

1. General comments

Many candidates experienced difficulties with the questions that required sophisticated reading skills as their skills were inadequate.

Those questions that required interpretation were especially problematic to some candidates.

The examination techniques of candidates showed an improvement when it came to extended writing as very few used sub-headings and most attempted to include both an introduction and a conclusion.

2. Extended writing questions

Candidates achieved mixed results in these questions. Large sections from the sources in the addendum were merely reproduced verbatim. Many candidates also struggled to adopt a line of argument and to defend and sustain it.

Candidates did not appear to have the required skills to substantiate a line of argument using evidence from the sources provided. This problem was exacerbated by the late access to the holistic rubric as candidates were poorly trained. Candidates generally fared better in the extended writing questions where the analytical rubric was used for assessment and where basic background knowledge was required, as opposed to the source-based questions, which were assessed using the holistic rubric.

3. Source-based questions:

Candidates generally found this type of question easier than the extended writing questions. Most candidates experienced difficulties with the answering of paragraph- writing questions. To do well in these questions, candidates needed to demonstrate comprehensive subject knowledge and the appropriate skills.

It would appear that most centres used textbook-driven teaching to prepare their candidates, with very little training in skills such as the extraction of the relevant evidence from sources and the application of knowledge.

Meticulous attention to detail, judging appropriateness of sources, interpretation of visual sources (e.g. cartoons) and the detection of bias are some of the skills that need to be developed through regular practice in class. Candidates also need to be assessed regularly to determine their level of competence.