

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 of the questions should be taken from one section, i.e. **A** or **B** however there were still many candidates that did not do this. 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 a significant impact on the marks awarded in this examination session.

General comments

Most scripts were well-focused on the syllabus material. This was shown particularly in the **part (a)** questions where some candidates received high marks by sticking closely to 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 the **part (b)** questions because they did not possess the necessary knowledge to link general comments to the particular question and were not focussed on explaining. Many responses were placed in the lower part of the Level 2 mark scheme 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, organization, and a good range of supporting material before arriving at a consistent judgement in a conclusion. Such responses 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 completely convinced by it because”. However, although this style was seen, responses which approached the questions in this way were still in the 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 organization; structure; explanation and specific detail.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Emergence of a Nation 1754–1890

Question 1

- (a) This question was generally well attempted, and most candidates were able to offer basic points about the ways that colonists responded to British rule. It should be noted that the time span of this question ended in 1774 so responses which included the Declaration of Independence were not credited.
- (b) Many candidates struggled to answer this question with any knowledge beyond very general descriptions. Some candidates had some basic knowledge of the federalist/anti federalist argument but could not use this to structure an explanatory answer to the question. Many responses also included details of political parties after 1840, e.g. The Republicans.
- (c) Some candidates had knowledge of this question and were able to discuss the issues with some ease. The best responses were able to discuss the issues of the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and other markers of democratic engagement. Weaker responses were unable to move beyond general comment about the Bill of Rights 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 the War of 1812. Some had basic knowledge of the events 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 Texas joined the union and show their understanding of the process which took place to make this happen during the 1830s and 40s. Weaker responses only had a basic knowledge of the period and did not understand the chronology enough to develop clearly explained points which were relevant to the question.
- (c) Stronger responses were able to select relevant examples of the influence of declining Spanish power on the expansion of the United States, e.g., the annexation of Florida in 1819, and contrast these with interactions with other countries in the period, e.g., the Louisiana Purchase and France. Many candidates 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) Many candidates were able to use some knowledge to make effective descriptive points in their response. Weaker responses struggled to make specific points about events or trends, opting for general ideas instead.
- (b) Most candidates struggled to answer this question using specific knowledge of the conflict. Some responses were able to make general points about the causes of conflict between native peoples and the US government in the period, but very few knew precise details of this conflict which took place in the Southern plains and so was not like other well-known battles.
- (c) A few strong responses displayed knowledge of events and relationships between native peoples and the US government before 1840. The Trail of Tears was the most common example, and, in some cases, this was used to answer the question clearly. However, weaker responses struggled to use examples of interactions in the period before 1840.

Question 4

- (a) This question was popular and generally produced responses which displayed good knowledge of the Missouri Compromise and its terms. The best responses laid out these ideas with clear description and precise knowledge. There was some confusion in weaker responses as number of them included details of the Fugitive Slave Act which was part of the Compromise of 1850 and so not relevant to this question.
- (b) Many candidates were able to describe the actions of John Brown in the 1850s and showed broad knowledge of the period. The best responses were able to link these descriptions to the question by explaining why he became famous/infamous. Overall, this question was generally well answered.
- (c) The best responses to this question were able to provide specific knowledge, within the time frame, that was relevant to the question on the causes of the Civil War. There were some strong responses here with candidates being able to discuss the long- and short-term causes and how this might differ according to perspective.

Question 5

- (a) This question was popular, and a minority of strong responses were able to offer specific knowledge of the Populist movement in this period. Much more common was generalized knowledge which scored a mark or two but did not move beyond this.
- (b) There were some excellent responses to this question which not only showed knowledge of the issues surrounding working conditions in cities but also how industrialization had an impact on them. Weaker responses tended to give generalized knowledge and struggled to move beyond general description.
- (c) Candidates who attempted this question often displayed a good general knowledge of inventions from this period and used it to try to answer the question. Candidates found it more difficult to give a counter argument to the question which could have discussed the use of natural resources or new systems for organizing factories.

