

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/01
Making of a Nation

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., **A or 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 only one question, and a few answered all twelve questions. There were also some candidates who answered questions across **Section 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-generalised 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 the Articles of Confederation as a new system of government for an emerging nation.
- (b) Many candidates struggled to answer this question with any knowledge beyond very general descriptions. Some candidates had some basic knowledge as to why a Constitution was needed but could not use this to structure an explanatory answer for its ratification by 1790.
- (c) Strong responses were able to discuss the importance of the Stamp Act, along with other reasons for the breakdown of relations such as the stationing of British troops and the Boston Tea Party. 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 did not have specific knowledge of why the United States declared war on Britain in 1812. Some had basic knowledge of the reasons but were unable to use it to make clear descriptive points.
- (b) The best responses to this question were able to give a clear explanation of why France played an important part in the Revolutionary War and show their understanding of the enormous amount of munitions and money, as well as military training which helped America to win the war. Weaker responses only had a basic knowledge of France as an ally and were not able to explain the depth of French help during course of the war.
- (c) Stronger responses were able to select relevant examples of how war had an impact on the borders of the USA before 1853, for example, the acquisition of Florida in 1819 and vast areas of the southwest and contrast this with other factors, such as the impact of the Oregon Treaty with Great Britain in 1846. 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 the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890. Weaker responses were aware that US soldiers opened fire on Native Americans but did not have the required knowledge to describe precise events.
- (b) Most candidates struggled to answer this question using specific knowledge of why Americans supported the Indian Removal Act. Some responses were able to make general points about the Act forcing Native American tribes to move from their lands but very few knew precise details about why the Act was strongly supported.
- (c) Strong responses displayed knowledge of the Reservation System and the impact of its forced settlement of nomadic tribes, as well as the impact of the forced assimilation brought in by the Dawes Act of 1887. It was rare to see an evaluation of which of the two factors had the greater impact on Native Americans. Weaker responses sometimes included knowledge which did not relate to either the Reservation system or the Dawes Act.

Question 4

- (a) Some responses showed an awareness of the Compromise of 1850 and were able to offer some description such as the settlement of the border dispute between Texas and New Mexico and that California became a state. There were some weaker responses which confused the Compromise of 1850 with that of 1820.
- (b) Many candidates were able to describe the election of 1860 and showed an awareness that many in the South viewed Lincoln as an abolitionist. The best responses were able to link these descriptions to the question by explaining that the importance of Lincoln's election was because it led to secession and brought civil war closer.
- (c) Some responses to this question were able to provide specific knowledge on Reconstruction, such as President Johnson's desire to allow the southern states to rejoin the Union as quickly as possible and how former slaves were helped. Weaker responses struggled to specifically address the extent to which Reconstruction failed because it had not done enough, though there was understanding that there were both failures and successes.

Question 5

- (a) This question was popular, and responses were able to offer some description of populist ideas, such as their wish to stop corruption. However, many candidates struggled with this question as they did not have specific knowledge of the main ideas of populism.
- (b) Strong responses to this question were able to give a clear explanation of the concerns around dangerous and unsanitary working conditions and how the discipline enforced in factories affected the workers. Weaker responses sometimes included details of living conditions which were not relevant to this question.
- (c) Responses showed some knowledge of a range of factors which impacted the US economy but struggled to use specific knowledge of the Transcontinental Railroad and how its construction contributed positively to the US economy. Counter arguments discussed population increase, new inventions or new systems for organising factories. Weaker responses were unable to move beyond general comments about the US economy or included knowledge which was not relevant to the question.

