



Course report 2022

Subject	History
Level	Advanced Higher

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	1470
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	32.1	Cumulative percentage	32.1	Number of candidates	470	Minimum mark required	94
B	Percentage	28.5	Cumulative percentage	60.6	Number of candidates	420	Minimum mark required	79
C	Percentage	21.1	Cumulative percentage	81.7	Number of candidates	315	Minimum mark required	64
D	Percentage	12.5	Cumulative percentage	94.2	Number of candidates	180	Minimum mark required	49
No award	Percentage	5.8	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	85	Minimum mark required	N/A

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in appendix 1 of this report.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the statistics page of [SQA's website](#).

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper

The question paper has 10 sections recognising the 10 fields of study. Each of these sections has five essay questions and three source questions. Modifications this year meant that two key issues in each of the fields of study were not directly assessed in the question paper.

The question paper produced a wide range of responses. A few candidates did not complete the paper.

Project–dissertation

The project–dissertation now includes the requirement for a relevant functional introduction in the form of an abstract with main areas of research outlined to gain marks in the 21–24-mark range and above. The marking grid also shows progression in the use of primary sources and acknowledging the use of referencing.

The maximum word count for this component is 4,000 words. If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied. There was a mixture of responses in terms of length though very rarely did candidates go over the maximum words allowed.

Overall, this component performed as expected.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper

Many candidates recognised the distinct expectations of each of the three source questions. However, there were some who continued to answer all three questions as ‘How fully...?’ responses. A very small number tackled the two-source interpretation question as a comparison. In the ‘Evaluate the usefulness...’ question the rubric provenance was often generic and some tried to evaluate the type of source rather than the purpose of the source.

The best responses answered the specific questions set and many candidates wrote full, thorough, analytical, and evaluative answers.

Part A: Historical issues — essays

Most candidates attempted to answer the question set. A few may have tried to ‘turn’ the question into the one that they expected and gave a rehearsed response with very little reference to the isolated factor.

Introductions were in the main well-structured and had a line of argument. Stronger essays had substantial factual evidence which was used to forward the argument. A few were prone to generalisations. At times, with little detail, assertions such as ‘this clearly shows...’ were made, when it did not. There was good use of historians’ views, but candidates should be careful not to over-use historians’ views by including them in every point that they make; it makes it difficult to know what the candidate’s view is.

A few otherwise well-prepared candidates did not mention historians in their essays, meaning that the maximum award was 9 out of 25 marks.

Part B: Historical sources: source-based questions

The ‘How fully...?’ question was answered well.

The ‘Evaluate the usefulness...’ question was the most challenging in the paper. Very few candidates attained 3 marks for rubric provenance, and many gave generic responses including replacing purpose with type.

The two-source question has the views of two historians as seen in their academic texts. One or two candidates answered this as a comparison question, which it is not. Candidates should not expect a binary approach in this question. It is better to look for nuances, not distinctly opposed interpretations.

In all source answers there is ample opportunity to add in recalled knowledge as wider contextual development. ‘Contextual’ is important here. The candidate is relating that knowledge to the context of the source and the question. A few tended to list facts without giving any further detail.

In each question, 2 marks are available for historians’ views but further historians’ views can be credited as wider contextual development. Most candidates gave historians’ views, though a few did not.

Field of study 1 — Northern Britain from the Iron Age to 1034: essays

Most essays were clearly structured. Most candidates set out their line of argument in the introduction and this was followed up in the conclusion. A few provided excellent, insightful evaluative summaries. Many showed good awareness of schools of thought, for example traditional versus contemporary views. A few used historians' views effectively to advance their argument. Some had 'bolt-on' historians' views and at times this was not relevant to the question.

Field of study 1 — Northern Britain from the Iron Age to 1034: source-based questions

How fully

Most candidates did well in this question. Candidates interpreted accurately and added excellent examples of wider contextual development (WCD) and historians' views. Poorer responses tended to list points of recall (WCD) with no link to the question.

Evaluate the usefulness

Few candidates offered insightful commentary on the rubric provenance — author, purpose, timing. Many gave generic responses.

The 'two-source' question

Most answers clearly and accurately addressed the different viewpoints in the sources.

Timing and approach

Those candidates who did not score well either misinterpreted the question or ran out of time, or both.

Field of study 2 — Scotland: independence and kingship, 1249–1334: essays

Most candidates understood the questions. Markers noted very good thoroughness of detail and candidates understood the importance of a line of argument and sustained analysis. Most used a range of historians' views. A few misinterpreted question 11 on Edward's occupation of Scotland and focused on why it failed instead of how successful it was.

