

## HISTORY

### Overall grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	E	D	C	B	A
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 36

### General comments

The large majority of essays received posed no fundamental problem in terms of the application of the new criteria. Schools were aware of the new criteria and seemed to have instructed the candidates about the new requirements. A very welcome development was that it was noticed that several schools had read the May Subject Report and had followed the suggestions to teachers of how to improve the candidate's performance in this component.

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most of the subjects chosen were appropriate for historical investigation. However, there were a few instances of studies that were unhistorical in nature - either because they concentrated upon events and situations within the past 10 years, or because the topic would have better suited entry for another subject. Moreover, although many supervisors wrote comments, some did not.

This session did not present a problem with the word limits, all the essays observed the 4.000 words, but there were some in which teachers had allocated too much time to discussion of the essays with their candidates. Some schools reported 8 to 10 hours, a situation that must be corrected.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

#### **A: research question**

The research question was generally clearly stated early in the essay. However there were some occasions when it was left to the reader to infer the nature of the investigation.

#### **B: introduction**

Many candidates' introductions satisfactorily indicated their topic's historical context. But in some instances the significance of the topic was not explained. Very few discussed why the topic was worthy of investigation.

#### **C: investigation**

The range of sources consulted varied widely. Many studies were well planned, but in some cases the candidate only began directly to address the stated purpose of the enquiry in the latter stages of the essay. There was little critical evaluation of the sources and very limited understanding of the reliability of the internet-based sources.

**D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied**

Candidates often showed a good understanding of their topic. However in those essays that adopted a “to what extent ....?” approach, the range of argument was sometimes too narrow. Such a formula is highly commendable as long as candidates remember that it requires a critical review of a range of contributory factors.

**E: reasoned argument**

Many essays were characterized by logical and coherent argument. However such argument was not always directly focused upon the question. As noted in the May report, this criterion is connected to the research question. The more focused the question, the better the candidate will be able to construct an argument.

**F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject**

There was a wide variation in both the quantity and the quality of analysis provided. Some candidates relied excessively upon simply summarizing the analyses of other historians rather than offering their own judgments. Also only a few candidates attempted to evaluate some of their sources in terms of possible utility and reliability.

**G: use of language appropriate to the subject**

The use of language was appropriate in most of the essays. Ideas were generally communicated clearly. A weakness in this criterion was a reluctance to provide precise evidence in support of the assertions made.

**H: conclusion**

Concluding comments were generally consistent with the main body of the essay.

**I: formal presentation**

Most essays were well presented. Sometimes however references to printed sources omitted page numbers and the bibliographies failed to include all the works earlier cited. Essays without references, or bibliography, or those that exceeded 4,000 words scored 0 here. Minor infringements lost 1 mark for each. Most candidates scored 2 or 3 marks.

**J: abstract**

Most candidates did, or attempted to follow, the indications of the research question, scope and conclusion. Some essays that otherwise were of good quality did not indicate the investigatory approach that had been applied - explaining both the aspects considered and the nature of the sources consulted.

**K: holistic judgment**

In this area, the majority of the candidates got at least a point. The essays showed considerable variation in depth and insight. Some candidates applied commendable initiative in supplementing the more conventional historical sources with oral testimony

## Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- Teachers, candidates and examiners must study the new Extended Essay guide well, and note the slight variations from the past.
- Care to ensure that the subject is both appropriate for historical investigation and that it offers ample opportunity for analysis.
- More advice and help is needed about producing a sharply focused question.
- Tighter focus throughout the essay upon its stated purpose.
- Understanding the need to ensure that arguments are precisely substantiated
- Understanding of what is required in the Abstract.
- Awareness of the possible limitations of evidence.
- Only one draft should be thoroughly examined and criticised, but oral advice can be given at any time, as long as the supervisor is not over-supervising the candidate.
- The supervisor's report provides an opportunity to explain the background to the candidate's work (for instance commenting on the process and quality of the research). Reference to the viva voce (if one has been held) is also most helpful.