mark for just including developed interpretation - without adding knowledge?

- Can 'developed' be defined? What is the difference between underdeveloped and developed?

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

In the SQA guidance on creating Higher assessments it states: "The two-source interpretation (How much do...) question must be based on an area from the **description of content** in the course specification." This was not the case for Q14 of the 2024 Higher Paper 2, which used wording from the previous course specification.

Can the SQA offer reassurance that there will not be any invalid questions in this year's paper? Alternatively, if the intention is to ask questions which do not correspond to the up-to-date course specification, will the SQA commit to publish a detailed breakdown of all the specific sub-topics which could be assessed so that students can adequately prepare for the exam?

Hi there,

On the course spec in the more detailed section, it states for part 2 Italians, Lithuanians, Irish and Jews and for part 3 India, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Therefore I am assuming if an evaluate the usefulness or two source question is in these two sections it will only be specific to one of these groups or countries or should we still be breaking it down further for these groups/ countries into reactions and experiences and also social, cultural and political impacts even though it is not mentioned on the course spec. In the 2024 paper, the two-source asked about the reaction of Scots to Irish immigrants? Please can you clarify surely this should be listed if it is specifically going to be asked about?

Thanks

[REDACTED]

There is debate online about whether your own knowledge is required when explaining a point in a source.

Some markers have stated that if you bring in your own knowledge to explain a point in the source then you won't get the mark, as you are not fully interpreting the source, while others disagree.

Question - Should you bring in your own knowledge when explaining a point in a source?

Thanks.

Good morning,

I have the following question for the webinar:

Q. When explaining a point in a source, is it necessary/preferable to use your own knowledge?

Thank you.

I Morrison  
20 December 2024