Field of study 2 — Scotland: independence and kingship, 1249–1334: source-based questions

How fully

Where candidates tackled this as their last question, the responses were not as good as those who completed it earlier.

Evaluate the usefulness

While the responses varied, there was clear evidence of candidates attempting this question with the proper approach. Candidates were more successful in gaining the mark for purpose in rubric provenance. There were also some generic responses. When interpreting the source, candidates did not always focus on its provenance, and responses were not specific enough to the document.

The 'two-source' question

Markers saw well-structured responses to this question.

Timing and approach

A significant number of candidates did not complete the paper. A few missed out one essay, and others also missed out a source question.

Field of study 3 — Scotland: from the Treaty of Union to Enlightenment, 1701–1815: essays

Markers commented on excellent responses with evidence of wide reading and real engagement with the question. Fluent and insightful answers were equally strong in detailed knowledge as they were on the analysis, evaluation, and use of historians' views.

Others were very conventional in their approach where factors were given and logically dealt with. A few candidates dealt with the isolated factor but did not always find it easy to produce an effective argument, using reasons and evidence to reach a conclusion. Historians' views were included.

Field of study 3 — Scotland: from the Treaty of Union to Enlightenment, 1701–1815: source-based questions

How fully

Candidates mostly selected the relevant quotes and married them to relevant recall (WCD).

Evaluate the usefulness

There were some outstanding responses to this question. Candidates tackled the rubric provenance effectively, and the content provenance was equally well considered. There was evidence of candidates who were very much engaged with the subject and the skills required.

The 'two-source' question

There was recognition of viewpoints in the two sources and most candidates enhanced them with relevant detail and included evidence of other views.

Timing and approach

A few candidates did not manage their time, which resulted in incomplete papers.

Field of study 4 — USA: 'a house divided', 1850–1865: essays

Markers noted that there were good essays on abolitionists (question 25), wartime economy (question 27), and Northern victory (question 29).

The line of argument was not always clearly identifiable in the introductions. There were a few examples of generic use of 'some historians'. Elsewhere markers found unattributed quotes. In a few there were no historians' views.

Some candidates found question 26 challenging as they did not link the question to 'compromise in 1860' and some tried to link with content from the wider 'causes of the Civil War'.

In question 27 a few candidates did not realise that 'economy' could come under 'resources' for the isolated factor.

Field of study 4 — USA: ‘a house divided’, 1850–1865: source-based questions

How fully

Markers noted that candidates attempted this question well, and answers had a great range of detailed recall. A weakness in source answers — which applied to each question — was the lack of named historians.

Evaluate the usefulness

Candidates tackled rubric provenance authorship well, but a few had a generic response to time such as ‘at the time of the event’. In general, the interpretation responses were very good and backed by recall and wider recall (WCD).

The ‘two-source’ question

Source A was interpreted very well. However, there were examples of misinterpretation of Source B, which was intended to give a view on the nature of culture in enslaved peoples’ society. This led to responses that suggested that Source B was supporting a benign view of slavery, which was incorrect. Candidates should not expect a binary approach in two-source questions. A few tackled this as a comparison of two sources. Some continue to list WCD points without linking this to the question.

Timing and approach

Markers noted that there were a lot of unfinished papers and that some candidates appeared to give pre-prepared responses that did not address the issue or isolated factor in the question. Other responses contained only one essay and the source answers.

Field of study 5 — Japan: the modernisation of a nation, 1840–1920: essays

Markers commented that there were some outstanding answers where candidates wrote sustained and consistent arguments throughout a well-informed essay, with a clear line of argument. In a few responses there was a lack of breadth and depth and a need for specific, relevant, and accurate examples as a foundation for the analysis required.

There was an attempt by some candidates to approach every question as an isolated factor question when this approach is not appropriate, for example questions 35 and 37. Candidates deviated from ‘external forces for change’ in question 33. This resulted in underachievement due to significant irrelevance. Some candidates used a significant amount of historians’ views, and most were accurate and relevant.

Field of study 5 — Japan: the modernisation of a nation, 1840–1920: source-based questions

How fully

Candidates showed good technique in their answers and interpretations were backed by relevant recall (WCD). Historians’ views were also given.

Evaluate the usefulness

Candidates gave answers that were scaffolded well. Some candidates did not link their points in an explicit manner to the question. This was true in all three questions.

The 'two-source' question

Most candidates recognised that this question was about differing viewpoints and interpreted them well.

Timing and approach

Essays were shorter than usual, and a few candidates chose to answer the source questions first.

