

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2010**

HISTORY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The format of the examination in CAPE History is similar for Units 1 and 2. The year 2010 marked the second examination in which Paper 01 in both units was examined by 45 multiple-choice questions, 15 on each module. Candidates were required to answer all questions and each correct answer was rewarded with no penalty for incorrect answers. Paper 01 contributed 30 per cent to candidates' overall grade in each unit. The questions aimed at assessing the range of content and skills covered by the syllabus.

Paper 02 comprised nine questions and candidates were required to answer three. This paper contributed 50 per cent to candidates' overall grade and assessed depth rather than breadth of knowledge. Three of the questions, one from each module, required candidates to analyse extracts from primary documents on one of the themes in the modules. Candidates were required to answer one of the three document-based questions. The responses were to be reasoned, clear and well-developed. The other six questions were extended essay question and candidates were required to answer two of these with clearly stated and well-developed arguments.

Paper 03/1, the Internal Assessment component, required candidates to submit a research paper on a topic selected from the syllabus. This paper contributed 20 per cent to the overall grade of candidates.

Paper 03/2 was the alternative paper to the Internal Assessment for private candidates. These candidates were expected to demonstrate that they had carried out a research activity on a topic related to one of the six themes in the three modules. This paper contributed 20 per cent to candidates' overall grade.

DETAILED COMMENTS

UNIT I

Paper 01 – Multiple-Choice Questions

This paper represents a change in the format of the examination. Prior to 2009, candidates were required to provide short responses to nine questions covering the three modules. From 2009, the paper assessed candidates' coverage of the syllabus with multiple-choice questions which tested their recall of content as well as their interpretive and analytical skills. There were 15 questions on each of the three modules, a total of 45 questions. Performance was satisfactory though candidates' content coverage of several themes seemed to have been limited.

Paper 02 – Structured Document-Based Questions and Extended Essays

This paper assessed candidates' depth of knowledge, understanding, evaluation, interpretation and problem-solving as well as their ability to present a structured and well-expressed historical argument.

Module 1: Indigenous Societies

Question 1

This question had three short extracts from primary documents on the conquest of the Amerindians in the sixteenth century. Candidates were asked four questions (a–d) related to the themes as developed in these extracts. Some candidates treated these as comprehension questions, giving quotations from the extracts as answers. The questions required candidates to use each extract as a stimulus to recall the history of the encounter between the Amerindians and the Spaniards in relation to the issue addressed by the extract. Candidates were expected to give short answers to the question as directed to discuss, outline or explain. The question was fairly well done by most candidates in that they knew the basic content; however, some found it challenging to use the knowledge to address the specifics of the question.

Question 2

This question required an essay on the lifestyles and social arrangements of the pre-Columbian Amerindian cultures of two indigenous groups, one from each category (Category 1: Aztec, Inca, Maya; Category 2: Kalinago, Taino, Tupi). Candidates were expected to compare the lifestyles and social arrangements of the two groups they chose. Candidates demonstrated basic and general knowledge of the Amerindian groups they chose but were unable to distinguish between social, economic and political features of the societies. Too often, there was no comparison to show either differences or similarities as required by the question and, in most cases, candidates wrote on economic and political arrangements instead of on the social. It appeared that candidates were relying on CSEC knowledge and found it difficult to classify and collate their historical knowledge.

Question 3

In this question, candidates were required to examine the claim that Europeans did not penetrate the interior of western Africa up to 1600. This question was not well done. Some candidates who had knowledge of European contact with Africa ignored the date [up to 1600] and the specifics of the question as it related to European contact with Africa. Too often, candidates wrote a narrative of European exploration, confused the penetration of the interior of Africa with the arrival of Africans in the Americas and focused on the trans-Atlantic trade, rather than on the extent of the penetration into the interior of Africa. This suggests the need for candidates to develop a historical sense of time, place and event.

Module 2: Slave Systems – Character and Dismantlement

Question 4

This question had three short extracts from primary documents that related to the experiences and strategies of survival of enslaved peoples. Candidates were required to answer four

questions (a–d) on the theme as represented in the document. Candidates, while not ignorant of issues related to the experiences and strategies of survival of enslaved peoples, found it difficult to use the knowledge to solve the problems given. For example, they were unable to distinguish between actions of planters and their causes and those of the enslaved as required for Part (a). As such, rather than addressing the reasons for planters allotting provision grounds to the enslaved (causes), most responses dealt with how the enslaved made use of the provision grounds (effects).

Question 5

This question required candidates to assess the effectiveness of non-violent strategies of resistance used by the enslaved during slavery. This was a popular question with a few good responses. The quality of the responses indicated that far too many candidates had knowledge of the relevant content but were unable to adequately explain the impact of the strategies on the plantations and the system of slavery.

