



**CARIBBEAN
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL**

CSEC[®] CARIBBEAN HISTORY



Subject Report

May/June 2025

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE[®]
EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2025

**CARIBBEAN HISTORY
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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INTRODUCTION

This guide was compiled using candidate responses to the 2025 May/June examination in CSEC Caribbean History. There was an increase in the number of candidates registered to sit the examination. In 2025, 7899 candidates were registered when compared with 7749 in 2024 and 7738 in 2023.

The examination comprises the following papers.

- Paper 01 — Multiple Choice
- Paper 02 — Structured Questions and Essays
- Paper 031 — School-Based Assessment (SBA)
- Paper 032 — Alternative to School-Based Assessment (private candidates)

Paper 01 consisted of 60 multiple choice items and tested the core topics of the syllabus.

Paper 02 consisted of three sections: A, B and C, each corresponding with the three sections of the syllabus. Section A consisted of six structured questions and Sections B and C consisted of six essay questions each. Candidates were required to answer one question from each section. Each question was worth 25 marks.

Paper 031, the School-Based Assessment, consisted of three assignments or one project. Students, with the guidance of their teachers, were required to select a topic and write a project report or complete three assignments based on their research. Teachers marked the assignments and submitted a sample of students' work to CXC for moderation.

Paper 032, the Alternative to School-Based Assessment, was designed specifically for private candidates. Candidates were required to answer five questions based on a specific theme identified in the syllabus.

There was a slight increase in candidates' performance for 2025 when compared with 2024. In 2025, 66.39 per cent of candidates achieved Grades I–III while in 2024 the figure was 63.82 per cent. However, this still reflects a decline from the 72 per cent recorded in 2023.

For Profile 1, performance showed modest improvement, with 68 per cent of candidates receiving Grades A–C in 2025. This is an increase from 59 per cent in 2024, though it remains below the 71 per cent achieved in 2023. In contrast, Profile 2 experienced a decline in performance, as only 50 per cent of candidates earned Grades A–C in 2025, falling from 62 per cent in 2024 and 63 per cent in 2023.

PAPER 01 — MULTIPLE CHOICE

This paper assessed candidates' knowledge and comprehension across the core areas of the syllabus. The questions were evenly distributed and included ten items on chronology and general trends. Overall, performance was fairly good, with similar results across all topics. The mean score was 37.83 out of 60 (approximately 63 per cent), reflecting an improvement over 2024 when the mean was 35.60 (about 59 per cent).

PAPER 02 — STRUCTURED QUESTIONS AND ESSAYS

This paper assessed the nine themes from the optional section of the syllabus and tested both the Knowledge and Comprehension profile (Profile 1) and the Use of Knowledge profile (Profile 2). Overall, candidates' performance was weak. The mean score was 20.15 out of 75 (approximately 26 per cent). Candidates demonstrated stronger ability in Profile 1 questions, achieving an average of 47.71 out of 90 (approximately 53 per cent), compared with 35.48 out of 80 (approximately 44 per cent) for Profile 2.

Section A — Theme 1: The Indigenous Peoples and the Europeans

Question 1

This was the most frequently attempted question in this section. Scores ranged from 0 to 24 marks. It focused on the syllabus objective of describing the social, political, and economic practices of the indigenous peoples in the Americas up to 1492.

In Part (a), candidates were required to list four Caribbean islands inhabited by the Taino. For each correct response, candidates earned one mark. Most candidates scored three to four marks.

Correct responses included

- Cuba
- Jamaica
- Hispaniola
- Puerto Rico
- Turks and Caicos
- British Virgin Islands
- Anguilla
- Bahamas
- Trinidad

Candidates were required to describe two migration routes and one transportation vessel used by the indigenous peoples within the Caribbean Sea. This part, which was worth nine marks, was generally poorly done. Many candidates struggled to identify any of the accepted responses or provide adequate descriptions. Many of them mentioned migration via the Bering Strait, which was not accepted since the question focused on routes within the Caribbean Sea. While most candidates correctly identified the canoe as a transportation vessel, their descriptions were often incomplete and so they earned only one to three marks.