Question 6

- (a) This question was generally well attempted with many candidates having a good idea of what the Chinese Exclusion Act was. The best responses were able to give specific examples of its terms and the impact they had on Asian immigrants.
- (b) Candidates who attempted this question often struggled to move beyond general comment because they did not show enough knowledge about the topic. Some managed to identify general economic issues and ideas about immigration in the Southwest of the United States but few knew specifics about the movement of Mexicans.
- (c) Many candidates struggled with this question as they did not have the required knowledge of immigration after 1860. This meant that their answers remained quite general and did not successfully build an argument in relation to the question. The best responses were able to look at cultural versus economic issues with some specific examples. These responses 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 was a popular question, and many candidates were able to respond with some knowledge of unions in this period. However, only a few responses showed specific knowledge and descriptions of the aims and actions of the Wobblies.
- (b) There were some good responses to this question which showed a sound knowledge of muckraking journalists such as Jacob Riis. The best responses were able to use this knowledge to

explain how the book had an impact on public opinion and government actions. Weaker responses tended to reproduce sections from the book.

- (c) The best responses to this question were able to show their knowledge of progressivism and link it to the question. However, many responses struggled to make clear points about Progressivism as detailed in the syllabus.

Question 8

- (a) This was a popular question and was generally well answered by candidates. Most responses knew something about the idea of the “New Woman” in the 1920s and the best answers were able to use specific knowledge to make descriptive points.
- (b) Many candidates were able to give solid descriptions the ways in which electricity was used more widely during the 1920s. However, many struggled to link this to why it was important to the wider economy.
- (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 answers included specific historical knowledge, especially of the impact of the boom which was deployed and explained to build an argument in relation to the question. Many weaker answers lacked specific historical knowledge and relied on generic assertions or a narrative overview which did not really address the question asked.

Question 9

- (a) This was a popular question, and many candidates were able to use their knowledge of the alphabet agencies to make clear descriptive points. There was some confusion when candidates described the whole of the New Deal rather than the specific focus on those agencies but overall, this was well answered.
- (b) The best responses to this question were able to use specific knowledge of Hoovervilles to explain why they were built and how they grew. However, many weaker 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 best 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. Some weaker responses struggled to move beyond generic answers which described the broad narrative of the Crash without linking them to the question. Responses which struggled to move into the higher levels of the mark scheme did so because they didn't explain these ideas or link them clearly to the question.

Question 10

- (a) Some responses showed an awareness of the Plessy vs Ferguson judgement and were able to offer some description of the importance of the judgement. However, many candidates struggled with this question as they did not have the required knowledge of Civil Rights movements in the late nineteenth century.
- (b) The best responses to this question were able to use their knowledge of the Black Panthers to explain how they challenged the wider Civil Rights movement. Responses like this used specific knowledge and explanation. Many other responses struggled to move beyond basic descriptive ideas and so could not gain access to the higher levels of the mark scheme.
- (c) Some candidates were able to use knowledge of the specified period to support and challenge the proposition in the question. The best 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

- (a) Candidates who attempted this question had a sound general knowledge of the events and importance of Cuba in the 1960s. The best responses gave clear details of the crisis to make descriptive points. Some weaker responses strayed beyond the year 1962 to offer details which were not relevant to the question.
- (b) Some responses to this question showed a clear idea of both what the Marshall Plan was and why it was created. These responses were sometimes able to show clear explanations. There was also a lot of confusion over this question with weaker responses not showing the requisite knowledge of the period to answer the question effectively.
- (c) Strong responses were able to use knowledge of the specified period to support and challenge the proposition in the question. The strongest of these had a detailed understanding of the actions of Reagan during the 1980s 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 12

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

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/02
Depth Study

Key messages

- Responses 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.
- Evaluation of the 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. Many candidates accepted the content at face value rather than examine its accuracy, purpose and the broader context in which it should be viewed.
- Responses to the first question of the Depth Study 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.
- Responses 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 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.
- Responses to the third question of the Depth Study should aim to assess the reliability of the source given the context and nature of the source. This might be done by the application of knowledge to confirm the accuracy or otherwise of the evidence or an evaluation of the provenance.
- Responses to 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 but, in addition, to provide reasons for the difference based on the context and the provenance of the sources.
- Responses to the fifth question of the Depth Study carry 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. It is recommended that candidates group the sources for and against the statement by letter, as shown in the mark scheme, in their introduction. This is good practice 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.