Question 6

This question required an essay that discussed the contribution of Eric Williams' decline thesis to the explanation for dismantlement of the British slave system. The responses were mixed; some candidates were very clear on the requirements of the question and were fully conversant with the thesis, the challenges to it and were able to provide a historiographical analysis. Other candidates merely wrote on the reason for the dismantlement of the British slave system.

Module 3: Freedom in Action

Question 7

This question consisted of three short documentary extracts that related to the attempts by Haitian revolutionary leaders to create a free society between 1804 and 1825. Candidates were asked to answer four questions (a–d) related to the extracts. This was a popular question but there were only a few good responses; candidates lacked the knowledge required for this question and encountered some challenges with the relevant vocabulary. It appeared that candidates' responses were limited to CSEC knowledge or knowledge from Module 2.

Question 8

This question required an essay discussing the obstacles to worker solidarity between the Asian immigrant groups and the formerly enslaved in the British Caribbean during the second half of the nineteenth century. Candidates demonstrated knowledge of immigrants but had a problem distinguishing between Asian immigrants and other nineteenth-century immigrants. The question proved challenging for some candidates who did not appear to understand the meaning of the word 'solidarity'. Responses often focused on 'obstacles' and addressed obstacles encountered by the two groups.

Question 9

This question asked candidates to examine the development of regional integration in the British Caribbean from 1956 to the 1970s. This was a fairly popular question and most candidates understood the demands of the question. However, some candidates ignored the stated time frame and wrote of integration before and after the stated period.

Further Comments

Examiners reported that candidates tended to pay very little attention to those areas of Module 1 with which they were familiar and consequently depended on their CSEC knowledge. They also reported that candidates were inadequately prepared for Module 3 as this Module was taught during the third term of the school year which was usually cut short by end-of-year examinations and other co-curricular activities. One recommendation from an Examiner was to start the year with the less familiar Module 3 to get candidates involved and motivated. Teachers and students need to approach the programme of study by focusing on the specific objectives as stated in the syllabus.

UNIT 2**Paper 01 – Multiple Choice Questions**

This paper consisted of 45 multiple-choice questions, with 15 questions on each of the three modules. The questions covered an extensive area of knowledge as set out in the syllabus and required candidates to recall information as well as to evaluate and assess claims made against historical evidence. The responses of candidates were generally satisfactory but it must be reiterated that candidates need to take an interpretative approach to the questions to achieve the best results.

Paper 02 – Structured Document-Based Questions and Extended Essays**Module 1: Atlantic World - Interactions**Question 1

This question had three short documentary extracts on the American and French Revolutions of the late eighteenth century. Candidates were asked to answer four questions (a–d) related to these revolutions and themes developed in the extracts. The responses suggested that candidates, generally, had not acquired the skill of answering document questions. However, there were a few good responses, although Parts (b) and (c) were misunderstood or candidates lacked the relevant knowledge. This suggested that, in some instances, these objectives and themes may have been misinterpreted.

Question 2

This question focused on rivalry among European nations in the Americas and required an essay assessing the causes of that rivalry. Candidates seemed to have understood the requirements of the question but the responses needed to be more structured.

Question 3

In this question, candidates were required to discuss the extent to which the trans-Atlantic trade in Africans was a continuation of the social and economic structures that already existed in West Africa. Candidates discussed the impact of the trans-Atlantic trade in Africans on the Caribbean rather than on Africa. In instances where they discussed the effects on Africa they spoke of perceived conditions in Africa — housing and social life — rather than the impact of the trade. This was surprising since the syllabus addresses this theme in a specific objective and there is available material for study.

Module 2: Atlantic Development – Identity and IndustryQuestion 4

This question had three short extracts from primary documents on the Industrial Revolutions in Britain and the United States of America. Candidates were required to answer four questions (a–d) on the theme as represented in the document. The question was popular, but, as with most document questions, was treated as a comprehension exercise rather than a question where the document should be used as a stimulus. Knowledge of the Industrial Revolution in the USA was also inadequate and, as a result, candidates had problems interpreting the phrase ‘labour responded’.

Question 5

This question required an essay that examined the attempts by the USA to fulfil the ideals of Manifest Destiny within continental North America between 1845 and 1867. There were mixed responses to this question. Candidates encountered challenges with the concept of ‘continental North America’ and wrote on the Americas in general. This may be a reflection of candidates’ dependency on the material from CSEC which addresses Manifest Destiny.

