

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2011

HISTORY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The format of the examination in CAPE History is similar for Units 1 and 2. The year 2011 marked the third 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 questions and candidates were required to answer two of these with clearly stated and well-developed arguments.

Paper 031, the School-Based 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.

For Paper 032, the alternative to the School-Based Assessment, private 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.

In both Papers 031 and 032, candidates were expected to demonstrate mastery of skills related to the discipline of history. These skills include interpretation and evaluation of sources by assessing the usefulness of the sources used in their research, collation and synthesizing of research data by providing the setting and the context of the topic, identifying the main historical data found and commenting on the significance of those findings. An important feature of this paper is the requirement that there should be proper referencing for all sources using the referencing style of the discipline of history.

DETAILED COMMENTS

UNIT I

Paper 01 – Multiple-Choice Questions

This paper used multiple-choice questions to test candidates' coverage of all three modules. The focus was on knowledge of the themes as well as interpretation and analysis of historical data. Each of the three modules provided 15 questions for a total of 45 questions. Most candidates seemed to respond adequately to what was expected in this paper. However, some candidates still struggled with the skills required to treat questions that were not strictly based on recall of knowledge. Every effort should be made to help candidates to develop the skill of deductive reasoning to treat the higher-order questions which require skills of interpretation and analysis.

Paper 02 – Structured Document-Based Questions and Extended Essays

This paper examined candidates' depth of knowledge of the content of the syllabus, their understanding of historical interpretation and debate, and their ability to present a well-structured, clearly expressed and coherent historical argument based on the evidence.

Module 1: Indigenous Societies

Question 1

This question had three short extracts from primary documents on the civilizations of the indigenous American peoples and the arrival of the Spaniards. Candidates were asked four questions (a–d) related to the two issues as developed in these extracts. Candidates were expected to use the extracts to stimulate their recall of the cultures of the indigenous peoples and the circumstances of the arrival of the Spaniards in the Caribbean and the mainland of South America.

Candidates were expected to write short answers with reference to the issues discussed in the extracts. The challenges identified in the past were still evident this year. There were mixed responses: some information was widely known but some candidates were not able to link extracts with specific indigenous groups. Some candidates continued to treat the document questions as comprehension questions, using quotations from the extracts to give answers instead of bringing their knowledge to bear on the issues identified in the question. It was clear that candidates need to pay attention to the political geography related to the issues/themes studied and to get practice in writing answers required for this type of assessment.

Question 2

This question required an essay to examine the debate among historians and assess the claim of a West African presence in the Americas before the arrival of Columbus. This was a fairly popular question and candidates were aware of key issues in the debate. However, they tended to recount the elements of the argument without discussion, debate or critique. They ignored the instruction of the question to assess the view.

Question 3

This question required an examination of the effects of Spanish settlement on the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean up to 1600. This was a popular choice and there were some excellent responses. However, most responses were generally satisfactory. There was a clear imbalance in the responses: candidates had detailed knowledge of the demographic disaster, knew very little about settlement on the mainland as against the islands and too often focused on conquest instead of settlement. This again suggested the need for candidates to expand and deepen their knowledge of the historical geography of the regions whose history they study.

Module 2: Slave Systems – Character and Dismantlement

Question 4

This question had three short extracts from primary documents that related to chattel slavery in the Caribbean. Candidates were required to answer four questions (a–d) on this theme as it was discussed in the extracts. While this was not a popular question, some candidates attempted it. The responses were poor, largely because candidates found the higher-order questions difficult. Parts (c) and (d) required some abstraction and a comparison of the data in the document. The candidates were obviously weak in the skills of interpretation and analysis, skills that are crucial for the use of primary documents. Candidates' performance not only reflected limited knowledge of the internal marketing system, but also an inability to make the distinction between urban and rural survival strategies employed by the enslaved.

Question 5

This question required candidates to discuss the view that one of four anti-slavery rebellions failed to achieve its primary objective due to a combination of factors. Candidates were expected to identify the primary objective of the selected rebellion and to discuss whether or not the objective was achieved. Candidates were expected to provide evidence for the position taken. There were some good responses but the majority of the responses gained marks at the lower end of the range of marks.

The less than satisfactory performance of a number of candidates revealed that they did not have a clear understanding of historical time and were unable to make a distinction between course and causes, elements that are central to the study of any historical event. Candidates were not able to make a distinction between the 1831–32 and the 1865 rebellions in Jamaica.

In many instances, there was no distinction between rebellions during slavery and after slavery and this raises serious questions as to candidates' understanding of a basic feature of the discipline – timeline. Candidates need to be exposed to the concepts of 'cause' and 'consequence' (important second order concepts) and how to analyse the course of events to understand these. If candidates could achieve this it would move the writing of their essays beyond narrative accounts that lack a discussion of the specific issues raised in the questions.

