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GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

ANCIENT HISTORY

J198
For first teaching in 2017

J198/01 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

Contents

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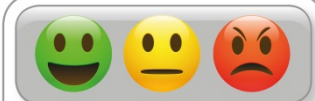
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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 1 series overview

Candidates had clearly enjoyed the topics that they had covered. There was a rise in candidates who had attempted to answer all three optional areas, as is the policy, all areas were marked and the highest response was credited.

The Alexander the Great depth study was by far the most popular option, probably due to a similar option being on the legacy specification.

Section A overview

As this was the first time that 'Persia' had been examined discreetly as a topic area at GCSE or A Level in Ancient History, it was very pleasing to see how candidates had engaged well with the topic area.

Centres are reminded that for the Persia Period Study, source analysis is not a focus of the examination, candidates need to focus primarily on AO1 and AO2. Candidates were clearly aware of the limitations of Herodotus as a source for the Achaemenid kings and were able to bring in knowledge of inscriptional evidence.

Question 1 (a)

SECTION A – The Persian Empire, 559–465 BC

1   (a)   Name **two** of the naval powers who joined the Persian Empire after the accession of Cambyses.   **[2]**
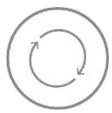
Candidates were able to access this question well.

Question 1 (b)

(b)   Name **one** of the reasons Herodotus described Cambyses as a madman.   **[1]**

Candidates were able to recall this well, naming specific acts, candidates were also credited regarding Herodotus' use of anti-Cambyses Egyptian sources.

Question 1 (c)

(c)   Name **one** of the duties of the Magi in Persia.   **[1]**

Candidates were able to give sufficient detail to be credited here.

?	**Misconception**	The duties of the Magi were confused with those of Satraps.
↻	**AfL**	Candidates could use flashcards or pre-made online sets to become more confident with some of the core knowledge. Candidates also are not required to write in full sentences for these responses, quick fire quiz games may be helpful to get them use to providing the right amount of detail.

Question 2

2   Outline what happened during Darius' expedition to Scythia.   **[6]**

A number of candidates were able to answer this with a significant level of detail, however there were a significant amount of 'No Response'. Candidates do not need to supply vast amounts of detail to achieve full marks. Some candidates who knew a lot were perhaps spending too long on this part of the exam and should be encouraged to spend approximately five minutes answering this type of 'outline' question

?	**Misconception**	Candidates were describing the background to Darius' expedition. This could in part be due to the specimen paper stimulus material. Candidates do need to check the wording of the question.
⟳	**AfL**	Encourage students to summarise key events for each king in six sentences – The first in each pair explaining what happened, the second providing more detail.

Exemplar 1

One feature of Darius' expedition to Scythia is that he couldn't keep up with the Scythians. The Scythians were nomadic and were constantly on the move, so Darius ~~couldn't~~ had to essentially chase them.

Another feature is that the Scythians would often leave some cattle behind to tease Darius and the Persians. Eventually, however, the Persians were drawn into barren land and ran out of supplies.

The final feature of Darius' expedition to Scythia is that Darius had to retreat due to lack of food and supplies. This meant that the expedition to Scythia had failed.

This candidate has achieved 6 marks, and it demonstrates what is expected of a candidate to fully meet the requirements of a Level 3.

Question 3

3 Using details from Passage A and your own knowledge, what can we learn about the Persian army at the Battle of Thermopylae? **[10]**

Candidates were able to use the stimulus to identify the key features of the Persian army, and it was pleasing to see that they were placing responses within a context and comparing with their own knowledge of the Persian Army. There was some confusion that this question was linked with Question 2 among weaker responses, however most students understood that this was part of Herodotus' longer narrative on the Persian War.

?	**Misconception**	Candidates do not need to talk about the accuracy or reliability of the source writer for this question.
		Lower scoring answers focused on the Spartan army, and there was discussion that Persia lost the Battle of Thermopylae.
↻	**AfL**	During class time, use one of the suggested passages of Herodotus or another sources as part of revision of a topic, ask students to choose relevant information and then expand using their own knowledge.

