

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

<p>Paper 0409/01 Making of a Nation</p>

Key messages

- To gain full marks in **part (a)** questions candidates should provide description containing relevant factual material with reference to the date range and focus of the question. Marks are awarded on a point system for relevant knowledge and development.
- **Part (b)** questions require that candidates **explain** their ideas in some depth. This necessarily goes beyond describing events or issues that relate to the question. Candidates should make a pertinent point, explain how it links to the question and support it with precisely chosen evidence.
- High marks for **part (c)** responses are achieved by providing balanced ('for' and 'against') and developed arguments. Candidates should attempt to build an argument in relation to the question; thinking about whether they agree with the statement or assertion in the question and building a balanced foundation of evidence. Comments should be supported with a reasonable range of detailed material.
- Candidates must observe the examination rubric. In this paper there are two sections, and all the questions should be taken from one section, i.e. **Section A** or **Section B**. The rubric states that candidates must *'Answer three questions from one section. For each question you choose, answer every part, (a), (b), and (c).'* These instructions are stated at the beginning of the paper, and while most candidates adhered to them, there was a significant minority that did not. Some candidates answered only one **part (a), (b), and (c)** taken from three different questions. Others answered one question only and a few answered all twelve questions. There were also some candidates who answered questions across **Sections A** and **B** which was not allowed within the examination. Rubric infringements had an impact on the marks awarded in this examination session.

General comments

Many scripts were well-focused on the syllabus material. This was shown particularly in the **part (a)** questions where some candidates received high marks by clearly focusing on the question and the dates, events or figures included. Stronger candidates showed excellent knowledge of the required ideas here.

With **part (b)** questions some responses were aware of the need to explain rather than just describe and this was shown in the way answers were structured into reasons/factors/causes and used language such as 'this showed that' or 'this meant that'.

Many responses struggled to gain marks in **part (b)** questions because they did not demonstrate the necessary knowledge to link general comments to the question and were not focused on explaining. Many responses were placed in the lower part of Level 2 because they did not move beyond description of some relevant knowledge.

Stronger candidates were aware of the need to offer balanced comments in response to **part (c)** questions. Some of these responses revealed clear exposition, structure, organisation and a good range of supporting material before arriving at a consistent judgement in a conclusion. Such responses usually started with a clear introduction before moving to a 'point per paragraph' approach. The balance in such responses was often sign-posted by the second half of the answer starting with 'However...' or 'On the other hand, I disagree with the statement because...'. However, although this style was seen, responses which approached the questions in this way were still in a minority and many candidates struggled to display the knowledge and skills required for these questions. It is acceptable, especially with **part (c)** responses, for candidates to write in the first person (i.e., informally) but slang and colloquialism should be kept to a minimum.

The best overall responses showed a strong approach to learning specific historical material. They moved beyond the over-generalized material of weaker responses to show awareness of organisation; structure; explanation and specific detail.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Emergence of a Nation 1754 – 1890

Question 1

- (a) This question was popular, and most candidates were able to offer basic points about Jackson's beliefs in greater democracy for the common man and his dislike of elites and monopolies.
- (b) Many candidates struggled to answer this question with any knowledge beyond very general descriptions. Some candidates described the argument over the inclusion of the Bill of Rights in the constitution but could not use this to structure an explanatory answer about the disagreement over the way in which the United States should be governed.
- (c) Strong responses were able to discuss political factors such as the Quartering Act, along with other reasons for worsening relations such as the importance of trade and taxation. Weaker responses were unable to move beyond general comment about taxes or included knowledge which was not relevant to the question.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates who attempted this question were clear that the Treaty ended the war between Mexico and America, and some were able to name several of the territories gained by the United States. Weaker responses showed some awareness that it established an important border.
- (b) The best responses to this question were able to give a clear explanation of the economic impact of the Louisiana Purchase and show their understanding of its role in furthering westward expansion. Weaker responses only had a basic knowledge of how it doubled the size of the United States and did not understand the consequences enough to develop clearly explained points which were relevant to the question.
- (c) Stronger responses were able to select relevant examples of Britain's importance in defining the borders of the United States, e.g., the Oregon Treaty of 1846 and contrast these interactions with other countries in the period such as Mexico and France. Weaker responses were able to describe some relevant knowledge but found it difficult to explain how these ideas linked to the question or form an argument to support either side.