Candidates were expected to state two of the following migration routes.

- Greater Antilles — Utilizing canoes, indigenous people travelled from the Yucatán Passage in Central America to Hispaniola and Cuba. During the Archaic Age, migrants journeyed from Trinidad to the Greater Antilles, passing through the islands of the Lesser Antilles. Many of them settled in Puerto Rico, forging connections with peoples from southern Cuba.
- Lesser Antilles — Migrants from the Orinoco River region (modern-day Venezuela and Guyana) travelled through and settled in the Lesser Antilles, including Barbados, St. Vincent and Grenada.
- Northern Caribbean — Armed with stone technology, some indigenous peoples originating from the southern United States and Florida, migrated to The Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Candidates were expected to state one of the following transportation vessels.

- Canoes — Made from hollowing out a single tree, these dugout canoes were single-hull vessels capable of carrying two and ten people by paddle from island to island. Mahogany which could grow up to a 30–35 m in height were used.
- Piraga — A piraga or pirougue was a wooden boat made from a large tree. It could hold over 40–50 people and allowed large numbers of people to travel at once. These may have been made from red cedar which can grow up to 60-70 m in height. They were made using dugout technology, involving burning out a hollow in the wood and then chipping and planing it to the desired shape.

Part (c) required candidates to discuss three characteristics of Taino societies at the time of Spanish contact. This question was worth 12 marks. Although most candidates identified three characteristics, their responses were often underdeveloped. Possible areas for discussion included the following.

- Religious practices
- Societal structure
- Hierarchy
- Gender roles
- Leisure activities
- Taino groups
- Art
- Economic structure or Agriculture

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to do the following.

- Have students label Caribbean maps showing territories settled by the Tainos, Kalinagos, and Mayans as a teaching exercise.
- Trace the three migratory routes on classroom maps using arrows. Teachers should then allow students to write a narrative on each route to reinforce understanding and future success.
- Provide greater practice in answering questions that require extended responses. For example, plan a lesson where students use a schematic plan, listing an identifier point and three fully developed supporting points to earn all Use of Knowledge marks.

Question 2

Few candidates selected this question and overall their performance was poor. Scores ranged from 0 to 20 and the mean was approximately six to nine out of 25 marks.

Part (a) required candidates to state four reasons for the decline of the indigenous population during European contact. Candidates earned one mark for each correct response. Most candidates scored between two and four marks. The reasons accepted included the following.

- Diseases
- Suicide or Infanticide
- Warfare or Violence
- Forced labour
- Hunger, Famine or Starvation
- Entertainment
- Punishment

Part (b) required candidates to explain three effects of the encomienda system on the lives of the indigenous peoples. This part was worth nine marks. Many candidates struggled to identify three effects and provide adequate explanations for each. Most candidates earned between zero and three marks. Expected responses included effects such as

- forced labour
- conquest of lands
- destruction of civilization
- Spanish reliance on local crops and food sources
- depopulation of the indigenous people
- change of indigenous religious practices.

Part (c) required candidates to discuss three effects of the Columbian Exchange created by the transfer of plants and animals between Europe and the Caribbean. This question was worth 12 marks. Many candidates struggled to provide suitable responses and often repeated points from Part (b). The average score for this section ranged from zero to two marks.