Exemplar 2

From the Source it is quite clear that the Persian Army isn't really battle hardened and this can be seen with the use of the word 'inexperienced' and this compared to the fact that the Persian army consisted of soldiers from over 57 nations which strongly means there must have been miscommunication within the army. Moreover from the Source we can see that the Persian army is quite naive and this can be seen when they were tricked by the Spartans who "pretended to be retreating in confusion" so they could inflict "innumerable casualties" and this implies that the Persian army were quite hot-headed and rather dumb. However we can also see that the Persian army are quite conservative as they knew when to retreat is they "broke off the engagement and withdrew when they realized their "assaults" were "useless".

This candidate achieved full marks on this question. They took parts of the stimulus passage and made direct comparison with their own knowledge. It is very well structured and covered the whole passage. This is the first half of their response and demonstrates how they have embedded the stimulus passage well in their response.

Question 4

4   Using details from Passage A and your own knowledge, explain why the Greeks were able to
    defeat Xerxes' forces in 480/79 BC.   [15]

Strong answers compared the events at Thermopylae with those of Salamis, and were able to draw out excellent comparisons between the leadership of Xerxes, Leonidas and Themistocles. Candidates were able to identify two or three key points from the passage to make a comparison with other events. Candidates do need to use the stimulus as a basis for their response.

?	Misconception	The Battle of Eurymedon happened in approximately 469 BC and was mentioned by candidates.
		As identified above for Question 3, some candidates were identifying the Spartans as the victors at the Battle of Thermopylae.
		The Hellenic League refers to the alliance which included Sparta and her Peloponnesian allies during the Persian Wars, the Delian League comes afterwards, and did not include Sparta and the Peloponnesians.
↻	AfL	Encourage candidates to compare and contrast short passages as part of their revision with similar events, think about trigger questions such as: this is the same as X, this is different from Y and consider how it gives us a picture as a whole.

Exemplar 3

we need to be careful with the source because this may be over exaggerated and also it may be inaccurate because Herodotus was not there to give first hand information.

This extract from an answer spent time discussing Herodotus as a source. This is not required in this type of question.

Question 5

5* 'Cyrus was the greatest of the Achaemenid kings.' To what extent do you agree with this assessment? **[20]**

(✎) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology **[5]**

There were some issues with timelines and understanding which order the kings came in, however candidates of all ability levels were able to highlight key achievements. There were some excellent responses questioning whether Cyrus was in fact an Achaemenid king at all, and the use of his role model by his successors. Candidates were not required to compare Cyrus with all the kings that they have studied as part of this module, the most successful answers compared him with at least two others. It was very pleasing to see that candidates had a good understanding of the different areas that could make a king successful. Lower scoring answers tended to write narratives of the 'origin' story of Cyrus and were able to gain some marks. It was great to see that candidates had used inscriptions in lessons and had engaged with them as sources.

⟳	**AfL**	For each of the kings, encourage students to create mind maps regarding the key areas for their reigns, consider what might make them 'good/bad' kings, encourage students to have a definition of what defines 'kingship'

Exemplar 4

Before Cyrus was born, his grandfather Astyeges had dreamed that his grandson Cyrus to be would overthrow him. Due to this, Astyeges had sent soilders to kill Cyrus when he was a baby, but this plan did not stcsseed sucseed and Cyrus soon killed Astyges. Conveying bravery, and that Cyrus illustrated outstanding aspects a king should have.

This candidate was given 5/20, overall there was no comparison with other kings and this response demonstrates a common type of narrative regarding Cyrus' 'origin' story. This candidate has tried to explain why the story made Cyrus the greatest Achaemenid, however it is not well developed.

Section B overview

This was the least popular option for centres.

Question 6 (a)

SECTION B – From Tyranny to Democracy, 546–483 BC

6 **(a)** Name **two** religious changes introduced by Peisistratus. [2]

Question 6 (b)

(b) Name **two** people who assassinated Hipparchus. [2]

Question 6 (c)

(c) Name the successor of Polycrates. [1]

Candidates were able to access the short answer questions well, and included a suitable level of detail.