Question 6

- (a) This question was answered by a small number of candidates and some responses knew of the sugar and fruit plantations which provided work for the Japanese immigrants. Much more common was generalised 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 comments because they did not show enough specific knowledge about the Know Nothing movement. Some managed to identify that the Know Nothings were against immigration and Catholics, but few were able to develop such knowledge into an explanation of the popularity achieved by the Know Nothing movement.
- (c) The best responses were aware of the promises of free land and American citizenship made in the Homestead Act and why these attracted immigrants to America. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge of the 'pull' factors for 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 popular, and some responses were able to offer descriptive points about their demands for fair wages and better working conditions. The strongest responses gave details of the Wobblies criticism of the American Federation of Labour and their aim to unite all workers across all industries.

- (b) Most candidates were able to identify key points from 'How the other half lives', which showed the overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions in the tenements. There was an awareness of the awful working conditions and of child labour. Some stronger responses addressed why these details were important and explained the impact the book had on Theodore Roosevelt.
- (c) Good responses to this question showed knowledge of the various amendments to the Constitution passed by the Progressives at national level and were able to explain why these were important. Some were able to identify states such as Wisconsin and California which introduced Progressive reforms. Weaker responses tended to give generalised knowledge and struggled to move beyond basic description.

Question 8

- (a) This question was popular, and most responses described the problems of over production and demand falling after the First World War. However, many candidates struggled with this question as they did not have specific knowledge of which industries were categorised as traditional.
- (b) Many candidates were able to give solid descriptions of farmers not being able to benefit from the boom because of falling demand and competition from Canadian farmers. Strong responses used their knowledge to explain the impact that falling demand for their products had on farmers. Weaker responses need to become more adept at moving from description to explanation.
- (c) This question provoked some thoughtful and considered responses where candidates were able to use clear knowledge to test the assertion, including some who successfully argued both for and against the assertion. These responses included specific historical knowledge of Henry Ford's mass production techniques, affordable cars and how the car industry stimulated growth in other industries. 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 generally well answered. Most responses knew that 'buying on the margin' was buying shares, by paying for part of the cost and borrowing the rest. Strong responses were able to describe the expectation that the value of shares would increase and could then be sold for a profit, enabling investors to repay their debt.
- (b) Weaker responses struggled to move beyond general comment because they did not focus on the limitations of the New Deal and instead, described why it was introduced. Some stronger responses were able to identify that the New Deal did not solve unemployment and failed to help African Americans, but few used this knowledge to structure an explanatory answer to the question.
- (c) Many candidates described Hoover's belief in self-help and 'rugged individualism'. Responses which struggled to move into the higher levels of the mark scheme did so because they lacked explanation or did not address what actions Hoover had taken to help solve the problems created by the Great Depression.

Question 10

- (a) This question was popular and generally well answered with responses describing that Jim Crow laws were passed in the Southern states after the Civil War. There was good knowledge about how these laws limited the lives of African Americans and the ways in which segregation was enforced.
- (b) Most candidates were aware of Martin Luther King's belief in non-violent protest and displayed sound knowledge of the campaigns in which he was involved, and of the famous 'I have a dream speech'. However, a significant number of candidates did not explain why Martin Luther King's beliefs and actions led to him becoming an important figure in the 1950s and 1960s.
- (c) This question was not well answered with many candidates struggling to identify the work of either man. Some candidates knew of Booker T. Washington's belief that access to education would help African Americans and a few mentioned the Tuskegee Institute. There was little specific knowledge of the role of William Du Bois, although a minority were aware that he founded the NAACP.

Question 11

- (a) This question had a limited number of responses and candidates struggled to attain more than one or two marks. Some knew that one of the terms of Potsdam was that reparations could be taken and that war crimes trials would take place.
- (b) Most candidates struggled to answer this question as there was limited focus on the wording of the question. Some described the meaning of détente and discussed why it came about. Weaker responses were unable to move beyond general comments.
- (c) Most candidates were able to describe the policy of containment and some also described why it was needed. There was knowledge of the Marshall Plan and mention of other aspects of containment such as the Berlin Airlift. There were few attempts to address the effectiveness of the Marshall Plan which limited access to the higher levels.