Question 6

This question required a discussion on whether or not one of three laws which ended slavery in the Caribbean was designed to compensate the planters. Candidates were expected to focus on the provisions of the laws and discuss who the beneficiaries were —the planters or the enslaved. Not many candidates selected this question and, in most instances when it was attempted, candidates selected the 1833 Act which ended slavery in the British Caribbean. The laws which ended slavery in the French and Spanish Caribbean were rarely attempted. The question was poorly done because it was widely misunderstood. Candidates were unprepared for this question although the syllabus includes the 'legislative dismantlement of the slave systems' and 'passing of the Emancipation Acts'. The responses suggested that some candidates lacked the knowledge required and had prepared for questions on the decline thesis, the process of or steps to, emancipation and what occurred after emancipation. Once again, candidates seemed confused about chronology in history.

Module 3: Freedom in Action

Question 7

This question consisted of three short extracts from primary documents that related to the social and economic experiences of the Chinese, Indian and Portuguese immigrants during the indentureship and post-indentureship periods. Candidates were asked to answer four questions (a–d) related to the extracts. This was the most popular of the document questions and the overall responses were barely satisfactory which suggested that candidates' knowledge of immigration was inadequate, especially as it related to the Portuguese as a distinct immigrant group. The responses also suggested that candidates were not very knowledgeable about the attitude of the colonial government towards the immigrants and how the ruling class facilitated the integration of the Portuguese. Candidates found difficulty interpreting at the appropriate level as they lacked the relevant breadth of knowledge required. The responses reinforced what was concluded from the other document questions (1 and 4)—that candidates found the document analysis challenging and, in far too many instances, reverted to regurgitation of what was in the documents.

Question 8

This question required an essay discussing the strategies used by the British-colonized Caribbean to attain independence in the 1950s and 1960s. This was not a popular question and when attempted it was poorly done. Once again, candidates were unsure of the time period addressed and the sequencing of events to produce the causes of another event. It appeared that some candidates prepared for a question on integration and so wrote on that — Federation, CARIFTA, CARICOM. Others who had some understanding of the question wrote mainly on Federation.

Question 9

This question asked candidates to account for the failure of the movement for independence in the French-colonized Caribbean up to the 1990s. This was one of the unpopular questions and speaks to what appears to be a challenge in teaching the history of the Caribbean to candidates in the English-colonized Caribbean. In most instances, the focus is on the English-colonized Caribbean and so candidates demonstrate a lack of knowledge of the other areas of the region. Knowledge of the French Caribbean was of Haiti, especially of the period leading up to the revolution in 1791. As a result, candidates more often than not wrote of Haiti's 'movement' to independence although the question asked about the 'failure of the movement' and addressed the twentieth century. While this misinterpretation was likely due to lack of knowledge, it invariably returns to a recurring problem—understanding the time period.

General Comments

Candidates' selection of questions and their general performance on this paper indicated that they were ill-prepared for the second half of the Unit 1 syllabus. The last four questions on the paper, especially Questions 8 and 9, were poorly done as candidates not only lacked the knowledge required to give satisfactory responses but were unable to relate the questions to the historical timeline. Contributory factors may relate to the schools' calendar and

competition from co-curricula activities such as sports and other events which reduce instructional time.

An equally important issue seems to be lack of resources. This was demonstrated in the type of sources used in the School-Based Assessment projects and those cited in essays. The texts used were those written for the CSEC level. As such, candidates may not be exposed to the texts that will improve the depth of knowledge, level of interpretation and analysis required for advanced level studies. With these limitations, some candidates continue to focus on the familiar and seek to spot questions rather than prepare for the examination guided by the objectives set out in the syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to help candidates to be familiar with the requirements of each section of the syllabus—module, objectives and themes—to provide a greater understanding as to where each topic fits. Teachers are also urged to use instructional time to have candidates practise document analysis and prepare and discuss responses to essay items which demand a range of performances—assess, compare, discuss, among others.

UNIT 2

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice Questions

In this paper there were 15 questions from each of three modules for a total of 45 questions. The questions required candidates to have extensive knowledge of the themes as set out in the syllabus and were designed to test candidates' ability to recall and analyse historical information and evaluate and assess claims made against historical evidence. While the performance of the candidates was generally satisfactory, it is important to emphasize that this paper tests more than candidates' ability to recall information. Candidates are expected to apply all the interpretive skills that are key components of the practice of history. Candidates are to prepare for this paper just as adequately as they prepare for the essay paper.