Passage B

Athens, a once great city, became even greater with her tyrants gone. The two main power holders were Cleisthenes, of the Alcmaeonid family, who allegedly once bribed the Pythia, and Isagoras son of Tisandrus, who had impressive lineage though I could not describe it to you; other than that his family make sacrifices to Zeus of Caria. These men and their supporters ended up in contention for power. Cleisthenes was doing worse in the dispute, and absorbed the common people into his party. Shortly afterwards, he divided the Athenians into ten tribes rather than the previous four. He did not name them after the sons of Ion; Geleon, Aegicores, Argades, and Hoples; but instead gave them names taken from other heroes, all native to Athens except from Ajax. He added Ajax because he was a neighbour and an ally, even if he was a foreigner.
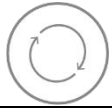
Herodotus, *Histories* 5.66

Question 7

7 What can we learn from Passage B about Cleisthenes' political activity in Athens? [5]

Higher scoring responses were able to pick out a range of detail regarding Cleisthenes' political activity, and lower scoring answers were able to choose at least one relevant detail. There was some confusion regarding Cleisthenes' status within Athens and where this event was on the timeline.

Question 8

8   Using details from Passage B, evaluate how accurate you think Herodotus' account of Cleisthenes'
     actions is.   **[5]**

Candidates were able to identify key points in the account that Herodotus may or may not have known about, and identified where he shows a lack of accuracy. Candidates should aim to spend a maximum of five minutes answering this type of question.

↻	**AfL**	Encourage candidates to focus on 'accuracy' and what that term means, create a checklist to consider what makes a source more or less accurate.
?	**Misconception**	Avoid assuming that because a source was written close to the time, it is more 'accurate'.

Exemplar 5

Passage B tells us Cleisthenes made Athens even greater as he replaced the tyrants. He won the political battle over Isagoras, by pleasing the 'common people' and became the chief Archon. He then 'divided' Athens into more tribes than before - which couldn't be aristocratic dominated and named them after Athenian heroes instilling national pride, only one, 'Ajax' was not Athenian, although he was an 'ally'.

Herodotus is writing over 150 years later than the events and is basing his evidence on what he had seen and heard rather than written evidence. He is also writing for entertainment leading to inaccuracies in his accounts. Herodotus is Greek so his accounts of Athens, a Greek state, are likely to be biased. His is Herodotus is against tyranny so he is likely to express the view that Athens 'became even greater with her tyrants gone'.

This candidate was given 5/5 for Question 7 and 4/5 for Question 8. Their structure is clear and there are direct links to the passage.

Question 9

9   Explain how Polycrates' foreign policy changed during his reign.   **[10]**

Higher scoring answers were able to address the second order concept of 'change' here, looking at the changes in specific areas. Lower scoring answers were able to identify key points of Polycrates foreign policy, however it was not related to the concept of change. Candidates do not need to use any ancient sources for this type of question, focus should be on knowledge and explanation.
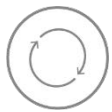
	AfL	For the second order concept question, during lessons, encourage students to think about which second order concepts could be applied to particular scenarios. Using extended mind maps, look at point and then expand onto each point.

Question 10

10* 'Our sources highlight that tyrants were a disaster in every state.' How far do you agree with this view?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge.   **[20]**

This question was handled well in terms of knowledge by the majority of candidates. There were some candidates who focused entirely on Athens, which made it very difficult for them to access the higher levels.

	AfL	Using a writing frame, encourage students to create a short epithet/characteristic phrase for each source writer, e.g. 'former-inhabitant of Samos' Herodotus, this encourages them to consider their usefulness as a source.
	Misconception	That 'tyranny' has a negative meaning in the ancient world.

Exemplar 6

On the other hand it could be argued that the thirty-ants were not a disaster. The Peisistratids introduced many positive reforms such as: travelling Judges, minting new coins, loans to farmers, employment through building projects, encouraging growth of olive treesrees a money-making crop, promoting peace and creating alliances for trade, the Panathenela, the city of Dionysia and building new temples and aqueducts. Although Herodotus to basing his evidence on what he had seen or heard and not was written and he is writing for entertainment which leads to inaccuracies in his accounts. Polycrates also had

This candidate was given 20/20 for this response. In this extract, it is clear here that they have understood how to use sources to demonstrate their knowledge and analyse the sources.

Section C overview

This option on the whole was done very well, especially regarding the stimulus passage and the second order concept question.