Recommendations

- Teachers can introduce this topic by dividing the class into teams. Each team should select one reason for the decline of the indigenous peoples and prepare a brief presentation with four to five supporting facts, lasting no more than five minutes. After all presentations, a short discussion should be conducted to connect the interrelatedness of these reasons. As a culminating activity, have each student complete a one-minute individual reflection summarizing any four reasons.
- To ensure students achieve optimum marks, the following strategies could be implemented.
 - Encomienda System effect mapping: Each student should receive an A4 sheet to create a mind map. At the center, they should write “Encomienda System.” From this, branch out into the categories forced labour, loss of culture, population decline, and conquest of land. Under each category, students should list specific effects and examples. After, students present their maps in small groups, explaining how the encomienda system affected the lives of indigenous peoples.
 - Encomienda System under the spotlight: Assign each student the role of either an encomienda overseer or an indigenous person. Invite students to the front of the class to answer questions about the system’s effects on indigenous lives, such as forced labour, loss of culture, population decline, and conquest of land. Allow follow-up questions from classmates. Subsequently, allow students work in pairs to summarize three key effects in their own words, linking each to real historical examples.
 - Columbian Exchange impact poster/collage: Ask students to create a poster or collage using images and examples of plants and animals to illustrate the consequences of the Columbian Exchange. Each student should present their work to the class.
 - Journal entry on the impact of Columbian exchange: Students should create journal entries from the perspective of a Caribbean inhabitant and a European explorer during the Columbian Exchange. Each entry must include a detailed description of four impacts of the transfer of plants and animals such as new crops, diseases and environmental changes with specific examples.

Section A — Theme 2: Caribbean Economy and Slavery

Question 3

In Part (a), candidates were asked to list four ways in which land was utilized on a typical 18th-century plantation. While most candidates identified at least one use, stronger candidates provided all four. Common uses of plantation land included

- growing sugar cane
- slave huts
- the mill
- the estate house.

Part (b) required candidates to explain the processes of grinding, boiling, and curing. Most candidates correctly indicated that sugarcane was harvested and crushed to extract the juice during grinding. Stronger candidates explained that the cane was passed through rollers and should reach the mill within 48 hours. Some candidates also described the types of mills — animal, water and wind. These candidates also mentioned that enslaved people were sometimes employed to operate the mills. Most candidates correctly identified the steps involved during the boiling process. Candidates discussed steps such as adding lime and evaporating water from the juice. A few candidates noted that the juice was transferred through a series of progressively smaller and hotter pots. However, many candidates did not know the steps involved in boiling and confused boiling with curing and lacked sufficient detail. Candidates generally explained that the cooling down process occurred during curing and the thick syrup was placed in perforated hogsheads to allow molasses to drain. Some candidates noted that the extracted molasses was sent to the distillery for rum production. Frequent spelling errors and incomplete explanations reduced the overall quality of responses, and some candidates failed to earn Knowledge and Use of Knowledge points for this part.

Part (c) required candidates to analyse three factors that contributed to the misery, illness, and death of the enslaved. Many candidates misinterpreted the question, spending considerable time describing the capture of Africans and the Middle Passage, which resulted in lost marks. They failed to focus on conditions on the plantation as required. Those who responded correctly identified mistreatment, punishment, and disease as the main factors. However, most responses showed limited logical progression. Candidates discussed open wounds caused by the planter punishing the enslaved. They shifted abruptly from one point to another within the same paragraph. Many appeared unfamiliar with the use of topic sentences. Nevertheless, a few candidates produced coherent and logically structured responses.

Recommendations

Teachers should encourage students to write logical, well-structured explanations, particularly for Part (c). In addition, students need explicit guidance on how to approach questions that require listing, explaining, and analyzing. While some candidates responded appropriately, the majority struggled to meet these requirements.

Question 4

In Part (a), candidates were asked to list four social classes found in the Caribbean slave society. Most candidates were able to identify at least one class, namely the enslaved. However, some candidates listed categories of enslaved people rather than distinct social classes.

In Part (b), candidates were asked to explain three ways in which free persons were discriminated against in the 18th century Caribbean. This part was generally well answered by those who attempted it. Although many candidates did not use the term *social discrimination*, their responses reflected this concept. Most candidates provided adequate descriptions.

In Part (c), candidates were asked to discuss three ways in which the whites held Supremacy in a Caribbean Society. This part proved to be challenging. Some candidates were able to identify at least two points. However, many struggled to discuss *military power*, although they noted that planters possessed guns, which were no match for the weapons used by the enslaved. Indigenous population or immigrants and appeared confused about the focus of the question. Others responded well but did not use terms such as *economic power*. The word “power” rarely appeared in responses.

