

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

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HISTORY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The examination in CAPE History maintains a consistent format for both Units 1 and 2. Since 2009, Paper 01 in both units has been 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 contributes 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.

In Paper 02, there are nine questions and candidates are required to answer three. This paper contributes 50 per cent to candidates' overall grade and assesses 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 and bring knowledge from the secondary material to bear in addressing questions. Candidates were required to answer one of the three document-based questions. The responses were to be reasoned, clear and well-developed and specific to the issues raised. The other six questions were extended essay questions and candidates were required to answer two of these with clearly stated theses and sub-theses and well-developed and structured arguments.

Paper 031, the School-Based Assessment component, required candidates to submit a research paper on a topic selected from one of the several themes in the syllabus. This paper contributed 20 per cent to the overall grade of candidates.

For Paper 032, the Alternative to 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.

Candidates were expected to demonstrate mastery of skills related to the discipline of history in both Papers 031 and 032. 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 1

Paper 01 – Multiple-Choice Questions

This paper tests candidates' coverage of all three modules. It comprises 15 items from each of the three modules for a total of 45 questions. The items focus on knowledge of the themes as well as interpretation and analysis of historical information. While most candidates seemed to respond satisfactorily to what was expected in this paper, some candidates found it challenging to respond correctly to questions requiring skills that were not strictly based on recall of knowledge. Candidates should be prepared to apply the skill of deductive reasoning and interpret and analyse so that they can master higher order questions.

Paper 02 – Structured Document-Based Questions and Extended Essays

Paper 02 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 with supporting evidence.

Module 1: Indigenous Societies

Question 1

This question had three short extracts from primary documents on the early contact between West Africans and Europeans up to 1492. Candidates were asked four questions (a–d) related to the issues as developed in these extracts. They were expected to use the extracts to help them recall the circumstances which led to contact between the people of West Africa, the assumptions held by the Europeans and the outcome of the encounter.

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 as 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 also clear that candidates need to pay attention to the time period cited in the preamble to the documents, the documents themselves and the questions asked. It is important that every attempt is made to delineate the phases in the expansion of Europeans into the Atlantic World so that candidates can be better prepared to apply the right body of knowledge to the questions asked.

Question 2

This question required an essay to compare the political and social organization of two selected indigenous groups in the Americas at different levels of development. This was the most popular question on this paper and most candidates had some knowledge of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. A few candidates provided masterful responses in comparing the two groups with clearly defined categories of analysis; however, there were those who just described in sequence the different features of these civilizations. Some candidates still have challenges identifying the historical data relative to the concepts of *political* and *social*.

Question 3

This question required a discussion of the relative role of diseases from Europe in the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Candidates were expected to not only discuss the impact of diseases but to say why these diseases proved to be such massive killers and discuss other contributory causes of the conquests, once they discussed the role of diseases. Most candidates who attempted this question were conversant with the role of diseases but there were those who focused on the role of diseases to the exclusion of all other factors. They ignored the requirements of the question to *discuss the extent*, that is, make an assessment.

Module 2: Slave Systems – Character and Dismantlement

Question 4

This question had three short extracts from primary documents that related to the dismantling of the slave system in the Caribbean. Candidates were required to answer four questions (a–d) on this theme as it was discussed in the extracts. This was a fairly popular question but some of the responses were somewhat surprising; candidates were unable to make a distinction between the abolition of the slave trade and slavery as well as to distinguish between what led to/cause [reason for] and the aftermath/effect/consequences. Too many candidates wrote of the examples of gradualism, for example, the apprenticeship system, rather than the reasons for that approach. This, as with so many other questions which require candidates to consider causes, indicate that there is a challenge for candidates as it relates to causation in history. This is an important part of the discipline and every effort should be made to clarify this for candidates.

Question 5

This question required candidates to provide well-developed explanations of the philosophical and institutional foundations of chattel slavery by delineating the justification provided for its existence and the structure put in place to support its institutional framework. Candidates were expected to demonstrate an understanding of the contradictions inherent in the system, paying specific attention to the activities of the enslaved in carving out an economic and culturally *independent* life of their own. This was the least popular question. It was clear that candidates were not introduced to the idea of contradictions in the system of chattel slavery. A few candidates were not aware of the distinction between the encomienda system and chattel slavery.