Question 12

- (a) This question had a limited number of responses, and most were able to achieve one or two marks. There was an awareness that oil was in short supply in America during this crisis and that people had to queue for fuel at gas stations.
- (b) Most responses described that the 1950s was a period known as the 'Red Scare' and how McCarthy accused people of being communist. Few were able to use this knowledge to develop an explanatory answer to the question because the 'importance' of McCarthyism was not discussed.
- (c) Most candidates were able to describe at least one aspect of either Kennedy's 'New Frontier' program or Johnson's 'Great Society'. There was an awareness of Medicare and Medicaid and that Kennedy had increased the minimum wage. Few gained access to the higher levels of the mark scheme because the achievements of the programs were not explained. Any comparisons of the work of the two Presidents were limited to generalised comments.

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/02
Depth Study

Key messages

- **Answers must identify specific details from the source(s)** that is relevant to the question. The content of the sources should be examined as evidence for historical inquiries, rather than information.
- **Candidates should add their knowledge** to either support or challenge the content in order to 'interpret and evaluate the sources'.
- **Evaluation of the sources as evidence** should be attempted when answering **Question 2, Question 3, Question 4** and **Question 5**. To do so, candidates should consider the details provided in the introduction to a source and its attribution as well as the language expressed in the source and the accuracy of the details in the content of the source.

General comments on the Depth Studies

- Candidates should confine their answers to one Depth Study. Many candidates attempted questions from more than one Depth Study.
- There were some excellent responses from stronger candidates. Many weaker candidates copied sentences from the sources or paraphrased the sources with little regard for the question.
- Subjective remarks in which the candidate expresses their personal opinion about an issue are not helpful.
- Depth Study B was attempted by more candidates than any other while there were few answers on Depth Study C.

Comments on specific questions

The following points outline the requirements of the five questions candidates have to tackle.

- Answers to the **first question** of the Depth Study should aim to identify evidence from the source that is relevant to the question. They should be advised to refer to specific details in the source. Commentary that develops the content, perhaps with knowledge, and shows the candidate's understanding is necessary for Level 3.
- Answers to the **second question** of the Depth Study should aim to identify points of content and/or provenance that would be useful to the historian. However, to access the higher marks it is important that, in addition, candidates show they appreciate the limitations or shortcomings of the source as evidence. Few candidates attempt this which confines their response to Level 2.
- Answers to the **third question** of the Depth Study should aim to assess the reliability of a source and must relate to the inquiry indicated in the question. 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 of the source. Too many candidates confuse reliability with utility.
- 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. Candidates would do well to, first, group the sources into those that support the statement and those that indicate otherwise. In their answers, candidates should identify the sources by letter so it is clear which source they are using. Some sources may be used on both sides of the argument. To gain the higher marks on the fifth question candidates need to evaluate the sources and use their contextual knowledge. A final judgement strengthens the answer further.

Comments on individual questions

Depth Study A

Question 1

There is a lot of detail in this source which gave candidates ample opportunity to produce an extensive answer. The banner, March of Destiny, was understood by some candidates who were able to add their knowledge about Manifest Destiny. Many identified the figures in the bottom circle as miners panning for gold. Astute candidates recognised the symbolism of the rays of light beyond the mountains and those with good understanding added knowledge about the trails and the practicalities of moving West.

Question 2

The key point of utility was recognised by most: the need for laborers – men who were master workmen. Few made anything of the word ‘brethren’ and its appeal to fellow Mormons though some did know of Brigham Young. Some attempted to provide a limitation of the source but the majority did not. A few provided knowledge about the Mormon settlement at Salt Lake City.

Question 3

Some were able to provide knowledge about the Homestead Act with which they attempted to test the reliability of the source. Some focused on the attribution of the source suggesting that the author had no direct knowledge of the effectiveness of the law and others commented on the date. No-one made anything of the reliability of the ‘unfavorable circumstances’ mentioned in the source. The majority either summarised the content or explained its utility.