Section A — Theme 3: Resistance and Revolt

Question 5

In Part (a) (i) , candidates were able name two Maroon communities or groups in either Jamaica or Suriname. Weaker candidates were restricted to naming two Maroon communities and they seemingly unfamiliar with the names of groups. This was well done by many candidates.

In Part (a) (ii), candidates were able to supply the names of two leaders of Maroon communities in either Jamaica or Suriname. This was well done by many candidates.

In Part (b), candidates were able to identify conditions that facilitated the origin of Maroon communities. However, weaker candidates often confused conditions with consequences, which resulted in low scores.

In Part (c), candidates were asked to discuss the consequences of the development of Maroon communities in Jamaica, Suriname, or Guyana. This part of the question was poorly done by most candidates, as many appeared to lack knowledge of this aspect of the topic. In several cases, responses included points that were not actual consequences of the development of Maroon communities.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to do the following.

- Reinforce the names of Maroon groups or communities and leaders by using interactive games and quizzes.
- Emphasize the conditions which facilitated the origin of Maroon communities in Jamaica, Suriname or Guyana. To help students have a clear understanding of the difference between condition and cause, scenarios can be provided which require students to identify conditions.
- Provide activities which require students to discuss the effects or consequences of historical events.

Question 6

Part (a) was generally well done. In Part (a) (i), most candidates correctly stated the dates of the major revolts in Berbice and/ or Jamaica.

For Part (a) (ii), most candidates were able to name one leader from each of the major revolts mentioned in Part (a) (i).

In Part (b), candidates were required to explain three major causes of major revolts in Berbice and /or Jamaica. Many candidates were able to explain at least two reasons for the revolt in Berbice and/or Jamaica.

Part (c) was done fairly well done. Candidates were able to discuss the consequences of major revolts in Berbice and/or Jamaica.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to do the following.

- Use quizzes to reinforce the dates of slave revolts and the names of their leaders.
- Incorporate activities that require students to explain the causes of events when teaching about slave revolts. Cooperative learning tasks can also be included, where students research the causes of slave revolts and present their findings to the class.
- Provide key terms to guide students in researching and remembering the consequences of slave revolts.

Section B — Theme 4: Metropolitan Movements Towards Emancipation

Question 7

This question required candidates to write from the perspective of a travelling member of the anti-slavery society visiting the French and British Caribbean in 1831. This member was expected to present observations on amelioration in practice within the English and French West Indies. Most candidates who attempted this well and addressed the two similarities and three differences between British and French amelioration policies. However, they failed to clearly distinguish similarities from differences, resulting in low scores overall. A few candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the amelioration concept but were unable to do the comparative analysis required. Some candidates created their own version of amelioration or confused it with apprenticeship, scoring only one to three marks. Overall, scores ranged from three to fifteen marks, with very few candidates scoring above this range.

Recommendations

The general impression is that this topic was not taught in a way that emphasized both British and French amelioration. Students were more knowledgeable about British amelioration and could identify popular proposals such as guidelines for flogging, market days, and the prohibition of family separation. However, they were unable to make the required comparison, mainly due to limited knowledge of French amelioration.

To address this, greater emphasis should be placed on sourcing additional material on French amelioration. This will enable teachers to provide students with the content needed for more effective comparative analysis when teaching amelioration in the region.

Question 8

Under this theme for Section B, candidates handled Question 8 better than they did Question 7. Candidates were required to write from the perspective of an Antiguan planter in 1839, explaining two reasons why Antigua did not adopt the apprenticeship system and three reasons why the system failed in other territories. Most candidates wrote the letter from the first-person perspective of an Antiguan planter, while a minority adopted the perspective of a freed black. Many candidates struggled to adequately explain why Antigua did not implement the apprenticeship system. The most common response cited the acrimony associated with apprenticeship, while those who discussed Antigua's size and the wisdom of avoiding apprenticeship provided well-developed and logical points. Candidates demonstrated strong knowledge of why apprenticeship failed in the wider British Caribbean, frequently mentioning issues such as the inadequacy of Stipendiary Magistrates, wage disputes, working hours of apprenticeships, punishment and control, and the early termination of the system.