General comments

- Candidates should read 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 might also encourage the cross reference of other sources when answering **Questions 2, 3 or 4**.
- Candidates should time their approach to the paper according to the marks allocated to each question. As the last question carries 15 marks candidate might be advised to spend a third of the time on this question.
- Several candidates attempted questions on more than one Depth Study.

Comments on specific questions

Depth Study A

Question 1

Many candidates struggled to identify points in the photograph about the life of settlers. Only a few appreciated that the house was made of sods of earth or that it was built into the bank probably for protection against the weather. Some commented on what could be learned about the interior of the house from the chimney and the lack of windows. Some candidates extracted points about a settler family from the possessions shown outside including the swing. Others made something of the crop being grown and some referred to the horses and cart. Several responses showed a misreading of the question and misunderstood the photograph and thought it showed a family travelling West so they added details about life on the trails.

Question 2

The source provided two main problems facing farmers which would be of use to an historian. One was the uncertainty of the weather and the other the threat of locusts. Only a minority considered the limitations of the source, not least the point that this account was not necessarily typical of all homesteads in the West, or that there were other problems such as diseases that affected crops.

Question 3

Many responses assessed this source critically and tested its reliability. Knowledge of the relationship between settlers and Native Americans, in particular about how they were often cordial, and comments about the language of the source and its authorship, were usefully deployed to question the reliability of the source.

Question 4

Most responses were limited to how the sources differed. The few that offered an explanation for the difference stressed the points that Source D was positive about life in the West because its purpose was to attract settlers to the Dakota Territory whereas Source E painted a stark picture of life in the West based on personal experience. Knowledge about the reality of the West could have been applied to support the claims made by both sources.

Question 5

The phrase in the question, "Living in isolation", was not mentioned, explicitly, in any of the sources so candidates had to infer whether this was a challenge facing settlers. Many found this difficult to do. For example, the family shown in Source A clearly lived in isolation from other families, but some responses suggested the number in the family proved otherwise. Sources C and D could be interpreted either way. Some candidates did not use Sources F and G as they had not been the subject of previous questions but in omitting reference to them, they were deprived of a useful source for both sides of the argument.

Depth Study B

Question 6

Some candidates either referred to the placards and picked out the details on them as points that can be learned about the campaign for women's suffrage. Few were able to add knowledge to develop from this such as identifying the president, mentioned on one board, and his attitude to women's suffrage. Others, commented on the fact that the NWP had its own paper. No response made use of the title of the cartoon which implies that the campaign was the equivalent of the suffragists war at a time of international conflict abroad.

Question 7

Stronger responses used inference to draw out the views of the NWP while weaker responses paraphrased the source.

Question 8

Some candidates appeared to be unsure about who "the authorities" were which, in this instance, was the Administration. Many responses focused on how members of the NWP reacted to the way the imposition of longer prison sentences by the authorities.

Question 9

Most candidates said how Source D opposed militancy and Source E favored it. Some were able to use the source content to explain the difference as Source D argues that the vote (for those with it) had not been won through violence and Source E explains that concessions had been made as a result of militancy. Some stronger responses showed knowledge of how women had the vote in some states and the concessions made to women in 1917.

Question 10

Candidates preferred to adopt a position either in support or against the statement rather than offer a two-sided response. Source F states that the NAWSA, representing 98 per cent of the organized suffragists in the US, opposed picketing. Many responses therefore argued that most supporters of female suffrage opposed picketing. However, Source F refers to all “organized suffragists” making it possible to argue that the source does not cover all women who supported an extension of the vote.

Depth Study C

Question 11

Most candidates understood the message of the cartoon. They were familiar with “the Big Stick” and Roosevelt’s policy in the Caribbean Sea even if the Roosevelt Corollary was not mentioned specifically. Some candidates were able to make something of the words on the side of the ships. No-one commented on the vultures.

Question 12

Candidates were able to comprehend the attitudes expressed and recognised that the position of the Anti-Imperialist League was the view of only a section of US society.

Question 13

Responses showed understanding of the content of the source. Most were prepared to accept the source as reliable of Bryan’s views if not of the US Government as a whole. Judgements were strengthened if candidates were aware that Bryan was a member of the Anti-Imperialist League, and that Wilson was sworn in as President in 1913.