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 European Enlightenment. Candidates were required to study the extracts and then answer four questions (a—d) on themes developed in the extracts. The responses suggested that this was not a particularly popular topic which proved surprising as, in the past, candidates seemed fairly conversant with the Enlightenment and produced some good responses. This question was poorly done as candidates encountered challenges decoding the questions, particularly Parts (b) and (d). The overall treatment of this question reinforced what has become obvious—candidates were not well prepared for the document questions. They struggled with the analysis of the documents and the higher-order questions, and the synthesis of knowledge from different sources.

Question 2

This question required knowledge of the reasons behind European settlements in the Americas up to 1763. Candidates were expected to discuss the assessment that economics was the motivation for settlement and should have included a discussion and evaluation of the

reasons for European settlement in the Americas. The responses were satisfactory but revealed many gaps in candidates' knowledge of the theme as well as some serious misconceptions. Candidates tended to focus on the settlement by the Spaniards only, ignoring the English, French and Dutch. They also tended to write about conquest rather than settlement. One area of confusion was between African slavery and the *encomienda* system.

Question 3

In this question, candidates were required to discuss the factors that led to the outbreak of the French Revolution, with special reference to the role played by royal incompetence. It was expected that candidates would give a position statement indicating the relative importance of the failings of the Crown, socioeconomic problems characteristic of the *Ancien Regime* and other developments such as famine and inflated prices. The question was fairly well done with some excellent responses which demonstrated that the topic was well known. However, some candidates wrote of the Haitian Revolution and of a King Nicolas instead of the French Revolution and King Louis.

Module 2: Atlantic Development – Identity and Industry

Question 4

This question had three short extracts from primary documents on the emergence of the United States of America as an industrial power and the consequences of this development. Candidates were required to answer four questions (a—d) on the theme as presented in the documents. The question was the most popular of the document questions but candidates were clearly challenged by the technique of document analysis. The weakness in this area resulted in a generally weak performance on this question.

Candidates generally lacked depth of knowledge of the theme and sometimes confused the British Industrial revolution with the industrial revolution in the USA. The responses demonstrated that candidates did not know the specific factual details that were expected. Most surprising was their lack of understanding of terms/concepts such as 'labour movement'. This suggested that candidates need to get familiar with the vocabulary of the discipline and the substantive concepts which relate to the topics studied.

Question 5

This question addressed the interest of the United States of America in the Caribbean from the early nineteenth century to 1945. Candidates were required to write an essay that explained the motivation for the USA's involvement in the Caribbean. Generally, responses were good but too many candidates were unclear about the political geography addressed by the question, and were not aware that they needed to write a response from the perspective of the USA. Too often the focus was on what the USA did rather than why they got involved in the Caribbean.

Question 6

This question required an essay on the consolidation of independence in either Brazil or Venezuela. Candidates were required to *either* discuss the view that, for Brazil, consolidation was relatively easy between 1822 and 1840 *or* account for the challenges encountered by

Venezuela in consolidating its independence between 1811 and 1830. The question on Brazil was the more popular one and candidates were obviously familiar with the content. However, they wrote narrative accounts rather than focused on the requirements of the question.

Few candidates selected the question on Venezuela and it was not well done. Generally, candidates struggled with writing analytic responses. Candidates were unable to use their knowledge of the movements for independence, the delay in gaining recognition, the reasons for the delay or the factors which facilitated the recognition, in answering the question. They seemed to struggle with the term ‘consolidate’ and this revealed that candidates need to expand their reading in keeping with the requirements of advanced level history.

Module 3: International Relations – Conflict and Liberation

Question 7

This question consisted of three short documentary extracts on the outbreak of World Wars I and II. Candidates were asked to answer four questions (a—d) related to the extracts. This was the most popular of the three document questions, and though there were a few good responses, the majority of candidates who attempted this question encountered challenges. The treatment of the question confirmed that candidates found it difficult to apply knowledge to problem solving. Too many candidates were unable to distinguish between foreign policy (the focus of the question) and domestic policy and so spent time addressing what Hitler did within Germany.

Question 8

This question required discussion of the factors that contributed to the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, with specific reference to the role of World War I. Candidates were expected to address the fact that there was no one explanation for the outbreak of the revolution and that it was caused by an interplay of factors. The question was not only popular but was well done by several candidates. Given that a number of candidates did well on this question, it was of some concern that some candidates were unable to dissect the question and wrote on World War I instead of the Bolshevik Revolution. Every effort must be made to incorporate analysis of questions in preparation for the examination.

Question 9

This question required candidates to examine the reasons for the national liberation movement in South Africa from the 1950s to the 1990s. Several candidates wrote very good responses but too many of the responses indicated the challenges faced by candidates in applying knowledge to problem solving, that is, how to interpret questions. Candidates’ responses seemed to suggest that they studied the biography of Nelson Mandela and so wrote on his contributions or gave an account of his biography instead of reasons for the movement.