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 commented on the provenance as well as the content would have been placed in Level 3. To reach Level 4 answers had to offer an explanation for the difference and without good knowledge Level 5 was not possible.

Question 5

Most answers were aware of an argument, but the quality of two-sided responses varied greatly. Weaker answers either used a minority of the sources – Source F was overlooked by many – or were confined to content only. A minority commented on the provenance of a few sources or added knowledge, and better answers offered a judgement. Many answers were one-sided and there were a surprising number of answers that were only generalised comment with little or no support from the sources.

Depth Study B

Question 6

Understanding of this source varied from good to confused. The former described some of the following details in the source: women voting, the polling station, the orderly line of women, the man apparently supervising things, women eager to vote and in discussion with each other, the social class of the women shown. Some were confused and claimed this was a protest of women demanding the vote and others that women did not gain the vote until 1920, despite the caption to the picture informing them otherwise.

Question 7

Most candidates described the content and accepted the source at face value. A few commented on the author claiming it was useful in showing how women’s suffrage had male support. The fact that the source comments on only two states was a point missed by most as a limitation.

Question 8

The content and attribution provided scope for testing the reliability of Source C. To do so, most attempted to assess the statistics within the source. Others stressed the confined location of the survey. Some commented on the type of women interviewed, the oath they took, and the presentation of the survey to the Select Committee. Those who adopted one or more of these approaches effectively reached Level 3.

Question 9

The contrast between the two sources is stark and, unsurprisingly, many were able to show how they differed. Few candidates offered explanations for the difference. Some claimed Source E was written by a man, though the attribution did not identify the authorship. The fact that it appeared in *The Revolution* would have been a more helpful point to make.

Question 10

Several candidates considered the sources sequentially often with limited concern for the question. This question is an example of how more than one source (B and G) can be used on both sides of the argument. Very few commented on the provenance of the sources and additional knowledge was rare.

Depth Study C

Question 11

Most candidates knew about the Monroe Doctrine and explained the message of the cartoon was that the USA was prepared to invoke it and apply force to defend Santo Domingo against European claims. No-one recognised the huge gun as symbolic of the excessive force the USA was exercising. However, no-one was penalised for not doing so.

Question 12

Answers identified the utility of the content in providing the justification for US foreign policy that Roosevelt wanted to convey to the public. Candidates had the opportunity to comment on the nature of the annual message to Congress, but no-one did so. No knowledge about specific foreign policy initiatives of the time or recent past were offered, such as the war in Cuba.

Question 13

The majority of responses relayed details from the content without considering reliability. A few did attempt to assess the reliability of the source aware of the political position of the speaker both as an anti-imperialist and the Democratic nominee for the presidency.

Question 14

In presenting Taft's reason for intervention in Nicaragua, outlined in Source D, most candidates emphasised the execution of two US citizens though other reasons were also picked up. Similarly, the view of the general in Source E about US policy was made clear – to defend US financial interests. Some commented on the provenance contrasting the immediate concerns of Taft to justify his actions and the general who was writing from firsthand experience in Nicaragua and years after the event. Attempts at explanation were assertions.

Question 15

Candidates were fairly comfortable with the sources in terms of their position on the question though they differed in their interpretation of Source F. Whether they claimed the source showed that US business interests were paramount or that, instead, it was purely imperialistic, credit was earned if the point made was expressed convincingly.

Depth Study D

Question 16

Many candidates identified the two points highlighted in the source – the car and the latest clothing fashion. Some developed these observations with comments on the motor industry and flappers and some reflected on the advertising of the period of which the source was an example. A few mistook the reference to peg-top trousers and long skirts as the fashion of the 1920s rather than previous years.

Question 17

Most candidates regarded the points made as the actual impact of the radio though, in fact, the source was anticipating the impact the radio would have in the future. This made for a valid limitation of the source which some recognised.