Question 14

The difference between the sources was understood by most candidates and some attempted to explain why that was the case. Examples of the latter stressed the point that Roosevelt was writing after the Panama Canal had been built and seeking to justify his policy while Source E was written at the time the canal was under construction and by an individual who opposed unilateral intervention by the US in the internal affairs of other states.

Question 15

Responses were brief despite the considerable scope in the sources to develop an extended answer. Most responses looked at two or three sources only. Several weaker responses focused on the attempts by the US to defend its democracy which was not the focus of the question.

Depth Study D

Question 16

Most responses used the source confidently and highlighted the colour, dress and music as key features of popular culture in the 1960s. Some responses were developed with knowledge about the permissiveness of the period and the prominent pop groups of the decade. A few added extra points (about drug use, for example) rather than develop what was in the source. Some thought the Hippies was the name of a pop group and others that they had their own magazine.

Question 17

Some responses suggested the city referred to in the source, that was expecting an influx of hippies, was Los Angeles. Others focused on the concerns of the authorities. Most attempted to show how the source was

useful in terms of the growth of the hippie movement. The limitations offered included the fact that the source referred to one point in time rather than the 1960s or concentrates on San Francisco rather than the country as a whole.

Question 18

The majority of responses described points in the source, sometimes with an assertion about its reliability. Some responses did attempt to explain how the passage of time between the event in 1969 and its recollection 40 years later might impact on its reliability. Similarly, some stressed how impressionable people are in their teens and how that would have had a bearing on the reliability of the source.

Question 19

All candidates were able to make something of the two sources. The difference between the two is clear, with Source D condemning candidate protests against the war in Vietnam and Source E expressing some reasons for opposing the war. Many responses reached Level 3 by commenting on the provenance or by adding some knowledge. Several went a step further and explained the difference based on the moral stance of the two authors.

Question 20

The sources offered considerable scope to argue for and against the statement and several responses did this well. Those which used the sources to construct an argument did so by assessing the position of the sources in turn to arrive at a judgement based on the weight of the balance of the sources. Stronger responses added some knowledge and provided some evaluation.

AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

Paper 0409/03
Personal Study

Key messages

- The study must be based on a site, person, object or event that is local to the center.
- There must be an inquiry question that asks candidates to assess the historical significance of the topic.
- The target word count is 1400-1600 and candidates should aim for responses in this range to ensure enough scope to demonstrate the skills required.
- The study must be based principally on historical source material. This could be written, oral, pictorial etc.

General comments

There was a strong range of topics that allowed candidates to select relevant themes and present theses about the significance of the chosen topic in relation to the theme. In most cases these demonstrated effective independent study with a good array of source material being selected by candidates. In some cases, weaker responses covered their chosen specified themes and considered significance at local, regional and national level without necessarily having sufficient supporting material.

The plans for outside speakers and site visits had necessarily been abandoned but there were several candidates who wrote with good understanding of the target concepts and whose studies showed thoughtful insight when assessing the significance of the history of their locality. These responses were generally well-structured and well-focussed. In particular, they demonstrated clearly that they understood that there was a range of issues that could be addressed and made their own decisions about which to choose. Weaker responses were not so well focussed and some lacked clarity as a result.

The selection of materials is important because candidates need to be able to demonstrate the ability to use historical source material critically. Weaker responses often identified missing information which didn't offer effective critical assessment, while stronger responses were able to weigh the evidence to assess how to use it in forming their conclusions. For example, some candidates noted that the "before and after" photographs of Native American Indian candidates at Indian schools were staged to confirm the "civilizing" influence of the schools and should not, therefore, be taken to reflect reality.

It is also important that the conclusions are based on evidence from historical sources, rather than on what historians, websites etc. write about the topic. This requirement should inform the choice of topic as well as the source material to which candidates are directed. Strong responses showed evidence of critically assessing these sources, while weaker responses tended to rely on the already interpreted material from websites or historians. Candidates should be encouraged to use websites critically, so as to inform their assessment and judgements, rather than just as a repository of information for their chosen topic.

Candidates should provide a bibliography that specifies the sources used. Simply referring to a package of materials provided by the teacher is not enough.