Question 11 (a)

SECTION C – Athens in the Age of Pericles, 462–429 BC

11   **(a)**   Name the place where the assembly met.   **[1]**

Very few candidates were able to identify this as the Pnyx Hill.

Question 11 (b)

     (b)   Give **two** functions of the assembly.   **[2]**

Candidates occasionally confused this with the *Boule.*

Question 11 (c)

     (c)   Name **two** political rivals that Pericles ostracised.   **[2]**

Candidates handled this well.

Passage C

People say that when ambassadors had come from Sparta to Athens to discuss the subject, Pericles was claiming that a certain law stopped him from taking down the tablet where the decree was written. Polyalces, one of the ambassadors, shouted: 'Well then, don't take it down: turn the tablet to the wall; surely there's no law preventing that?' The proposal was clever, but Pericles still would not give in. He must have secretly had a private grudge against the Megarians…

It is not easy to discover what the original reason was for the proposal being accepted, but everyone blames Pericles for the fact that it was not overturned. But some say that he kept up his refusal for a good reason and because he had clear view of what was best for the city. They say that he saw the demand as a test of resistance, and giving in would have been a sign of weakness. Others say that he went against the Spartans because of his arrogance and love of conflict, as well as to display his power.

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 30–31

Question 12

12 What can we learn from Passage C about why Pericles did not want to overturn the Megarian decree?   **[5]**

This passage allowed students to demonstrate a good awareness of Pericles role in Athens and it was very pleasing to see that higher scoring answers were able to confidently able to place this within the wider context.
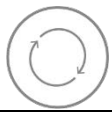
Exemplar 7

Pericles didn't give up the decree as he wanted his city to look strong and not seem weak by overturning et...

The candidate was given 1/5 for this response, they had picked out relevant information from the passage but had not expanded their choices.

Question 13

13 Using details from Passage C, evaluate how accurate you think Plutarch's account of Pericles' actions is. **[5]**

The best responses to this question were able to compare Plutarch's account with other classical sources, and to make judgements in terms of accuracy. There was some confusion among lower scoring answers as to when Plutarch was writing. It was pleasing to see that candidates were able to discuss the inclusion of direct speech and how that would affect the accuracy of the passage.

(AfL icon)	**AfL**	Encourage candidates to focus on 'accuracy' and what that term means, create a checklist to consider what makes a source more or less accurate.
(? icon)	**Misconception**	Avoid assuming that because a source was written close to the time, it is more 'accurate'

Exemplar 8

The dialogue in the source may not be accurate because Plutarch was most likely not there to be able to know this. Also Plutarch did not have his own information so he may have twisted the information slightly to make it more interesting.
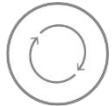

The candidate was given 2/5 for this response, they addressed accuracy and they understood that Plutarch wasn't there, however they did not know that Plutarch was living 600 years later and it is useful to re-enforce the time gap.

Question 14

14 Explain the significance of Pericles' building programme in Athens. **[10]**

Candidates were able to answer this question well in regard to what the Periclean building programme entailed. It was pleasing to see that candidates were able to place this in a very wide context and understood both the significance for Pericles personally, and Athens as a whole.

	AfL	For the second order concept question, during lessons, encourage students to think about which second order concepts could be applied to particular scenarios. Using extended mind maps, look at point and then expand onto each point.

Question 15

15* 'An Athenian woman would have little freedom in her daily life'. How far do you agree with this view?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge. **[20]**

This question allowed candidates to display a great deal of knowledge regarding the daily life of women. Candidates did find it difficult to use the sources for their knowledge and to evaluate them. The best responses compared several male perspective written accounts, considered the archaeological images and from there made judgements about the daily life of women. It was great to see that some candidates understood that 'Aspasia' was an unusual woman, and used her as a counterpoint to the sources, but demonstrated they understood the importance of her metic status.

	Misconception	Candidates were often confusing the following:
		Euripides' *Medea* is a tragic play; Medea's speech would have been given by a man and there is still scholarly debate as to whether women would have seen the play.
		Pericles did not write the Funerary Oration, the historian Thucydides compiled various speeches Pericles had given into one.
	AfL	Using a writing frame, encourage students to create a short epithet / characteristic phrase for each source writer, e.g. 'admirer of Pericles' Thucydides, this encourages them to consider their usefulness as a source.

