

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. They should be able to 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 obtained 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 base of evidence. Comments should be supported with a reasonable range of detailed material.
- Candidates need to observe the examination rubric. In this paper there are two sections, and all of 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 some candidates adhered to them, there was a significant minority that did not. Some candidates answered only one part **(a)**, **(b)**, and **(c)**, each taken from three different questions. Others answered only one question, and a few answered all twelve questions. There were also many 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

Performance was very good. This was shown particularly in the **part (a)** questions where some responses received high marks by sticking to the question and the dates, events or figures included. Stronger responses 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”. Weaker responses struggled to gain marks in the **part (b)** questions because they did not demonstrate the requisite knowledge to link general comments to the particular question and were not focussed on explaining. Many of these responses were placed in the lower part of the Level 2 mark scheme because they did not move beyond simply description of some relevant knowledge. Candidates need to concentrate on building particular knowledge that is relevant to that laid out in the specification.

Strong responses were aware of the need to offer balanced comments in response to **part (c)** questions. Some of these revealed clear exposition, structure, organization, and a good range of supporting material before arriving at a consistent judgement in a conclusion. Such responses invariably started with a clear introduction before moving on 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 “Although I agree to some extent with the statement, I am not totally convinced by it for the following reasons...”. Weaker responses 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.

Many responses would have benefitted from closer attention to the dates of the question and the figures or events included. Where questions offer a date range (i.e., **Question 10(c)**) this invites the candidates to look at events and consequences during a specific period of the Civil Rights movement, i.e., the 1950s and 1960s. It was rare for the date ranges in these questions to be fully used by candidates and many ignored entirely the dates offered to include material from outside the period.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Emergence of a Nation 1754–1890

Question 1

- (a) This question was well answered with most responses able to offer points about the Bill of Rights. The strongest responses gave details of what was included in the Bill of Rights with precise language used.
- (b) Weaker responses made broad descriptive references to the problems which were created by the Articles of Confederation especially the lack of an army or navy, and the lack of taxation powers. The strongest responses were able to use these issues to explain the disagreement that were discussed by federalists and anti-federalists. These clear explanatory links helped some responses reach the top level in this question, but many continued to describe rather than explain and the weakest in very broad terms.
- (c) Strong responses were able to discuss the issues of, e.g. the separation of powers, Jackson's use of his presidential veto and other changes made under "Jacksonian Democracy". Weaker responses were unable to move beyond general comment about Jackson or included knowledge which was not relevant to the question.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates answered this question well using strong knowledge of the impact of the Louisiana Purchase. Many included ideas about the impact on the size of the United States and the idea of moving West. The strongest responses were also able to include more nuanced details about, for example, the importance of New Orleans for trade.
- (b) Strong responses to this question were able to give a clear explanation of why the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed using specific examples of, e.g. the importance of land in the Southwest of the continent to the government of the United States. A few weaker responses struggled to move beyond the basic idea of ending the war.
- (c) Strong responses were able to select relevant examples of the influence of Great Britain on the expansion of the United States, e.g. the impact of the Oregon Treaty in 1846, and contrast these with interactions with other countries in the period, e.g. the Louisiana Purchase 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 the Pontiac rebellion. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge to describe precise events.
- (b) Strong responses to this question were able to use specific knowledge of the Battle of Little Bighorn to explain why Custer lost. These candidates were clearly explaining and building an answer to the question. Weaker responses only had a surface knowledge of the events and struggled to move beyond description to explanation.
- (c) Strong responses displayed precise knowledge of Wounded Knee and other areas of conflict between Native American tribes and the US government. Weaker responses struggled to show a clear knowledge of different events and did not have a clear enough chronological understanding of the whole period to tackle the question. This led to many these responses being confused or conflating issues.

Question 4

- (a) This question was popular and produced responses which displayed good knowledge of Black Codes created immediately after the Civil War. There were some weaker responses which confused these ideas with later Jim Crow laws.
- (b) Many candidates were able to describe the event in Kansas that created tension in the years before the Civil War. Strong responses were able to place this knowledge into the wider context and produce clear explanations of why it increased sectional tensions.
- (c) Strong responses to this question were able to provide specific knowledge, within the time frame, that was relevant to the question on Reconstruction. These candidates were able to discuss the successes and failures of Reconstruction and how this might differ according to perspective. Weaker responses struggled to restrict their answers to the period of Reconstruction and moved a long way out the timeframe into the twentieth century but generally this question was well attempted.