However, weaker candidates failed to develop their points, writing extensively about slavery or amelioration and displaying no knowledge of the reasons Antigua did not adopt the system. Several candidates focused on the negative aspects of slavery, emphasizing ideas of black inferiority versus white superiority in their capacity as an Antiguan planter and arguing that the enslaved were undeserving of freedom, wages, and basic provisions.

Recommendations

Commendations are due to teachers; however, greater emphasis should be placed on the time period (1834–1838), as the letter was intended to be written after apprenticeship ended in 1839.

Candidates should be allowed to conduct critical analysis of the reasons why Antigua opted not to have apprenticeship and the other British colonies. Teachers should encourage wider reading on this area and provide structured, step-by-step guidance so that points are fully developed and logically presented to earn maximum marks.

Section B — Theme 5: Adjustments to Emancipation, 1838–1876

Question 9

Most candidates adhered to the required perspective, with only a small minority ignoring it. Within this theme, many candidates provided responses on both impacts the free peasantry and the plantation economy. However, emphasis was placed primarily on the economic aspect. A few candidates mentioned negative impacts, such as how emancipation affected planters and plantations negatively.

The most popular correct responses included

- creation of free villages
- crop diversification
- economic independence
- economic diversification
- contribution to exports
- internal markets
- development of infrastructure
- disrupting traditional land ownership
- resurgence of African culture
- expansion of churches and schools
- social bonds
- solidifying families.

In contrast, the least popular responses given were

- economic enfranchisement
- injection of cash into the economy
- development of the Metairie (metayage) system
- social mobility
- new types of employment
- creation of co-operative and friendly societies
- disrupting the local labour market.

Overall, candidates' performance ranged from outstanding to less than satisfactory, with most falling within the satisfactory range.

Question 10

Many candidates adhered to the required perspective in this question. However, it was attempted by relatively few candidates, making it one of the less popular choices on the paper. Most candidates were unable to recall the reasons for the introduction of Crown Colony government. Few candidates performed at a satisfactory or above-average level and provided the most common correct responses which included the following.

- The Morant Bay Rebellion in relation to deteriorating socio-economic conditions
- Failure of Representative Government
- ORS representing the interest of the white oligarchy
- Fear that emancipation would lead colonial legislative bodies to be dominated by formerly enslaved people (people of colour)
- Concerns that ORS Planter-filled assembly wielded too much power on the legislative process

A few candidates wrote about features of a constitutional monarchy or a republican system of government. In contrast, a significant number of candidates provided no correct responses to the question. The responses to this question clearly indicate the challenges candidates faced in developing sound, accurate, and well-supported historical arguments.

The majority of candidates performed unsatisfactorily on this question, with only a small fraction achieving satisfactory to good scores.

Recommendations

Students should be taught to think critically about time period. They should be encouraged to envision themselves living in that era and experiencing their challenges and opportunities. This approach will help them engage more deeply with the material and strengthen their analytical skills.

Section B — Theme 6: Caribbean Economy, 1875–1985

Question 11

Candidates were asked to discuss factors that led to the establishment of service industries and the development of extractive industries in the Caribbean up to 1985, from the perspective of a journalist assessing economic diversification. Most Candidates did not clearly understand the concept or meaning of service industries. As a result, they were unable to provide relevant details or identify each service.

Recommendations

To mitigate these issues,

- Teachers, especially those in territories where tourism is a primary source of income should consider organizing field trips to locations involved in tourism.
- For extractive industries, teachers on smaller islands without such industries can arrange virtual tours to provide students with exposure to these operations.
- Teachers' ought to teach this concept by emphasizing
 - what led to the emergence of these industries
 - What were the mitigating factors that made it difficult for success to be obtained
 - what steps could have been taken to ensure success.