Question 3

- (a) A few strong responses were able to offer a clear description of what happened at Little Bighorn in 1876. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge to describe precise events.
- (b) Most candidates struggled to answer this question using specific knowledge of Pontiac's Rebellion. Some responses were able to make general points about the causes of conflict between native peoples and the British but very few knew precise details of Pontiac's grievances and others thought that it related to later disputes between native tribes and the US government.
- (c) Strong responses displayed knowledge of the Indian Removal Act and how it impacted Native Americans through the forced resettlement of tribes, along with other government actions such as the many battles fought with Native American tribes and the Dawes Act of 1887. Weaker responses did not have a clear enough chronological understanding of the whole period to tackle the question.

Question 4

- (a) This question was popular and generally produced responses which displayed good knowledge of the 15th Amendment. There were some weaker responses which confused it with the 13th and sometimes 14th Amendments.

- (b) Many candidates were aware of the Kansas–Nebraska Act and of the violence which took place in Kansas in the mid–1850s. The best responses were able to explain why sectional issues over whether new states became free or slave states, led to such violence.
- (c) Responses showed knowledge of the causes of the Civil War, but struggled to use specific knowledge of the Republican victory to explain why Lincoln’s election caused the war. Counter-arguments discussed Bleeding Kansas or divisions over slavery. Weaker responses were unable to move beyond general comment about Lincoln or included knowledge which was not relevant to the question.

Question 5

- (a) Responses showed an awareness of the Industrial Revolution and were able to offer descriptions of some of its key features such as factories and new inventions. However, some candidates moved away from the timeframe of the nineteenth century and a few included comments about the South.
- (b) Some responses showed an understanding of the Farmers’ Alliances and were able to offer descriptions of the reasons for their formation. However, many candidates struggled with this question as they did not have specific knowledge of why many farmers were struggling, and thus felt the need to fight together and argue for reduced transport costs and lower tariffs on goods.
- (c) Many candidates showed good knowledge of the negative consequences of the Industrial Revolution such as unsafe working environments and cramped and unsanitary living conditions. However, many struggled to use specific knowledge about the positive impacts such as the creation of wealth and the formation of labour unions. Weaker responses were unable to move beyond general comments about industrialization or included knowledge which was not relevant to the question.

Question 6

- (a) This question was popular, and a minority of strong responses were able to offer specific knowledge of the Homestead Act and how it affected immigration. Much more common was generalized knowledge which scored a mark or two but did not move beyond this.
- (b) Candidates who attempted this question often struggled to move beyond general comment because they did not show enough specific knowledge about the American Party. Some showed awareness of its links to the ‘Know Nothing’ movement and that it held anti-immigrant views, though not many used this knowledge to explain why the American Party gained popularity.
- (c) Many candidates were able to display good knowledge of the negative consequences of immigration such as gang violence in New York or the worsening of living conditions. It was rare to see comments about the benefits of immigration such as the rich diversity of cultures which it brought to many cities. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge of immigration in this period which meant that their answers remained quite general and did not build an argument in relation to the question.

Section B: Consolidating the Nation 1890 – 2000

Question 7

- (a) This question was very well answered with most responses able to offer points on at least two of the four amendments passed by Progressive presidents. The strongest responses correctly linked amendments to their specific content, for example that the 19th Amendment allowed for women’s suffrage.
- (b) Many candidates were aware of Upton Sinclair’s book and how it exposed the unhygienic conditions in the meat packing industry. There was some good description of these conditions but not all candidates used this knowledge to structure an explanation of the book’s impact on peoples’ lives. Some responses thought that the book was solely about living conditions in the cities.

- (c) There were some good responses to this question which displayed detailed knowledge of unhealthy living conditions and how these affected the people living in the overcrowded cities. Some also mentioned the impact of the books published by Hunter and Riis. However, there were few balanced answers as comments on positive developments were generalised and struggled to move beyond basic description.

Question 8

- (a) This question was popular and generally produced responses which displayed good knowledge of consumer products in the 1920s. The best responses described new production methods in the canning and car industries with precise knowledge.
- (b) Candidates who attempted this question often struggled to move beyond general comment because they did not show enough specific knowledge about Harding's phrase 'return to normalcy'. Some were aware that he said this during his Presidential campaign and that this was after the First World War.
- (c) Many candidates described how rural areas did not experience the advantages of the boom as did urban areas and how farmers suffered because of overproduction. However, there were few balanced answers as comments on how rural areas benefitted from the economic boom were generalised and struggled to move beyond basic description. Weaker responses lacked historical knowledge and relied on generic assertions or narrative overview which did not address the question asked.