Question 6

This question required candidates to discuss the reasons for the success of the Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804. Candidates were expected to identify the fact that the revolution was more than a slave revolt and that the different components of the revolution — slave revolt, war of independence and international war — contributed to the difficulties France and the ruling classes in St Domingue faced in suppressing the revolt. A significant number of candidates selected this question and, in most instances, demonstrated some knowledge of the revolution. However, many responses indicated that candidates were challenged by the demands of the question even though the wording was straightforward. The problem identified was not specific to this question — it related to candidates' ability to interpret the question, how to use knowledge and how to distinguish between the cause of an action and the action itself.

Module 3: Freedom in Action

Question 7

This question consisted of three short extracts from primary documents that related to the social and economic reconstruction in Haiti, 1804–1825. Candidates were asked to answer four questions (a–d) related to the extracts. The responses suggested that candidates were not very knowledgeable about the post-independent development of Haiti. The responses reinforced that candidates found the

document analysis challenging and suggest that candidates need to be encouraged to reflect on the *facts* of history in order to develop a sense of historical understanding and to aid them in interpretation.

Question 8

This question required an essay discussing the factors which led to the development of the integration movement within the British Caribbean. Candidates were expected to examine both internal and external factors and address significant attempts at integration — Federation, CARIFTA and CARICOM. Candidates were not ignorant of the topic but some saw integration as equal to Federation while others could tell of the attempts at integration, discussing milestones, but were unable to enunciate the factors.

Question 9

This question asked candidates to account for the ascendancy of Fidel Castro as leader of Cuba in 1959. They were expected to indicate in the responses that Castro's rise to power/leadership in Cuba was due not only to his brave and revolutionary actions and the socio-political conditions of Cuba but also to his personality, demonstrated patriotism and the support of other leaders as well as the nature of Batista's regime. The responses indicated that candidates had a problem with historical timelines, and so causation in history. They too often wrote of Castro in power rather than Castro coming to power. There were also instances of incorporating events that were too far removed to have been a factor such as the ten years war of 1868–1878. A basic skill needs to be taught as a precursor to the teaching of causation — how to develop a timeline/dateline so that relationships between events can be recognized.

General Comments

This year's performance in this unit was below par and was surprising given the straight-forward nature of the questions. Candidates' general performance on this paper indicated that many were ill-prepared for the second half of the Unit 1 syllabus. An equally important issue continues to be the need for greater innovation in teaching familiar areas of history.

UNIT 2

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice Questions

This paper was designed to test candidates' ability to recall and analyse historical information, evaluate and assess claims made against historical evidence. There were 45 questions, 15 questions from each of the three modules. To answer the questions candidates were required to have extensive knowledge of most of the themes as set out in the syllabus, to recall information related to those themes as well as apply all the interpretive and analytic skills that are central to the practice of history. It is important to emphasize that candidates are expected to prepare for this paper just as adequately as they prepare for the essay paper. While the performance of candidates was generally satisfactory, there were some questions that proved challenging as candidates found it difficult to weigh the evidence provided to support or challenge a claim.

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 West African response to European contact up to 1800. 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 a popular topic which is in keeping with the fact that the slave trade is a popular theme in the schools' curriculum. Candidates however found Parts (c) and (d) difficult as they were unable to make the distinction between the *changes to West African society* because of impact of the trade in gold and slaves on West African society and the *changes in the nature* of the slave trade. The responses suggested that candidates treated the study of the trans-Atlantic trades as a trade between Africa and the Caribbean and did not give sufficient attention to all aspects of the trade, the dynamic nature of the trade and its changing impact on Africa.

Question 2

This question required candidates to assess the impact of the eighteenth century Enlightenment on the place of religion in European society — the church's control of education and intellectual life in Europe up to the eighteenth century. It was not a very popular question which was unexpected as in the past candidates demonstrated fairly good knowledge of the European enlightenment and its far-reaching impact. While this was not a popular question, only a few of those who attempted the question failed to relate the ideas with the central issues of the question, *the shift from the centrality of the religious thought...* Candidates were expected to do more than merely relate the ideas of the Enlightenment. An excellent response would address the issue of the centrality of religion and the shift from the centrality, the move towards secularization of the society, would note that the Enlightenment involved more than a reaction against religion, discussing its reaction against the political, social and economic systems of the age.