Question 12

Candidates were asked to explain two negative and three positive effects of industrialization in the Caribbean during the 1980s, from the perspective of a politician on a campaign. Although this question was very popular, many candidates lacked the factual knowledge needed to score well. As a result, they relied heavily on inferences rather than providing accurate information.

Recommendations

Many candidates gave limited explanations. For example, some mentioned pollution as a negative effect of industrialization but did not explain what pollution is or how it impacted the region, resulting in lost marks. Teachers should encourage students to provide complete explanations for each point.

Section C — Theme 7: The United States in the Caribbean, 1776–1985

Question 13

Overall, candidates' performance on this question was the poorest. The mean score was only 1.38 out of 25.

Many candidates did not understand the meaning of the word *espoused*, which led them to guess and provide answers unrelated to Theodore Roosevelt's time in office. Additionally, some candidates confused Theodore Roosevelt with Franklin Roosevelt and incorrectly listed the Good Neighbour Policy as one of Theodore's policies. Relatively few candidates were able to list two of Theodore's policies. The most common was the Roosevelt Corollary to Monroe Doctrine (MD) but even fewer could define or explain these policies. Those who mentioned the RCMD often provided the Monroe Doctrine as context for its implementation.

Candidates did not pay careful attention to the timeline. Many of them provided information irrelevant to Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. Some candidates focused on the timeline of the theme rather than the question itself and therefore included events such as the Grenada Revolution of 1983. A number of candidates were able to list three territories where the RCMD was applied but their examples were outside the correct time frame.

Responses on the use of the RCMD were vague. For instance, regarding the Panama Canal, candidates stated that the canal was already constructed instead of explaining how Roosevelt used the RCMD to secure permission to build it.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the terms and phrases used are consistent with those found in the students' texts. For example, the term *espoused* is not commonly used by today's youth.
- Based on experience, candidates perform better when they have a stimulus to guide them.
- Teachers should pay greater attention to preparing students for this theme (Theme 7 — The United States in the Caribbean, 1776–1985).

Question 14

Some candidates did not understand the difference between policies and programmes. As a result, they listed and described programs that Castro introduced, such as health, education, and housing, rather than policies. Those who demonstrated sound knowledge of this distinction were able to fully describe three policies. The most stated policies were the Agrarian (Land) Reform, nationalization of industries, and the adoption of communism. However, some candidates failed to provide sufficient context and evidence to support their arguments, which affected their overall performance.

Candidates generally knew the US response to Castro's policies and were able to describe the required two examples, with some providing more than two. However, others included the US response to Russia rather than focusing on the US response to Castro's policies. The most frequently cited response was the Bay of Pigs Invasion. Several candidates provided excellent answers, giving the correct historical context and specifics such as the date of the invasion, the involvement of the CIA and Cuban exiles living in the US, Castro's role in the invasion and the devastating effects for the US. The trade embargo was also a popular example, but it was not as well done. Many responses were vague and omitted the important detail that the ban was initially placed on the importation of Cuban sugar before being extended to all goods except medicine and food.

Section C — Theme 8: Caribbean Political Development up to 1985

Question 15

This was the more frequently attempted of the two questions in the section, although it was still answered by only a minority of candidates. Candidates were required to discuss three political and two socio-economic factors that led to the failure of the West Indies Federation in 1962. The question was clearly stated and most who attempted it demonstrated a general understanding of the reasons for the failure of the West Indies Federation. Commonly identified factors included

- Jamaica and Trinidad’s withdrawal
- insularity
- narrow political interests
- geographical separation
- under-representation
- the desire for independence.

However, while many candidates were able to list relevant points, they often failed to fully develop these ideas. It was also noted that some candidates struggled to distinguish between socio-economic and political factors, often categorizing them incorrectly. Although this did not result in penalties, it is important that candidates be taught to accurately identify and categorize these points in future responses.