Question 9

- (a) This question was popular, and most responses knew how President Roosevelt's passing of the Emergency Banking Act had helped people to trust in the banking system again and were able to gain some marks for this question. Strong answers were able to describe several details of this act. Weaker responses focused the reasons why banks had been forced to close.
- (b) Some responses were able to describe relevant factors such as a fall in demand for consumer goods and overproduction in farming but could not use this knowledge to structure an explanatory answer about why overproduction caused economic concerns.
- (c) This question was generally well answered with clear knowledge and explanation which enabled candidates to build an argument in relation to the question. The better responses were able to use precise knowledge of relevant New Deal Acts and how these solved some of the economic problems caused by the Great Depression. Responses which struggled to move into the higher levels of the mark scheme did so because they did not explain the failure of the New Deal to solve unemployment.

Question 10

- (a) Some responses showed an awareness of the Great Migration and described that it involved the movement of African Americans from the South to the North. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge of the Great Migration, and some confused it with immigration into the United States.
- (b) This question was quite well done overall. There was description of the protest methods used by both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. Some were able to develop an explanation as to why Malcolm X's sanctioning of the use of force, challenged the peaceful approach to protest advocated by Martin Luther King.
- (c) Most candidates were aware of various achievements of the Civil Rights Movement such as Brown vs Board of Education and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. However, fewer were able to explain the significance of the achievement which they had identified. It was rare to see an attempt at a balanced answer because comments on the Civil Rights Act lacked depth of knowledge. Weaker responses often relied on narrative which did not attempt to build an argument and had more generalized knowledge.

Question 11

There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment.

Question 12

There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment.

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/02
Depth Study

Key messages

Many candidates wrote at length and generally understood the sources. However, too many candidates seem unfamiliar with the requirements of the exam and instructions in the questions.

- This paper requires the examination of sources provided in the Insert. The sources provide evidence about each of the four Depth Studies and all the questions require this evidence to be used by candidates in their answers. As such, **answers must identify specific details from the source(s)** that is relevant to the question. It is important to recognise that historical sources provide evidence for historical inquiries, rather than information. Generalised comments about the content or a paraphrase of it will limit the answer to Level 1.
- In addition, every answer should not only use details from the source but also **'your knowledge'**. It is important that candidates include information that either supports or challenges the details in the content in order to **'interpret and evaluate the sources'**, as the instruction at the top of each set of questions for all four Depth Studies makes clear.
- Evaluation of the sources as evidence is necessary when answering **Question 2, Question 3, Question 4 and Question 5**. To do so, candidates should take into account the nature of the source considering some of the following **points of provenance**: the authorship of the source, the date of the source, the type of language expressed in the source, the audience for whom the source was intended, and the accuracy of the information contained in the source. These require carefully reading the attributions for each source. As in previous years, many responses accepted the content at face value rather than examining its accuracy, purpose and the broader context in which it should be viewed.

General comments on the Depth Studies

- Candidates would gain by first reading through all the sources relevant to the Depth Study they are going to tackle at the start of the exam to gain an overall sense of the material. This would also prevent them from rushing to answer questions, and to better assess the demand of the paper as a whole.
- Candidates are advised to allocate their time according to the marks available for each question. As the last question carries 15 marks, candidates are advised to spend about a third of the exam time on this question.

Comments on specific questions

Each question is designed to test certain skills in the assessment of historical sources. The following points outline the requirements of the five questions candidates must tackle.

- Answers to the **first question** of the Depth Study should aim to identify evidence from the source that is relevant to the question and show the candidate's understanding by the addition of knowledge and commentary that develops the content.
- Answers to the **second question** of the Depth Study should aim to identify points of content that would be useful to the historian. However, to access the higher marks it is important that candidates show they appreciate both the use and the limitations or shortcomings of the source as evidence. Relatively few candidates consider the shortcomings of the source as evidence.

- Answers to the **third question** of the Depth Study should aim to assess the reliability (or accuracy with regard to **Question 8**), not its utility as many candidates are tempted to do. As historians interrogate sources, reliability must relate to the inquiry identified in the question. Unless there are obvious factual errors, consideration of the nature of the source, its authorship and the context in which it was written are routes into assessing the reliability (or accuracy) of the source.
- Answers to the **fourth question** of the Depth Study should aim to explain why the two sources differ. To do so, candidates are advised to show **how** they differ (if done well with content and provenance up to six marks are possible) but, in addition, to provide reasons for the difference based on the context and the provenance of the sources. The objective should be to explain **why** the sources differ (in doing so answers might access Levels 4 or 5).
- The **fifth question** of the Depth Study carries one third of the total marks available, so it is really important. Candidates should construct an argument for and against the statement in the question. In previous reports it has been recommended that candidates group the sources for and against the statement by letter, as shown in the mark scheme. Candidates might be encouraged to start their answer 'Some sources contain evidence that supports the view that ...' and once the relevant sources have been evaluated move on to a counter argument starting, 'However, other sources challenge the view'. Candidates also need to be reminded that all seven sources should be considered not just the five sources studied for the first four questions. This is made explicitly clear by stating that all seven sources, identified by letter, should be used. To gain the higher marks on the fifth question candidates need to evaluate the sources and use their contextual knowledge and a final judgement is needed.