Field of study 6 — Germany: from democracy to dictatorship, 1918–1939: essays

In general candidates were able to direct their answers to the questions set. They wrote good introductions where a clear structure was evident. Thoroughness was strong and there were good examples of its partnership with analysis and evaluation. In very good responses there was use of sub-conclusions to tie the issues together and there was also a broad range of historians' views.

Questions 41 and 44 were, in the main, answered very well. A few candidates struggled with question 42 and tried to answer a different question on 1924–29 with a focus on whether it was a 'Golden Age' or whether he was a 'Good German' or 'Good European'. A few twisted the question to such an extent that they answered on domestic policy. There were examples of generic rehearsed responses. In question 43 a few referred to propaganda, which was used after 1933, rather than what was used up until Hitler was appointed Chancellor.

A few suffered from brevity in introductions and conclusions. A few tended to stick to narrative at the cost of analysis. Others lacked the depth of detail to make the analysis valid. Statements became assertions without substance, for example 'Therefore, it can be said that propaganda was very important...' without actually proving it.

There were some with 'bolt-on' historians' views and limited engagement with the view. More than usual had no reference at all to historians, meaning that the maximum award was 9 out of 25 marks.

Field of study 6 — Germany: from democracy to dictatorship, 1918–1939: source-based questions

How fully

Candidates were clearly more comfortable with the demands of this question. Interpretation was well considered, however some responses needed to be more specific on factual detail related to the question (WCD). A few did not use historians' views and in a few WCD was not relevant.

Evaluate the usefulness

Although some candidates engaged well with the purpose of the source rubric provenance, for others it was a challenge and some generic responses were seen. A few evaluated the type of source rather than the purpose of the source. Some showed a very good approach to interpreting the source with regards to its provenance.

The ‘two-source’ question

Candidates interpreted the viewpoints in the two sources to good effect and markers noted some nicely-structured responses. However, markers also noted that a very small number approached this as a comparison question.

Timing and approach

Markers noted that quite a lot of candidates did not complete two essays. A significant minority found it difficult to sustain the quality of writing throughout their answers.

Field of study 7 — South Africa: race and power, 1902–1984: essays

Almost all candidates knew how to structure an essay. Candidates made good use of sub-conclusions as a means of driving forward and building their argument. Essay responses had some excellent detailed knowledge. This was matched by well thought-out analysis and evaluation, which showed that candidates were able to explore and grapple with the main themes. When thoroughness and detail were not strong, analysis suffered. Some responses did not include sufficient specific detail to back up analysis, and a few abandoned the essays in preference of using the time for source answers. The best answers saw historians’ views used to challenge and to advance the argument. A few were vague and inaccurate.

Question 50 was very well answered. In question 51 some candidates indicated that they wanted to write about the development of segregation rather than the reasons for the introduction of apartheid.

Field of study 7 — South Africa: race and power, 1902–1984: source-based questions

How fully

Most candidates were very comfortable with the question and answered it well.

Evaluate the usefulness

There were well-structured responses clearly linked to the question. Rubric provenance was challenging, and some candidates did not access purpose and authorship. Others did not understand the meaning of ‘resolution’. Yet others were not aware of the relationship between the SANNC and (as later it was called) the ANC.

The ‘two-source’ question

Most managed to tackle the two sources well and selected differing interpretations as expected. A few extended beyond or before the 1970s.

Timing and approach

Many candidates appeared to run out of time. Final answers were hurried and generally not answered well.

Field of study 8 — Russia: from Tsarism to Stalinism, 1914–1945: essays

Markers noted the range of approaches taken to answer questions. In well-written introductions markers saw well-selected context, the inclusion of at least one historian plus their view, and most had a line of argument. In the stronger essays there was a clear line of argument reinforced by sub-conclusions in each paragraph, which helped build their argument. There were also examples of analytically led answers and an impressive amount of factual knowledge in many essays. Historians’ viewpoints in some were very well

integrated into the answer but in others they were used as illustrations of evidence. On occasion quotes were attributed to the wrong historian. There was evidence of rushed conclusions.

The most popular essays were questions 57, 58 and 61 and there were some excellent responses to question 60. Question 57 saw responses that read as causes of the February Revolution and candidates struggled with the timeframe of this question, which was set at 1914 to January 1917. While long-term factors can be considered, too much on Stolypin's reforms and Bloody Sunday was seen. Question 58 saw many responses that presumed 'mass support' meant the weaknesses of the Whites, and candidates did not engage with the question set.

Field of study 8 — Russia: from Tsarism to Stalinism, 1914–1945: source-based questions

How fully

Most candidates correctly identified and interpreted the source point. There were a few examples where candidates provided points of WCD that were alluded to or mentioned in the source.