Recommendations

For future preparation, candidates must be encouraged to strengthen their analytical and critical thinking skills. Greater emphasis should be placed on essay structure, argument development, and the effective use of supporting evidence. This will enable them to craft more coherent and insightful responses and ultimately achieve higher scores.

Question 16

Very few candidates attempted this question, and those who did generally misinterpreted its requirements. None of the responses met the expected standard to be used as a seed script. The question specifically required candidates to discuss alternatives to independence in the French, Spanish, and Dutch colonies. However, many candidates instead focused on unrelated topics such as apprenticeship, amelioration, and the abolition of slavery. As a result of this misinterpretation, all submitted responses fell within the Level Five band, with scores ranging from only one to two marks. This widespread misunderstanding may have been due in part to the complexity of the question. It is worth considering whether the question would have been better interpreted if it had asked candidates to examine alternatives to independence in one of the three colonial systems, rather than all three.

Section C — Theme 9: Caribbean Society, 1900–1985

Question 17

Candidates generally developed their answers using the essay format. Most demonstrated an understanding of the socio-economic conditions facing the poor or working class in the Caribbean between 1900 and 1935. Weaker candidates, however, recalled little to no historical details to discuss the nature of socioeconomic conditions facing the poor or working class in the Caribbean between 1900 and 1935. There were some instances where candidates wrote about the conditions under slavery or about the immediate post emancipation period and therefore did not obtain a satisfactory score. Very few candidates addressed issues such as overcrowding, access to land, cost of living, and education, and those who did provided underdeveloped responses. This was the most popular question attempted by candidates.

Recommendations

Commendation is due to teachers preparing candidates to use the essay format effectively. The question was clear and specific regarding the socio-economic conditions and the time period. However, some candidates wrote about conditions under slavery or the immediate post-emancipation period, which did not meet the requirements. Additionally, some candidates appeared to think the poor class was different from the working class, which needs clarification.

While housing and health were generally understood, candidates often confused unemployment with working conditions. Clear distinctions between these points should be taught. The concept of cost of living was also poorly understood by those who attempted it.

Question 18

Candidates were generally unable to clearly identify the women's groups and other organizations that sought to improve social conditions in the Caribbean up to 1985. As a result, most responses were unsatisfactory. The weaker candidates wrote stated the ways the social conditions were improved during the period of amelioration and apprenticeship. This was the least popular and poorly answered question by the candidates.

Recommendations

Commendation is due to teachers preparing candidates to use the essay format effectively. The question was clear and specific regarding efforts to improve social conditions by women's groups and other organizations within the stated time period. However, some candidates wrote about amelioration and apprenticeship period as ways to improve the conditions. Teachers should emphasize the correct time period and encourage the use of accurate historical terminology. They should also be guided to identify specific women's groups and organizations and explain their roles in improving social conditions. Many candidates wrote in general terms about women's groups or organizations and were unable to meet the requirements outlined in the mark scheme. Greater effort is needed to prepare candidates to be more analytical in their responses to these types of questions.

PAPER 031 — SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

This external paper is set and marked at the school level. The mean score was 26.14 out of 35 marks (74.70 per cent). This represents a decrease in performance when compared with 28.29 (80.83 per cent) in 2024.

A large number of students earned marks between 24 and 35. Students were able to gain marks easily in the section of the mark scheme devoted to language and writing conventions, rather than for historical knowledge and the collection and use of data and analysis.

Too many topics were based on common essay questions for which the answers are well known and predictable. The Sugar Revolution and the Haitian Revolution were among the most frequently chosen topics. There was evidence of candidates taking essays directly from online sources and presenting the work as their own. The use of AI was also detected, with no reference to sources in cases where this occurred. It also appears that some students may have used mark schemes from past papers to formulate SBAs.

Several projects were outside the time frame of the syllabus. For example, some compared the eighteenth century with the twenty-first century. Other topics were far too broad and lacked any time frame, making it difficult for students to stay focused on a particular argument or discussion. This resulted in descriptive rather than analytical projects.