Comments on individual questions

Depth Study A

Question 1

Many responses offered only a general observation that men were prepared to shoot at one another. Some developed this by saying this indicated that law enforcement was limited, as those involved showed no concern about shooting at each other in the open air. Answers that used more detail picked up on the cards and bottle on the ground to suggest possible causes of the violence or referred to the poster offering a reward as an indication of one way law enforcement was attempted. The details were developed with knowledge about cow towns and the nature of cowboys passing through, for example, the fact that they carried guns.

Question 2

The key point of utility was recognised by most candidates, who described the crimes for which arrests were made with or without a warrant. Those who considered the limitations of the source pointed out that the source refers to one part of Arkansas only. A few commented on the attribution as an indication that responsibilities of marshals were recognised as early as the 1860s.

Question 3

Those who considered the reliability of the source as evidence of the lawlessness in Lincoln County argued the author had direct experience of it as he was appointed sheriff in 1880 at a time just after the 'war' there and that he was responsible for the death of Billy the Kid who had been involved in the 'war'. The best answers developed the argument further based on Garrett's purpose and motives in publishing his account.

Question 4

The majority of responses outlined the differences between the sources. A considerable number merely described the content of the two sources in sequence with the difference implicit only. Those who attempted to explain the difference did so with some simplistic comments about the authors and the dates in the attribution.

Question 5

Candidates were able to use all the sources. Candidates who used Source F well did so by linking it with other sources that included a reference to the territories such as Sources E and G. Many answers were one-sided. Those that presented a two-sided argument were often limited to the content of the sources used. Very few considered the provenance or added knowledge which restricted their answer to a mark in Level 3.

Depth Study B

Question 6

Responses generally focused on the words on the banner and the fact that it showed suffragists were prepared to take their message directly to the President and the White House. A few developed this to stress the peaceful nature of the picket. Very few answers included details on the dress of those on the picket line (coats and hats signalling a willingness to protest in cold weather, or their sashes). Similarly, there were few comments on the suffragist flags or pennants. Few answers demonstrated applied knowledge.

Question 7

Most candidates described the content of the source, and many responses suggested they had accepted the source at face value. Those who identified limitations mainly emphasised the absence of any detail about the methods adopted by the NWP which the author refers to. In terms of the provenance some stressed the importance of the Chief Justice and his understanding of the law to explain why the source was useful.

Question 8

A minority of responses showed awareness of Wilson's views on women's franchise, though some candidates knew he had previously opposed it and argued that this meant the accuracy of Source C might be questioned. Some knew that he was a Progressive politician and as such likely to favour women's suffrage. The majority of answers paraphrased the source and considered the audience rather than focusing on more relevant context.

Question 9

Source E was better understood than Source D. Most candidates seemed unaware of the aims of the two groups before the war. This would have been useful in explaining the difference between them and the reasons for the split. Many responses merely outlined the position of each as described in the sources.

Question 10

Candidates found it easier to find evidence that women's involvement in the war was the reason the amendment was passed, rather than for the counter-argument. Sources A, B, D and G provided plenty of scope for disagreement with the statement. Knowledge about the groups' tactics was important to develop the content of Sources B, D and G.

Depth Study C

Question 11

Most responses were limited to the enthusiasm evident on the faces of the men. A few identified the individual in uniform suggesting he may have been a recruitment officer. Some commented on the youthfulness of the men and that they appeared to be well dressed and from a certain social group.

Question 12

Answers showed understanding of the content, and many emphasised the small number that volunteered to join the army. Those who suggested there were limitations to the source argued the report was merely the opinion of one person in one town and may not have been representative of the majority.

Question 13

The source was generally taken at face value. Most candidates did not seem to understand the provenance, which meant they were not able to judge the reliability of the source. Some were able to apply knowledge about Wilson's position on the war at the time of the election in 1916 to explain the opening sentence.