Question 5

- (a) This question was popular, and some responses were able to offer specific knowledge of labor unions in this period. Weaker responses used generalized knowledge and attracted one or two marks.
- (b) There were some excellent responses to this question which not only showed knowledge of the issues surrounding living conditions in cities but also of the people who began to take action to improve them. Weaker responses tended to give generalized knowledge and struggled to move beyond basic description.
- (c) Responses had knowledge of political groupings in the late nineteenth century but struggled to use specific knowledge of Populism. Although some candidates knew the word Populist they often could not describe or explain particular policies or events concerning the Populists in this period. Most responses struggled to reach the top levels in this question.

Question 6

- (a) This question was well answered with many candidates having a good idea of the concept surrounding the “Land of Liberty”. Strong responses were able to give specific examples of push and pull factors which impacted on immigration.
- (b) Weaker responses struggled to move beyond general comment because they did not know enough about the topic. Some stronger responses managed to identify general economic issues and ideas about racism on the West coast of the United States, but few knew specifics about Hawaii.
- (c) Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge of immigration after 1860 and were quite general and did not successfully build an argument in relation to the question. Strong responses were able to look at economic issues versus those to do with freedom or religion. These answers often had excellent and precise knowledge of the different groups who opposed immigration and for what reason.

Section B: Consolidating the Nation 1890–2000

Question 7

- (a) This question often provoked clear and well-informed responses with a good knowledge of the living conditions in the period. Strong responses were able to use precise vocabulary and examples to describe the problems. Weaker responses often only described the issues generally.
- (b) Strong responses showed a sound knowledge of muckraking journalists such as Jacob Riis and others. The strongest responses were able to use this knowledge to explain how this had an impact on public opinion and government actions.

- (c) Strong responses were able to show knowledge of progressivism at a local and national level in order to form an argument about the question. Weaker responses struggled to make clear points about Progressivism as detailed in the syllabus. Candidates should be aware of what terms like this mean in relation to the period studied so that they can relate their knowledge to bigger questions.

Question 8

- (a) Most responses knew the meaning of laissez faire and were able to gain some marks for this question. Strong responses were able to relate this directly to the 1920s and describe what laissez faire meant to the government and economy of the United States in this period.
- (b) Many candidates were able to give solid descriptions of the lives of some women in 1920s America especially flappers. Strong responses were able to use their knowledge to form an explanation of how these changes came together to form the idea of the “New Woman”. Weaker responses needed 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 many who successfully argued both for and against the assertion. These responses included specific historical knowledge, especially of new consumer goods which were available in the 1920s, which was deployed and explained to build an argument in relation to the question. Weaker responses lacked historical knowledge and relied on generic assertions or narrative overview which did not address the question asked.

Question 9

- (a) Many responses struggled to describe the Second New Deal because they did not demonstrate enough knowledge of its policies or the context surrounding it. Most responses relied on knowledge of the First New Deal most of which was not credit worthy. Strong responses were able to describe specific policies such as the Social Security Act.
- (b) Strong responses to this question were able to use specific knowledge of the Dust bowl to explain the impact it had upon people’s lives. However, many responses struggled to move beyond general description and explain the links between events and consequences.
- (c) This question was generally answered well with clear knowledge and explanation which enabled candidates to form an argument and test the validity of the assertion. The strongest responses were able to use precise knowledge of the causes of the Wall Street Crash to write balanced answers which argued either for or against the assertion. Weaker responses did not move beyond generic answers which described the broad narrative of the Crash without linking them to the question. No matter how detailed these sections were candidates struggled to move into the higher levels of the mark scheme because they didn’t explain these ideas or link them clearly to the question.

Question 10

- (a) Some responses showed an awareness of the Booker T Washington and were able to offer some description of the ideas and activities surrounding him. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge of Civil Rights Movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.
- (b) Strong responses to this question were able to use their knowledge of the Harlem Renaissance as well as conditions in the Northern states to explain why the movement happened. There were many responses that made a good attempt at this and had some knowledge of the music and literature of the period. Weaker responses struggled to move beyond description towards clear explanation of why it happened.
- (c) Some candidates were able to use knowledge of both peaceful and violent methods of campaigning for Civil Rights to build an argument about which was most effective. The strongest responses had a detailed understanding both of the events and the consequences of those events during the period. 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