Question 3

In this question, candidates were required to discuss the consequences of the French Revolution of 1789 for France and the Atlantic World up to 1800. Candidates were expected to demonstrate knowledge that the French Revolution was a significant event which had repercussions beyond France. Essays should have addressed the impact in France and Europe as well as in the Americas, including Haiti. Most candidates demonstrated knowledge of the French Revolution but some wrote of the causes rather than the consequences. The confusion between causes and consequences suggests the need for candidates to be exposed to a template, a way to map historical events and to be guided in how to apply such a map/template to any and every event.

Module 2: Atlantic Development – Identity and Industry

Question 4

This question had three short extracts from primary documents related to the United States' intervention in the Caribbean and Latin America up to 1917. Candidates were required to answer four questions (a—d) on the theme as presented in the documents. The question was not only the least popular of the document questions but the responses were the weakest of the questions attempted in Module 2 in this paper. The responses demonstrated lack of knowledge of the specifics of the theme and a failure to pay attention to the timeline of the documents and the questions asked. The document questions continue to be a problem for candidates who tend to approach the question more as a comprehension exercise than as an analysis of historical documents to which knowledge of the wider historical context is brought to bear in problem solving.

Question 5

This question examined the claim that trans-Atlantic trades made an enormous contribution to Britain's industrial development. Candidates were expected to make reference to the debate among historians as to the contribution made by Britain's colonies of the Atlantic World to the Industrial Revolution. The responses should have included the claim that by the eighteenth century those involved in the Atlantic production had accumulated substantial profit that was needed and used in the industrial expansion. This was the most popular question in both the module and the paper in general and the performance was satisfactory. However, while most candidates were knowledgeable about the slave trade, too often the links were not made between the trade and the specifics of the question ; some responses dwelled too much on the trade itself and examined the effect on Africa. Points made were not effectively developed. The best responses discussed the contribution of the trans-Atlantic trades to the British Industrial Revolution and demonstrated awareness of the fact that there was a debate among historians — some candidates were able to do this and produced balanced responses.

Question 6

This question required candidates to discuss the main features of national development in either Brazil or Venezuela after independence and up to 1900. Candidates were expected to focus their explanation on political, economic and social aspects of national development in Brazil or address both the political and economic development of Venezuela from the recognition of independence in 1823 to the end of the nineteenth century. The question was the least popular of the paper but for those who chose to do this question, the majority selected Brazil. The responses were generally weak with knowledge of Venezuela very limited. The responses for Brazil too often discussed factors leading to independence rather than the features of national development. The quality of the responses reflected a weakness noted generally — candidates are challenged in differentiating between cause and effect. The study of historical phenomena often ends with the culmination of the situation with little attention given to the aftermath.

Module 3: International Relations – Conflict and Liberation

Question 7

As with other documentary questions, this question consisted of three short documentary extracts. These extracts were related to Nazism in Germany up to 1945. Candidates were asked to answer four questions (a–d) related to the extracts. This was not the most popular of the three document questions, and those who attempted it did not do a good job; too often they merely summarized and repeated the contents of the document. Generally, this question was poorly done, though Parts (c) and (d) were better handled than the other parts.

Question 8

This question required candidates to assess the contribution of Nelson Mandela to the liberation movement in South Africa. Candidates' responses should have focused on the leadership role played by Mandela as well as the strategies he designed to undermine the system of apartheid while addressing other factors in the liberation movement, including the role of others who shared in the movement. It was not a popular question and those who attempted it tended to write descriptive accounts and to write generally on Mandela's background with little substantive discussion on his contribution. Here a recurring issue was identified in candidates' responses — difficulty in the use of knowledge through interpretation and analysis geared at problem solving.

Question 9

This question required candidates to discuss the view that World War II resulted not only from the actions of Germany but also from the policies of Britain and France. Candidates were expected to demonstrate that they were critically aware of the significance of Germany's aggression as well as the importance of the Anglo-French policy of Appeasement in the unfolding of the events that contributed to the outbreak of war in 1939. They should have noted the connection between the two World Wars in explaining Germany's responsibility. This was a fairly popular question and saw candidates performing better than they did on Questions 7 and 8. However, they tended to focus on the drafting of the Treaty of Versailles and limited the discussion to the role of Britain and France in that, ignoring the appeasement policy which followed. Candidates' responses reflected limited preparation and a lack of understanding of the different historical linkages, the possible relationship between consequences of one event and the causes of events which followed.