Question 18

Those who considered the reliability of the source either emphasised the firsthand experience of the author or the fact that it was a subjective viewpoint or the comments related to just one school. The majority merely outlined the points made without assessment.

Question 19

Most managed to present the content coherently and many attempted to evaluate the provenance. The contrast between the evangelical preacher delivering a sermon and the calm language of the courtroom was recognised by many. Very little knowledge was added: no candidate referred to the so-called “monkey trial”, though one candidate knew that Billy Sunday was also a famous baseball player.

Question 20

Better answers differentiated between the attitudes of the younger generation and older people. The sources provided scope for an argument and both Source C and Source G could have been used on both sides of the argument. Too many responses failed to give this question sufficient thought and the evaluation of the provenance was rare. Further, very little knowledge was added.

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/03
Personal Study

Key messages

Most candidates wrote papers within the word parameters set. Those papers that fall significantly short of the word count are unlikely to meet the criteria for higher levels, as they cannot include sufficient supporting evidence and explanation to meet the criteria.

In AO2 some candidates did not understand that 'historical significance' requires a consideration of what was different because of the particular focus event/site/person or object. Candidates need to exemplify how the event/site/person or object made a difference within a developmental account.

In AO4 'critical use of sources' was very weak. Many candidates understood this to mean, 'which of my questions about the topic did I find difficult to answer because there was insufficient information?' This is not the intention of the phrase 'critical use of sources.' Candidates need to draw inferences from sources and evaluate individual primary sources for qualities such as typicality, reliability and purpose to meet this criterion.

General comments

Most candidates appreciated the opportunity to study local history and were pleased to discover that the place where they live had a part to play in their country's history. Chosen topics often provide an interesting insight into a national issue through the local connection. Effective topics have a wealth of primary source material available, and some candidates showed awareness of the way that evidence was presented to the population of their local area to influence their view of the site. However, individual primary source material is often used uncritically. In other examples there was insufficient focus on the local elements of the topic or candidates were not provided with sufficient primary source material.

Centres are reminded that it is important to use the procedure for marking set out in the Coursework Handbook and current syllabus which are available on the School Support Hub. These provide guidance on the use of Levels mark schemes, explaining how to apply 'best fit'.

Comments on specific Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 2

The target concept for the Personal Study is historical significance. This is not the same as impact, consequence or result. It is important that candidates are rewarded for their understanding of the correct concept. Candidates should be differentiated on the basis of the quality of supporting evidence for their claims about the historical significance of the topic investigated.

A significant number of candidates did not attempt to comment on the limitations of their studies. Those that did so usually commented on the limited information provided by the sources, or the problems in visiting the topic of their study. Failure to include this element does not mean that they are confined to Level 1 but it should be taken into account when deciding the mark to be awarded within the 'best fit' level.

Assessment Objective 4

The historical sources available to candidates necessarily vary according to the topic chosen. It is essential that there are sufficient primary historical sources available to allow candidates to show critical use of sources. Historians' publications on topics are not historical sources. While they may be used by candidates, it is not appropriate to classify them as sources.

The level descriptors require that candidates use a range of [types of] sources. There is no requirement to use a specific number of sources and Centres should not introduce rules about how many sources are to be used when awarding levels. The extent to which candidates demonstrate understanding of critical use of sources is far more important in deciding the level in AO4.

In the samples seen, candidates had used a wide range of sources including photographs, maps, extracts from newspapers, government reports, the site studied and first-hand accounts of experiences and events. All these sources were created for a specific purpose. Where sources were found on websites, questions might be asked about the selection of sources for the website, as this can skew the impression created. One example would be both the subject of the photographs chosen for publication on websites, and the captions these photographs are given.

Often candidates are presented with conflicting first-hand accounts about the study topic. These should be evaluated by considering their purpose, typicality and reliability as a route into explaining why they are different. Candidates should be trained in explaining the differences between source content when preparing for Paper 2, so can transfer this skill. This strategy will enable them to reach a conclusion about the historical significance of the site.