1. The basis of each answer should be the content of the source(s). However, there is still a significant number of responses which provide only generalised comment, or which paraphrase the content. Some responses ignore the content entirely and offer opinion on the issue in question and in doing so, they are not answering the question.
2. The command in every question makes it clear that the answer should not only use details from the source but also 'your knowledge'. Candidates should aim to do this with facts that show understanding about the content and also, when appropriate, as a way to evaluate the quality of the source.
3. There is no specific command in the questions that candidates should evaluate the source(s). However, except for the first question in each Depth Study, evaluation is necessary. The nature of the questions is such that a full answer cannot be written without consideration of some of the following: the authorship, the date of the source, the quality of the language, the audience and specific facts. Many candidates regard the content as information rather than evidence and, as such, are inclined to accept the content at face value rather than interrogate it or its provenance.
4. Answers to **Question 1** should aim to identify information from the source that is relevant to the question and try to show their understanding by the addition of knowledge and commentary that develops the content.
5. Answers to **Question 2** 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 the limitations or shortcomings of the source as evidence. This might be done by consideration of omissions in the information or an evaluation of the provenance.
6. Answers to **Question 3** should aim to assess the reliability of the source given the context and nature of the source.
7. Answers to **Question 4** should aim to explain why the two sources differ. To do so, candidates are advised to show how they differ but, in addition, to provide reasons for the difference based on context and the nature of the sources.
8. The final question of the five questions set on each topic is really important. It carries one third of the total marks available. Candidates should be made aware of the need to construct an argument for and against the statement posed in the question. Some candidates grouped the sources by letter in their introduction. This is recommended as it provides a plan and encourages candidates to consider the sources as a set rather than individually. In addition, it should encourage candidates to use the last two sources which are not the subject of earlier questions. It would also deter candidates from going through the sources sequentially. A supported and developed judgement is required to conclude the answer if the top marks are to be awarded.
9. No set answer is expected to any of the questions.

General comments

1. Depth Study A was the most popular by far. There were very few answers to Depth Studies B or C.
2. Candidates might be encouraged to read through all the sources at the start of the exam to gain an overall sense of the material and this might allow them to cross reference another source when answering an individual question.
3. Candidates might be advised to time their approach to the paper according to the marks allocated to each question. As the last question carries 15 marks it would not be unreasonable for a candidate to spend a third of the time on this question. Too many candidates do not delve into the last question as much as they might.

Comments on specific questions

Depth Study A

Question 1

Most responses were able to identify some details from the source. Some responses explained the reason for the name of the Donner Pass and the more successful responses applied their knowledge of the terrain to develop the source detail. A few thought the trail started on the west coast.

Question 2

Most responses highlighted the utility of the details in the source but only a few explained the limitations of it, notably the absence of any reference to the problems of wagons breaking down or the threat from Native Americans. In evaluating the provenance, some regarded the experience of the author as proof of its utility, but others were more sceptical given his experience seemed limited to one trip on the Oregon Trail only.

Question 3

Weaker responses treated this as another utility question to query and were sceptical about the reliability of the source because it does not comment on the views of the Native Americans. Stronger responses considered the veracity of the source given its content, their knowledge and their evaluation of the information provided in the attribution.

Question 4

The contrast between the two sources was clear to most candidates but few explained the difference as primarily due to the perspective of a newly-wed used to home comforts, and mainly of selfish interest, compared with that of a captain with responsibility for others and experience of the dangers of travelling West. Engaging with the provenance of the sources would help explain the contrast and help to reach the higher levels in the mark scheme.

Question 5

Most responses used the source content effectively and recognised that the mountains were dangerous but also considered other elements of the journey that were dangerous. A minority of responses only offered short comments without reference to the source material. Many responses also ignored Sources F and G which provided much useful material and, in the case of the former, scope for evaluation and the application of knowledge. Many well structured answers lacked any evaluation of provenance.

Depth Study B

Question 6

All responses recognised the print as illustrating the views of opponents of female suffrage and most regarded such views as those of men not least because of the wording on the board at the centre of the image. The print provided scope for candidates to form an answer though few responses pointed out that Susan Sharp Tongue was a reference to Susan Anthony. This is an example of the point made above of the opportunity for cross reference (in this case with Source E) and the benefit of looking over all the sources before starting to write.

Question 7

Responses mostly re-stated the source saying that women gained the vote in Wyoming in 1869 with little consideration of the provenance. In evaluation, a comment on the official nature of the source might have been offered.

Question 8

Most candidates lifted details from the source about 'work and wages', and that this 'evil' is most likely remedied by 'the ballot for women'. Those who engaged with reliability made something of the remarks being those of the NWSA.

Question 9

The different priorities of Douglass and Anthony were identified in most responses though not all were clear about the meaning of the reference to women in New York and New Orleans in Source D, and to Douglass not changing sex made in Source E. Very few responses offered a reason for the difference between the sources.

Question 10

Responses struggled to organise the sources into a coherent argument. It seems as if the content of the sources was not always understood and instead of trying to group the sources candidates felt more secure in commenting on each one in turn with a 'nod' to how they linked to the question.