Question 6

This question required an essay discussing the view that international developments in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were responsible for the independence of either Brazil or Venezuela. Most responses focussed on Brazil. The question proved difficult for a few candidates who were unclear about the meaning of the term ‘international developments’, while others focused on international developments without discussion of internal developments.

Module 3 – International Relations – Conflict and Liberation

Question 7

This question consisted of three short documentary extracts on the Russian Revolution. Candidates were asked to answer four questions (a–d) related to the extracts. This was not a popular question and there were few good responses. The responses reflected inadequate preparation.

Question 8

This question required an essay discussing the factors that contributed to the outbreak of World War I. Candidates were asked to refer to three schools of thought in their responses. The question was popular and responses demonstrated that candidates were conversant with the topic. A few candidates wrote about causes of the outbreak generally and ignored the reference to the ‘schools of thought’ but there were some who recognized that they were expected to write about historians’ perspectives on the causes. The question seemed to have posed a challenge to some candidates, but speaks to the need for students and teachers alike to be aware of the interpretations put forward by historians.

Question 9

This question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which the nationalist strategies used by Mahatma Gandhi to decolonize India were effective. Candidates were familiar with the actions taken by Gandhi and presented them as steps taken towards independence. Few candidates took the analysis beyond the narrative account to a more analytic presentation designed to evaluate the effectiveness of what he did. However, it was a popular question and generally well done.

Further Comments

Performance on Module 3, as reported by the examiners, was only fair; this was felt to be a reflection of inadequate preparation due mostly to activities during the school year which militate against completion of the topics.

As stated in earlier subject reports, candidates seemed ill-prepared to address questions that did not follow the established pattern of previous years. This suggested that candidates rarely focused on the objectives set out in the syllabus and, as such, when questions deviated from the perceived pattern of earlier years, they found it difficult to present answers beyond the usual. The most striking example from Unit 1, Paper 02 was Question 2 which required a discussion of the lifestyle and social arrangements of the Amerindians. Examiners agreed that candidates usually prepared questions on the economic and political arrangements of the indigenous peoples of the Americas and so wrote on those arrangements. Once again, students and teachers are urged to use the syllabus to prepare for the examination so that all the possible interpretations of a theme as guided by the stated objectives can be explored and examined. It is also important

that teachers assist students to become familiar with the language/vocabulary of history. Every effort should be made to use the language of the discipline in teaching so that students become familiar with the associated terms.

Paper 03/1 – Internal Assessment (IA)

This paper is the Internal Assessment for Units 1 and 2. In general, students adhered to the word limit stipulated by the syllabus, and produced work of acceptable quality. However, the moderation exercise revealed that the problems identified in 2009 persisted with glaring weaknesses as follows:

- Poor construction/conceptualization of thesis statements;
- Overuse of narration at the expense of analysis; and
- Failure to adhere to the conventions of writing history as it relates to referencing.

The following additional concerns need to be addressed by teachers and students:

- Over reliance on CSEC texts which helps to account for an inadequate level of analysis;
- Failure to provide the historical setting for research papers;
- Overuse of headings and subheadings in the body of the work which distract from the flow of the work;
- Failure to demonstrate an understanding of what goes into the conclusion of a paper by introducing new information at the end;
- Ignoring the time frame of the syllabus;
- Failure to carefully select topics which represent CAPE rather than CSEC themes and the need to select topics which fit the time period of the syllabus;
- Need to pay attention to the historical context of the selected topic;
- Need to use appropriate literature (advanced texts rather than texts more appropriate for the lower school or CSEC) and credible sources.

It is evident that most teachers followed the stipulated criteria for marking the research papers and that documents submitted were well completed. However, care should be taken to avoid giving more marks than are allotted for the criteria.

Paper 03/2 – Alternative to Internal Assessment (IA)

This paper is the alternative paper to the IA for private candidates in both units. Although the number of candidates increased, performance continues to be weak.

Candidates were expected to respond to four questions (3–6) after they indicated the topic of their research project. In general, the formulation of the topic was poor; little was provided beyond the restating of the theme's title and, when this was attempted, it was not well stated. The stated reasons for the selection of the topic (Question 3 — the rationale) demonstrated that,

in general, there was very little historical understanding. The reasons given were highly personal.

The procedure for citing sources and their evaluation was clearly not understood by candidates (Question 4). In fact, there was little indication that there was any understanding of what constituted an acceptable source.

Questions 5 and 6, which comprised the main part of the paper, were not well done. Candidates were unable to adequately fit their research topic into the wider context of Caribbean history. This requirement suggested that they were restricted to research on Caribbean history although the syllabus has a wider focus. Candidates found it difficult to provide the main findings of the research and the supporting evidence or assess the significance of the findings. At best, what was mostly presented was a basic narrative account on the topic.