General Comments

Candidates’ performance was generally better in Unit 2 than in Unit 1. There was the recurring concern as to the extent to which candidates were prepared for the examination and adequately focused on the objectives and themes as set out in the syllabus. Candidates were especially challenged by the document questions, and many seemed to be lacking in the skills needed for the document analysis. For the essay questions, in both Units 1 and 2, it seemed

that candidates were not sufficiently exposed to diverse types of questions and so found it difficult to interpret some questions. For example, questions which provided a statement and asked candidates to respond to the claim of the question proved especially challenging.

Candidates seemed distracted by the statements or failed to read them fully before beginning a response. In some instances, it appeared that they either did not read the questions fully or prepared particular questions and so reproduced whatever was prepared. Question 8 in Unit 2 was an example where candidates wrote on World War I instead of on the Bolshevik Revolution. Some candidates clearly need to be taught how to dissect questions and should be exposed to the different ways in which questions are formulated.

It is important to reiterate that attention must be given to inculcating the following requirements of the discipline of history:

- The importance of time. Every historical event or experience has a timeline and a context. Understanding the context and the time sequence helps in the explanation of history, that is, deciding on the cause of the event or the experience.
- Concepts that are characteristics of the discipline. This requires the explicit and purposeful teaching of historical concepts (concept teaching). This will certainly help candidates to differentiate between concepts such as war or revolt as against revolution, and should reduce the likelihood of candidates confusing concepts such as ‘emancipation’ and ‘independence’ as they did in the current exam.

Paper 031 – School Based-Assessment

This paper represents the School-Based Assessment for Units 1 and 2. Candidates were required to conduct independent research over the school year with ongoing guidance from teachers.

Candidates were expected to select a topic for research relevant to the syllabus and the unit studied, place the topic in its historical context, comment on the usefulness of the sources used in the research for the study of the selected topic, formulate a thesis, write a fluent, logical, well structured and coherent account of the research findings by providing evidence to support the stated thesis. It is important too that the research paper is properly referenced and a bibliography is provided in the format used in the discipline.

The samples moderated by the examiners revealed a number of weaknesses which suggested that there were challenges in interpreting the criteria provided in the syllabus as well as the demands of the discipline of history. Some of the challenges identified in the samples were as follows:

- Poor formulation of the topic: there was some confusion as to what constituted a topic as opposed to a thesis.
- Weak formulation of a thesis. In many instances, the thesis did not pose a problem – there was nothing to discuss or debate. In two instances candidates had used questions from past CAPE examinations as their thesis statements. Candidates are encouraged to do their own research and so generate their own theses.

- Inadequate critique and use of the sources. There was very often no comment on the usefulness of the sources. Sources were not used critically, with quotes given from them and presented as part of the narrative. The problem identified here was indicative of the problem encountered by candidates in answering the documentary questions in Paper 02.
- Lack of understanding of setting and context. Candidates need to be guided in understanding the difference between setting and context and how to use such to interpret the data extracted. Some candidates were unable to narrow or focus the context for their papers and oftentimes went too far back in time, utilizing a considerable portion of the words allowed to provide this context.
- Synthesis and presentation of the research finding proved challenging as very often the final paper was a narrative account with very little discussion of the issues. The categories of analysis should be clearly linked to the issues raised in the thesis and should be clearly identified. The use of subheadings within the ‘body’ of the paper can help to give focus to it.
- The application of the rules of the historian’s craft especially as they related to the referencing style was frequently ignored. Candidates seemed unaware of the style used in the humanities and history in particular.

Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

This paper is the alternate to the School-Based Assessment for private candidates in both units. The candidate population continues to be very small and performance continues to be unsatisfactory. As with the School-Based Assessment, candidates seemed to encounter challenges in interpreting the requirements of the syllabus. The questions which guided candidates in reporting their research findings produced unsatisfactory results. Candidates continued to encounter challenges in completing the following aspects of the report:

- Formulating the topic. It was often vague, not specific enough, which suggested that candidates were not very conversant with the theme from which it was selected.
- Giving a rationale for selecting the topic. More often than not the rationale had no relation to the topic and no historical content.
- Identifying the sources used. Usually the type of source was given—books, newspapers, even museums, but rarely specific sources. The sources specifically identified were not usually suitable for research at this level.
- Assessing the usefulness of the sources. Performance on this aspect was clearly linked to the fact that many candidates were unable to present satisfactory sources.
- Setting the topic in its historical context. The phrase ‘up to the contemporary period’ in the question may have led some candidates to try to link the topic to the modern period, even if the topic came from the earliest times.

- Presenting findings. In most instances, the presentation was basic recall with no clearly stated focus, lacking in structure, argument and analysis. There was usually no well articulated conclusion to demonstrate the significance of the findings.