A few projects were of very poor quality, presented mainly as collections of notes unrelated to the research question. Some candidates submitted projects in the format of Social Studies assignments, including questionnaires, interview schedules, and graphs.

Additionally, many projects included appendices with photographs but did not reference their significance or source.

Recommendations

The standardization process regarding SBAs needs to be more in depth as it was in the past. The emphasis must be on the quality and accuracy of marking by teachers and moderators rather than on the speed of marking.

There was evidence of widespread plagiarism and the use of AI. A clear strategy must be formulated to guide markers on how to address these issues. Subject teachers should ensure that students submit original work before submitting it. The SBA project should therefore be in a format that requires originality; otherwise, the validity of the SBA as an assessment tool becomes questionable if students do not demonstrate genuine effort.

PAPER 032 — ALTERNATIVE TO THE SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

This paper consists of five questions. Questions 1–4 required short responses while Question 5 required an extended response in the form of an essay. Generally, candidates adequately interpreted and analyzed the excerpts and used their background knowledge along with the excerpt to answer the questions effectively. The mean score was 8.76 out of 35 marks (approximately 25 per cent). This represents a decrease in performance when compared with 10.95 (approximately 31 per cent) in 2024 and 12.80 (approximately 37 per cent) in 2023.

Question 1

Only a few candidates recognized that the cameo in Source 1 was used as part of the antislavery campaign to sensitize the British public to the humanity of the enslaved. Most, however, simply described the inscription on it.

Question 2

In Part (a), all candidates were able to state that it was a diagram showing how enslaved people were packed into a slave ship.

In Part (b), few candidates recognized that the diagram was used by abolitionists, especially in the British Parliament, to portray the inhumanity of the slave trade. Most, however, simply stated that it was intended to show how a ship should be packed with enslaved people.

Question 3

For Part (a), responses were generally superficial and it appears that candidates did not pay close attention to the table presented. Most candidates simply stated that compensation was due to the number of slaves without looking at the correlation of numbers with the size of the territories, and the compensation given per slave.

For Part (b), most candidates were able to state that compensation was given to planters for the loss of labour.

For Part (c), candidates were asked to state the total compensation given to slave owners. The answer expected on the mark scheme was 20 million pounds which was the total amount paid by the British Government for all slave owners in the empire. However, a significant number of candidates added the numbers in the column of the table which related to the sums paid to Caribbean territories. They were awarded the mark for either answer, since the question did not specify.

Question 4

This question was not well done; candidates did not seem grasp the content of the text written in Source IV. These were higher-order questions that required analysis and interpretation.

In Part (a), Candidates were asked to identify the “strategic advantages” of apprenticeship. They did not understand that the question was requiring them to state that apprenticeship was supposed to benefit both planters and apprentices, by providing planters with extra years of free labour, and an opportunity for both slaves and planters to graduate to free labour.

In Part (b) This question asked candidates to state why a spirit of “reconciliation and compromise” was necessary for apprenticeship to work. Candidates were expected to recognise that the planters would have to adjust to the terms of apprenticeship for the system to work successfully, but as the text indicated, they were too used to “reliance on force and intimidation”

Question 5

Candidates were asked to examine the poster in Source V and state how it called apprenticeship another form of slavery and called for its immediate abolition. To answer the question, students would have had to identify five ways in which apprenticeship was similar to slavery; this would have required knowledge of the workings of the apprenticeship system. Most candidates were able to identify one or two reasons, but not four.

Recommendations

This paper is not usually well done; this may be due to the fact that candidates taking this paper are probably out of school and not being tutored. This year, candidates’ performance was especially poor. Knowledge of the topic is critical and effort must be put into thorough exam preparation.

Candidates taking this paper need to review a variety of sources on the topic being examined. Since the paper is based on the presentation of pictorial and written sources, it is critical that exam preparation be based not only on what the textbooks present on the topic, but on other forms of historical data.