Depth Study C

Question 11

Most responses showed understanding of 'Anarchy' and 'Spanish Misrule' in general terms but few provided any knowledge about events in 1898 and these did not progress beyond Level 2.

Question 12

There was plenty in the content for candidates to pick out as useful to an historian. However, few responses were able to tie the mention of the sinking of the *USS Maine* to the content. The limitations of the speech in terms of its content and the political objectives of the speech were recognised by only a few candidates.

Question 13

Many responses were prepared to dismiss the source as unreliable as it provided a one-sided (or biased) view suggesting a misunderstanding of reliability. This might be an example of a one-sided view, but it is, despite that, reliable in terms of the position of the *Washington Post* as a paper, that was opposed to American intervention in Cuba.

Question 14

As with other comparison questions on the paper, those who tackled this appreciated the difference but there was a reluctance to explain the difference. The attribution is really helpful in this regard as the views expressed in the sources reflect the position and vested interest of the authors.

Question 15

The sources were clear in their position either for or against the statement in the question and most candidates recognised this even if they did not use all the sources. As with other last questions there was limited evaluation and added knowledge which is necessary for reaching the higher levels.

Depth Study D

Question 16

All candidates were able to make the central point that sport was very popular. The evidence for this in the source is confined to the size of the stadium and the number of people packed into it. Many were able to develop their answer by reference to the popularity of famous players of the time and the importance of sport in urban centres. In some cases, additional knowledge was unrelated to the question of popularity. Where additional knowledge is offered, it is important that it is explained in terms of the question focus.

Question 17

Of all the utility questions this one tended to attract answers offering personal and subjective opinions about religion and the content of a school syllabus. These were not answering the question and would have failed to score very highly. However, most candidates focused on the reasons for the trial even if responses were usually confined to the content.

Question 18

Only a few responses addressed the reliability of this source with any confidence. The majority accepted the content as likely to be reliable simply because of the expansion of the movies in the 1920s, without considering the doubtful nature of the source as an advert. Those which did consider this appreciated how the purpose of the advert undermined its reliability.

Question 19

Like other fourth questions, the majority of answers compared the content only without any evaluation of the provenance or additional knowledge which would help explain the difference and encourage a higher-level response.

Question 20

There was a range of responses and several stronger ones were well constructed two-sided answers, though most were one-sided and lacked evaluation of the provenance. Source F and G were usually overlooked.

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/03
Personal Study

Key messages

Candidates generally wrote analytically, showing good understanding of the topic of their coursework.

There was little understanding of the concept of historical significance: this should be viewed as an aspect of change and continuity, attributing significance to events, people etc. within a developmental account. Most candidates understood significance as meaning consequence, impact and importance.

Candidates mostly used a satisfactory range of sources, but there was overemphasis on works of history rather than primary source material.

In order to score well in AO4 candidates need to display the same critical use of sources that is required in Paper 2. Candidates tend to critique sources in terms of the amount of information they contain. This shows a limited understanding of the concept of historical evidence. It is essential that candidates consider factors such as the purpose of a source and the audience, when forming a judgement based on the evidence in the source.

General comments

Candidates wrote with good understanding and engagement with the chosen topics. They were able to suggest the importance of the topic chosen by the centre and assess this at a local level. Better candidates were also able to assess the part played by the chosen topic at a national level and over a long time period. This could lead to the recognition that the importance of the site chosen changed over time.

Historical significance was not well understood. In order to assess significance over time, candidates need to recognise what was happening beforehand, not simply as a static situation but one that was developing. This would help them in assessing significance rather than describing consequences. In assessing the significance of Indian schools, better candidates traced developments including the Dawes Act and the Indian wars. This helped them to recognise the role played by the Indian schools in a process, as well as linking the schools to changing ideas about different cultures and races. The detailed accounts of candidates at the Indian schools could then be bedded into accounts tracing the development of policy towards Native Americans.

Candidates are also required to demonstrate understanding of how to use historical sources. In some cases, there was overemphasis on the mechanics of using a certain number of sources; the mark scheme requires an extensive range at the highest level meaning that candidates should not rely on a narrow range of source-types. Candidates should also not be penalised for citing sources in non-academic ways, provided that they acknowledge where the evidence was derived. It is more important that candidates use sources critically. There was little evidence of this. Candidates accepted what they read at face-value. There was some limited consideration of the typicality of accounts, but not of the reason for writing a source and the audience, the purpose of photographs and so on. Candidates must demonstrate that they are considering the reliability, typicality and purpose of sources if they are to score the highest marks in AO4 Level 3.