Evaluate the usefulness

Many candidates started with the content points in this question, and in the main the selection was very good. Candidates used historians' views and quotes that were appropriate and accurate. Few candidates managed to achieve full marks for rubric provenance, and many had a generic response to timing. There were a few examples of purpose being confused with type of source.

The 'two-source' question

A few responses were comparisons of the two sources. Most candidates interpreted the viewpoints in the sources and added relevant WCD, and historians were referenced. However, in a few responses the recall used was not linked to the question and in the most extreme cases became a list of what happened in the Purges, rather than reasons for the Purges. Markers noted that most candidates had a considerable bank of knowledge that they used as WCD in all three questions. In weaker responses the quotes were misinterpreted or there was no attempt to interpret the source at all. The approach was to write about the topic and use recall and historians. This rarely happened and when it did it was unsuccessful.

Timing and approach

A few candidates did not complete the paper as they appeared to run out of time. The approach in the main was as expected for essays and sources.

Field of study 9 — the Spanish Civil War: causes, conflict and consequences, 1923–1945: essays

Most essays were well-structured. In a few cases a pre-learned response was attempted. In others the question was changed to try to answer the preferred question. There was some misinterpretation of questions. For example, in question 68 on Franco's rise to power, there were examples of responses that instead provided reasons for the Nationalists' victory. Most

candidates used historians' views appropriately, but one or two gave irrelevant quotes and a few gave a very basic acknowledgement of historians.

Field of study 9 — the Spanish Civil War: causes, conflict and consequences, 1923–1945: source-based questions

How fully

Candidates generally interpreted this question accurately, and there was good use of historians' views. In a few responses the WCD was not relevant or not made relevant by linking it to the question. A couple misinterpreted the question and discussed the reasons for the success or failure of the initial coup rather than the role of different groups in planning the coup.

Evaluate the usefulness

Some rubric provenance responses were far too generic and lacked specific links to the source. Candidates provided very good recall (WCD).

The 'two-source' question

Candidates accurately selected source points and there was good use of WCD.

Timing and approach

A few candidates did not complete the paper as they appeared to run out of time.

Field of study 10 — Britain; at war and peace, 1938–1951: essays

Markers noted that candidates dealt well with the nuances within the questions, for example question 74 where 'democracy' was recognised as part of the question. Most essays were well-structured and contained the key elements of an introduction, which included a definite line of argument. Where this was not present, answers lacked a clear direction.

Markers noted a significant amount of well-explained and detailed evidence, which showed impressive understanding of the issues. Where evidence was sparse there was a lack of depth and analysis. Conclusions were well done. In the stronger essays, sub-conclusions helped build the argument. Use of historians' views was in some cases excellent, but equally there were generic citations. There were examples of question 75 being misinterpreted where candidates treated the question as an isolated factor question.

Field of study 10 — Britain; at war and peace, 1938–1951: source-based questions

How fully

Interpretation points were accessed. A few candidates misinterpreted and wrote about Churchill when the question was about the Labour ministers in the coalition governments.

Evaluate the usefulness

Rubric provenance was overall well done. A few candidates found the purpose of the source difficult to comment on.

The 'two-source' question

A few candidates treated this as a comparison question, but most interpreted very well and brought in recall (WCD), which was appropriate.

Timing and approach

Markers indicated that some candidates struggled to complete the paper.

Project–dissertation

There was evidence of considered and considerable research in the project–dissertations. Candidates used the full wording allowance and the best examples contained genuine research and real engagement with History. Many candidates tackled the abstract introduction very well although a few only provided introductions.

The dissertations that were most successful were those that had a focus on an issue or isolated factor within a topic area.

There were some instances where the candidate misinterpreted their question.

Titles

The impact of content modifications meant fewer titles from key issues that were not directly assessed in the question paper (Britain at War: The war and the British economy and Conservative recovery and Labour's defeat).

Candidates who had consulted the 'Approved list of dissertations' document or had submitted alternative titles tended to do better than those who had not.

Structure — abstract introduction

Many candidates produced well-worked abstracts. Some produced a mini-essay and afforded this area too many words.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

This varied a lot. If candidates are using online resources, care should be taken that the information is appropriate to Advanced Higher level. Candidates benefit from academic online resources.

Line of argument

Most candidates understood that the argument should be supported by robust evidence. A few did not and were determined to provide a counter argument, which was not supported by evidence.

Presentation

While this does not have marks allocated to it, there is an expectation that the project–dissertation will use academic conventions. There were a few instances of very poor proofreading, and a few had no page numbers, were not double-line spaced and were not single-sided.