Question 14

Largely, answers were confined to points of detail selected from the two sources. Some responses struggled to use Source E and a few even interpreted it as being in favour of war.

Question 15

The sources were fairly clear in terms of the views of Americans about the declaration of war. Many responses were merely one-sided, but there were some sound attempts at an argument. Candidates who had not evaluated the sources in addressing previous questions were not inclined to do so with this question. Additional knowledge was limited and usually absent from responses.

Depth Study D

Question 16

All but one or two responses suggested candidates were unfamiliar with this event. Some guessed that those running were students fleeing from a gunman with those on the ground having fallen over or been shot as they ran but the context was unknown to them. Taking their cue from the parked car with the flower on the door panel, some thought those running were hippies. The syllabus includes domestic and student protest about Vietnam so candidates should be familiar with the event at Kent State University.

Question 17

Responses mostly described the content and made an assertion that the information would be useful to an historian. A few responses did comment on the obvious hostility of the report to suggest it was written by someone who disapproved of the hippies, and so was limited in its utility.

Question 18

There were many responses about when the recollection was written in relation to when the event occurred and about whether teenagers are reliable witnesses. However, a few argued that it was unsurprising that such an experience made a profound impression on those there.

Question 19

The contrast in the content was straightforward and candidates managed to say how the sources differed. Some struggled to use the attributions, and as a result attempts to evaluate the sources were limited. This meant responses rarely went beyond Level 3.

Question 20

The sources offered plenty of scope to construct a two-sided argument. The impact of music is clear in several sources and candidates were largely alert to them. Similarly, most appreciated that other factors had an impact on society. Those who used Source G fully were presented with the chance to explore several of these factors – Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War – as well as music. Many answers were concluded with a judgement though few evaluated the provenance of the sources or added knowledge.

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/03
Personal Study

Key messages

The coursework question should focus on a local topic. This topic should be the focus of the investigation and be the main subject of the writing. The wider temporal or geographical context should be used to support conclusions about the historical significance of the local topic.

Candidates need to be introduced to the concept of historical significance in the context of developmental accounts prior to undertaking coursework as this will support them in addressing the coursework topic in an appropriate way.

Candidates must be supplied with first-hand (primary) source material if they are to access the higher levels in AO4.

Candidates need to be well-versed in the way historians interrogate their sources in relation to their inquiry question. Their work on Paper 2 will also require this understanding in a different context.

General comments

Many candidates relish the chance of investigating their locality and assessing its historical significance. The best work is produced when candidates are given an element of choice in the way they approach the topic within a framework of understanding the requirements of the mark scheme.

Coursework is least successful when candidates are not provided with appropriate sources or when the tested concepts are not understood. Some centres allow candidates to select the developmental accounts in which they assess the historical significance of the topic. Others are prescriptive, providing a framework of questions which candidates answer. The first of these strategies is more successful. It has a number of advantages, such as allowing candidates to follow lines of inquiry that interest them and allowing them to write at length on a few issues rather than attempting to cover every possible aspect superficially. The prescriptive approach presents several problems for the candidate and the marker. Coverage tends to be more superficial and reliant on the content of the sources provided. Differentiation between candidates is more difficult.

Candidates are required to use a range of sources. Range means a range of different types of sources. This is more important than the number of sources used. It is not good practice to use the number of sources referenced as the basis on which to assign the level in AO4. Instead, markers should focus on the types of sources used and the way in which they are used. The mark scheme refers to using sources at face value. This represents a low level of understanding and should be rewarded correspondingly. To move up the levels, candidate need to make inferences from sources and then demonstrate, within the main body of their writing, that they are considering factors which might affect the extent to which the source evidence can be accepted a reliable for their inquiry. Comments on the reliability of sources should not be an afterthought. They must be used in forming judgements.

Finally, a reminder that the level descriptors are not mastery criteria. They should be applied using 'best fit.' A candidate should not be penalised by being placed in the bottom level because they have omitted one element of a level descriptor.

Comments on specific questions

Most Centres use local 'Indian Schools' or railroads as their topics. Both have the potential for success. Whatever the topic, the most important decision for the Centre is the pack of sources to provide for their students. These must include primary source material which should be the focus of the investigation. Extracts from accounts written by historians are not primary sources and should be used sparingly. Similarly, websites must be used with care and students need to be taught to use them discerningly. Often the content is heavily weighted to persuade the reader of a particular point.

Above all, candidates need to show understanding of how historical significance can be judged. The Coursework Handbook which can be found on the Cambridge School Support Hub gives detailed information on what this means.