General Comments

As noted in the past, candidates' performance was generally better in Unit 2 than in Unit 1. While the questions were quite straightforward, candidates were challenged in applying knowledge to the problem to produce a reasoned response. Candidates continued to be challenged by the document questions; responses suggest that they still have difficulty in applying knowledge to higher order questions. This difficulty was reinforced in the essay questions, in both Units 1 and 2. In some instances, it appeared that candidates prepared to answer specific questions and were unable to use the knowledge from such questions in other questions on the same theme. There needs to be a concerted effort to get candidates to prepare themes in conjunction with the specific objectives if they are to be given the best chance to produce excellent work.

Overall, in this year's examination, performance suggests that the majority of candidates lack wide ranging historical knowledge and were unable to write high level analytical essays as they did not have a good understanding of different historical interpretations. These limitations were not helped by the challenge they faced in producing very well structured and fluently written responses. These skills have to be taught.

It was observed, however, that where candidates in fact had knowledge of the topic related to the questions attempted but fell down in the use of their knowledge and struggled with the development of answers, essay writing skills/techniques seemed to be generally weak. Students need to learn how to answer essay questions; very often they produced rambling responses which lacked structure, and bore no relation to the question asked. These weaknesses adversely affected their performance. Students need to be taught how to develop a thesis, write an introduction, identify categories of analysis and write a conclusion. This will help them to focus on the theme of the essay, avoid rambling introductions and straying from the issue(s) addressed by the question. Interpretation of the instructions also proved a problem — what does *examine*, *evaluate*, *assess*, require of a candidate? Clearly, there is need for revisiting the higher order skills required in the practice of history.

It must be emphasized that candidates need to learn how to write a well-structured essay to include a clear and purposeful introduction and conclusion. These should lead to and follow from the relevant arguments presented in the development of the essay to substantiate their thesis which should be well established by the end of the introductory paragraph. Candidates need to pay attention to the syllabus and issues such as timeline, cause/consequence.

Paper 031 – School Based-Assessment (SBA)

This paper represents the SBA for Units 1 and 2. Students were required to conduct independent research over the school year with ongoing guidance from teachers and to demonstrate in the final project their understanding of the basic conventions of the discipline of history.

Students were expected to:

1. Select a topic for research relevant to the syllabus and the unit studied
2. Place the topic in its historical context
3. Comment on the usefulness of the sources used in the research for the study of the selected topic
4. Formulate a thesis
5. Write a fluent, logical, well structured and coherent account of the research findings by providing evidence to support the stated thesis.
6. Provide a properly crafted reference [foot/endnotes], citing authors used in the research and acknowledging the source of quotations
7. Provide a bibliography in the format used in the discipline.

This SBA component continues to be plagued by the same problems identified in the past:

- There was no clearly stated topic and there was continued confusion of the topic of research with the thesis. This view is strengthened by the way the cover sheet for the research paper is completed; the thesis is more often than not given as the title of the research paper.

- The formulation of a clear and testable thesis. Theses were poorly formulated.
- References were not properly done.
- Evaluation of sources — students cited sources, they did not evaluate them.
- Use of sources appropriate to CAPE level.
- Adhering to the conventions of the discipline.
- Development of arguments in support of thesis where identified.
- The need to be more analytic in their work, relying less on mere narrative.
- Teachers need to show evidence that projects have been examined by them.

There seems to be some confusion as to what should constitute the structure of the paper submitted and the criteria for assessment. This needs to be clarified if both the performance of students and the moderation process are to be advanced.

Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

This paper is the alternative to the SBA for private candidates in both units. Very few candidates register for this paper. Challenges identified with the alternative paper are long-standing ones. Some of these are given below.

- Candidates generally do not provide a topic for their project.
- Candidates launch into providing a rationale for doing a project on a topic not identified.
- Sources used are not identified with full bibliographic details; instead candidates write about the features of primary and secondary sources; they do not know how to reference Internet-based sources. Candidates have difficulty with assessing the usefulness of sources (Question 4b) and in discussing the historical setting (Question 5).
- Question 6 required candidates to give the major findings. They were rarely able to say what these were or to indicate their significance.
- In most cases, there was no clearly stated topic and there was continued confusion of the topic of research with the thesis.
- Theses were poorly formulated and references were not properly done. For Paper 032, candidates generally showed very limited knowledge of what constituted an appropriate source.
- Candidates struggled with deciding what constituted the historical setting and what was considered significant as required for Question 6(c).