

OIB History-Geography Section britannique

Some indications of standards using sample scripts

With the change to the MEN syllabus, Cambridge specification, generic marking criteria and format of the written examination in the academic year 2012–13 it is time to make available new standards material using the work of actual candidates from the June 2013 session. This document accompanies 5 whole scripts as indicators of standards and overall achievement.

Each of the scripts in this selection comprises responses to the same two questions, Question 1 (History essay) and Question 3 (Geography document-based question) for ease of comparison.

Choice of scripts

The scripts have been chosen, first, to illustrate total marks of 05 Very weak; 08 Weak; 10 Bare pass; 13 Satisfactory; and 17 Good, which are the marks at the top of the levels in the generic marking criteria. No candidate achieved 20, which is the case most years, although some gained marks in the Very good band, of 18 and 19.

The scripts have also been chosen to show different approaches to the questions. Although concise work lends itself to becoming standards material, the scripts vary in length as well as quality. Furthermore, the selection comprises the work of candidates from different schools which was marked by several different examiners.

Some of the scripts demonstrate the principle of benefit of the doubt which is fundamental to assessment practice for the OIB *Section britannique*. This means that total marks involving a fraction are rounded up and that the descriptors in the generic marking criteria may be used to help judge overall quality for both responses and scripts.

A word of caution

The transcription of the responses is literal and preserves original spelling, structure, capital letters and punctuation, but not any crossings out or gaps. Standards material should be treated with some caution. It is generally accepted that it is difficult to read responses fairly after the event, in isolation and without the benefit of the flow of marking. It should also be borne in mind that these responses were produced by real candidates under examination conditions. Any higher-achieving response should not be viewed as a 'model' answer, as there are more ways than one to achieve a particular mark.

Other materials

For completeness and for ease of reference, these materials should be read with a copy of the question paper and of the writing guidance used by examiners. The report on the written examination for 2013 may also be of help.

Claire J Sladden Cambridge Inspector for History-Geography 30 September 2013

Performance	Comments from examiner/moderator on script's qualities
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<p>17 Good</p>	<p>A thoroughly good script, of sustained and developed writing. The essay is broadly based, sorts the material effectively and addresses the demand explicitly. Whilst there are some omissions what is presented is well-argued and well-evidenced.</p> <p>The DBQ is of similar good quality. The response to (a) is very good and can be regarded as full, i.e. one way of achieving 8/8. (b) is of good quality, carefully worked for three strategies, the third being the weakest. It combines the documents and own knowledge and is solid and of good quality, integrating some examples, not all in Africa.</p>
<p>13 Satisfactory</p>	<p>An example of an unbalanced script, in which the history essay is of low good quality and the geography DBQ is of bare pass quality, being undeveloped notably in a relatively brief (b) of one side in length.</p> <p>The essay demonstrates a clarity of approach to both parts in which the focus of the question is the focus of the answer. It follows the command words explain and evaluate well and the writing is well-directed and concise. It appears to have been planned in that the structure is clear, e.g. an attempt to conclude each element.</p> <p>The DBQ is evaluative in (a) and offers evidence from the documents. It could go further in exploring 'for understanding' but is of fair quality and shows good skills. (b) mentions a number of key words but is unclear about what a strategy is. It seeks to assess which kind of development strategy might be best, which is a valid, but limited, approach. The content is largely based on the documents and it does not 'break out' into own knowledge and own examples/case studies.</p>
<p>10 Bare pass</p>	<p>An aggregate pass, the DBQ being judged of firmer quality than the essay. In both responses the candidate addresses the second part of the questions better than the first part. It is of an appropriate length (7 sides in the handwritten original).</p> <p>The essay has no clear break between the two parts. In places it 'tells the story', e.g. Pearl Harbour, and can be expressed loosely e.g. 'not going to get along all that great', but it does offer some reasons and some historical context. Overall it is not of pass quality.</p> <p>After an unrobust descriptive start ('beautiful lakes', etc.) to the DBQ, it looks simply at what each document offers and does not offer. The main limitations are a lack of specific evidence and limited links to the question's 'for understanding'. In (b) the candidate compares and contrasts two development strategies (called models) in a satisfactory way, with the use of named examples of countries.</p>
<p>08 Weak</p>	<p>An example of an unbalanced script, in which the history essay is a pass of low satisfactory quality, but the geography DBQ is incomplete, comprising only a few lines for (b).</p> <p>The essay is stronger in the second part than in the first, being straightforward in approach, sound, reasonably focussed but not far developed. In the original, it was one side of handwriting.</p> <p>In the DBQ the candidate provides a basic answer to (a) in which s/he shows understanding of the nature of the documents, but limited evaluation of their usefulness. (b) is a fragment, which was awarded 1/12, limiting the overall outcome.</p>
<p>05 Very weak</p>	<p>An example of a brief, but not fragmentary, script.</p> <p>In the essay, the approach is explanatory in the first part, but narrative rather than evaluative in the second and the selection of material is weak given the demands of the question. Some material is inserted using an asterisk which is avoidable in a 4-hour examination. The response divides with an enlarged bullet, and is slow to address the question set, producing a few basic factors near the end.</p> <p>The DBQ is of similar overall quality, (b) being weaker than (a) overall. Whilst (a) is basic, (b) is "low level generalities about the state of the world, unrelated to the documents" and is therefore of the max. 6 type. It is more about what must be done than about actual strategies in the real world.</p>