Section D overview

This was the most popular option by a considerable margin, partly due to its inclusion in the legacy specification.

Question 16 (a) – (e)

SECTION D – Alexander the Great, 356–323 BC

(b) Name Alexander's first wife. [1]

(a) Where was Alexander born [1]

Question 16 (b)

(c) Name the god that Alexander apparently believed he was descended from. [1]

Question 16 (c)

(d) What name did Alexander give many of the cities he founded? [1]

Question 16 (d)

(e) Name the Persian king Alexander defeated at the battle of Gaugamela. [1]

Question 16 (e)

The short answer questions were accessible to candidates, there were some minor errors with spelling.

Passage D

As soon as she had said this, there was loud clapping, and the people with Alexander eagerly encouraged him, so that he gave in to their wishes, and jumping to his feet, with a garland on his head and a torch in his hand, he led the way. The party followed and surrounded the palace with shouts and dancing. The rest of the Macedonians who heard about it ran there joyfully with torches because they hoped that burning and destroying the palace was a sign that Alexander wanted to go home and did not plan to live among the barbarians. Some writers say that this is the way the deed was done, but others say it was planned beforehand.

Plutarch, *Alexander* 38

Question 17

17   What can we learn from Passage D about the behaviour of the Macedonian court?   **[5]**

This question caused some confusion in terms of the definition of court and what this passage referred to (the burning of Persepolis). Candidates were able to pick out details relating to why the Macedonians would be behaving in this way, the higher scoring responses were able to identify the relationship between Alexander and his companions and other members of the Macedonian Army.
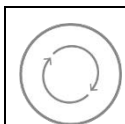
	AfL	Encourage candidates to place prescribed passages in a timeline, what happened before, what happened next. In the revision phase before an exam, give them passages and ask them to describe where it falls in the narrative.

Exemplar 9

The fact that Alexander 'gave in to their wishes' suggests that the court had a lot of influence over Alexander and could easily persuade him to do things they wanted. The Passage claims they was 'shouts and dancing' which really implies that they had been drinking a lot and were therefore easily riled up by drink into doing destructive things such as burning persepolis. It says they hoped destroying the palace 'was a sign' that Alexander wanted to return home rather than stay, which implies that they were unhappy living with barbarians and wanted

desperately and eagerly wanted to return home. The fact that they don't say anything of this directly to him suggests the court was afraid to stand up to him as they were worried of the consequences.
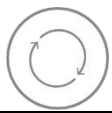
> This candidate was given 5/5 for their response. Each point was picked out from the passage and embedded in the response and demonstrated an awareness of what the source can tell us about the Macedonian court. They have demonstrated that they know what the passage it referring to.

Question 18

18 Using details from Passage D, evaluate how accurate you think Plutarch's account of this event is.

[5]

The best responses discussed Plutarch's account in comparison to Arrian's and considered the sources for both and why they would or wouldn't be accurate. Candidates demonstrated that there were severe limitations with Plutarch as a source, however a number strayed into discussion of 'reliability' rather than 'accuracy'.

↻	**AfL**	Encourage candidates to focus on 'accuracy' and what that term means, create a checklist to consider what makes a source more or less accurate.
?	**Misconception**	Avoid assuming that because a source was written close to the time, it is more 'accurate'

Exemplar 10

At the end of the passage, Plutarch mentions that 'some writers' assume that the Palace was burnt illustrating that Plutarch ~~do~~ is not confident in describing this event as he does not talk about the accuracy neither the other source / authors as 'some' also shows Plutarch is unsure. This also contributes to 'but others' as once again, Plutarch does not mention the name of these writers.
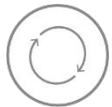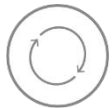
This candidate was given 2/5, there was inconsistency regarding Plutarch in the first part of their response. They had however understood what might limit Plutarch's accuracy through their analysis of his sources, this part here led to the award of 2/5.

Question 19

19   To what extent was Alexander's campaign against Persia purely one of destruction?   **[10]**

This question led to a variety of approaches regarding which second order concept the question was addressing. Candidates were rewarded for demonstrating an understanding of elements of the campaign in relation to the term 'destruction', whether they had looked at it in terms of how it changed or the significance. There were some very interesting responses regarding cultural destruction as opposed to physical destruction, and consideration of why Alexander was campaigning to begin with. Candidates do not need to use ancient sources for this type of question.

	AfL	Encourage candidates to consider Alexander's motivation and reasons for key events/times in his campaigns, draw up 'for and against' lists.
	AfL	For the second order concept question, during lessons, encourage students to think about which second order concepts could be applied to particular scenarios. Using extended mind maps, look at point and then expand onto each point.

Exemplar 11

one of destruction. He campaigned against Persia for his own benefits of millitary resources and to streangthen his empire enitially making him appear to others as a strong, confident leader...

Some sources are also evidence that Alexander's campaign did not ~~defend~~ depend souley upon destruction...

This candidate was given 2/10. The missing part was an introductory sentence. It is clear that they understood some of the possible reasons for Alexander's campaign. It does lack detail and also there is an attempt to discuss sources, which is not required here.

Question 20

20* 'It is not possible to learn any facts about Alexander's character because of the lack of contemporary sources.' How far do you agree with this statement?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as supporting your answer with your own knowledge. **[20]**

Candidates must use ancient sources, especially those that have been prescribed, in order to answer the essay question. Candidate who had otherwise scored highly in other questions were unable to access the top levels, as they had not evaluated existing sources. The best responses to this question considered the use of contemporary sources such as Ptolemy, Aristobolus and Callisthenes, by later writers such as Arrian and Plutarch. As part of that, the very best responses considered the motivations of those contemporary sources. Weaker responses were able to give narrative accounts of events from Alexander's life, particularly the taming of Bucephalus, as evidence of Alexander's character, however they were unable to be critical of Plutarch as a source. There were some excellent responses using material culture, and what that tells us about character, which was really pleasing to see.
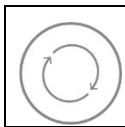
	AfL	Using a writing frame, encourage students to create a short epithet/characteristic phrase for each source writer, e.g. 'Roman era writer' Plutarch, this encourages them to consider their usefulness as a source.

	Misconception	Candidates were not confident that Arrian, Plutarch and Diodorus Siculus used sources such as Alexander's general Ptolemy and Callisthenes, the 'official court historian' of Alexander.
		There was some confusion regarding the Alexander Sarcophagus, some candidates thought that this was Alexander's tomb, rather than that of a near contemporary Hellenistic leader.

Exemplar 12

gain factual knowledge about Alexander. This is due to the fact that both Arrian and Plutarch use primary sources such as Aristobulus and Ptolemy who spent time with Alexander, fought with him and travelled with him and therefore gained a lot of knowledge about his character from their first-hand experience with him. The fact that Arrian and Plutarch use the accounts of such people gives their

This candidate was given 13/20 for the response overall; they had not provided many examples of character. This assessment of the sources used by Arrian and Plutarch demonstrates a very good awareness of where their sources came from.

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Section B, Passage B: Herodotus, Histories, 5.66.

Section C, Passage C: Plutarch, 'Life of Pericles', 30-31.

Section D, Passage D: Plutarch, 'Alexander', 38.

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For further details of this qualification please visit the subject webpage.

Review of results

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our review of results services. For full information about the options available visit the OCR website. If university places are at stake you may wish to consider priority service 2 reviews of marking which have an earlier deadline to ensure your reviews are processed in time for university applications.

activeresults

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. Available for GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Nationals.

It allows you to:

- review and run analysis reports on exam performance

- analyse results at question and/or topic level*

- compare your centre with OCR national averages

- identify trends across the centre

- facilitate effective planning and delivery of courses

- identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle

- help pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of students and teaching departments.

*To find out which reports are available for a specific subject, please visit ocr.org.uk/administration/support-and-tools/active-results/

Find out more at ocr.org.uk/activeresults

CPD Training

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear exam feedback directly from a senior assessor or drop in to an online Q&A session.

Please find details for all our courses on the relevant subject page on our website.

www.ocr.org.uk

The small print

Looking for a resource?

There is now a quick and easy search tool to help find **free** resources for your qualification:

www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/find-resources/

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