Historical sources and interpretations

Most dissertations provided historians' viewpoints, but not all examined them. The best work used the historians to advance their argument and produced cross-referenced views —

whether to agree or disagree with the argument or analysis. Primary evidence was included but most were used as evidence and not examined. Those who received higher mark ranges examined and commented on the primary evidence.

Referencing and bibliography

Referencing was very mixed across responses. Some candidates seemed unfamiliar with the methods that should be used.

Field of study 1 — Northern Britain: from the Iron Age to 1034

Titles

Candidates used the 'Approved list of dissertations' for titles.

Structure — abstract introduction

Most dissertations had a consistent line of argument, which followed through the abstract introduction to the chapter conclusions and to the final conclusion, which had a clear overall judgement. However, there was a tendency with some to get lost in the narrative, to over describe and then use historians as further illustrations of the narrative. The most successful dissertations outlined the issue clearly and suggested a line of argument.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

Many dissertations referenced at least six resources in their bibliography. They demonstrated a breadth of knowledge but, in some, they did not always use factual knowledge effectively to advance the argument.

Line of argument

Some submissions had instances of 'leaping to' a judgement and not enough use of conditional language, for example 'this clearly shows...' rather than 'this suggests' or 'this indicates'. There were a few instances of summing up rather than attempting to evaluate. In a few, the conclusions were brief and lacked the thoroughness and synthesis of the factors examined. On occasion the line of argument was poorly considered, which affected the final award.

Historical sources and interpretations

Historiography was often used to illustrate knowledge rather than opinion or historical debate. In a few, historians' views were used out of context. Primary source used at its best acknowledged source provenance and reliability.

Referencing and bibliography

Markers noted excellent examples of moving beyond the traditional texts and using more recent works. Most had sound referencing.

Field of study 2 — Scotland: independence and kingship, 1249–1334

Titles

Most candidates chose titles from the 'Approved list of dissertations' although a few alternative titles were also chosen and successfully pursued. Markers noted the focus on Balliol, Alexander III or Bruce. Unusual questions allowed candidates to produce very independent responses using source materials outwith the norm to give evidence of real research and engagement.

Structure — abstract introduction

The abstract introduction was completed well by many where they met the expected criteria. Some candidates were not confident in expressing the reasoning behind their choice of question. However, some did not define their interpretation of the question and therefore tried to cover too wide a timeframe.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

Many candidates engaged in wide reading, going beyond the usual source material to use specific examples. Candidates demonstrated critical use of primary evidence. Several candidates demonstrated reflection in the use of source materials in the annotated bibliography.

However, an increased number of submissions had vague answers. Often the candidate knew what they should cover but did not have the sufficient quantity and quality of detailed evidence to allow for robust analysis. A significant number of submissions were very short at around 3,200 words.

Line of argument

The best work had a focus on the argument. Candidates had a confident and consistent control of their evidence and analysis, which afforded a real clarity in direction of argument from most.

Some candidates effectively analysed evidence and this was most successful where there was absolute clarity on the aims of the question and focus on the line of argument. But there was also evidence of 'bolt-on' analysis, for example comments at the end of paragraphs and sections.

Historical sources and interpretations

Use of historical interpretations were much improved from previous years. Candidates were more likely to use historical interpretations to advance the argument and there was a greater appreciation of variations of interpretations. Some used primary evidence very successfully to advance the argument, but a number struggled to use this evidence effectively.

Referencing and bibliography

In the main referencing was good. The annotated bibliography provided reflection on the resources used.

Field of study 3 — Scotland: from the Treaty of Union to the Enlightenment, 1701–1815

Titles

The titles selected worked well. Many chose the tobacco lords, the Treaty of Union, or the Jacobites.

Structure — abstract introduction

The abstract introduction worked well, replacing poor introductions that were very focused on background and context. This approach ensures candidates set out their rationale for the study, the areas of focus, and the argument that the writer has discovered in order to lead to the pursuit of their line of argument.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

In many ways this is about quality as much as quantity. In this field of study, a very high standard can be reached from the detailed reading of one good book, or a few good books. Some dissertations did not get beyond the main general points to be found in a textbook.

Line of argument

Very impressive use of argument and the best ones added sophistication and nuance to their reasoning.

Historical sources and interpretations

Markers noted good use of primary evidence and multiple primary sources to drive the argument. They also noted the impressive breadth and depth of historians' views.

Referencing and bibliography

There were examples of excellent referencing and very sound use of footnoting. Annotated bibliographies reflected the value of the resources accessed.

Field of study 4 — USA: 'a house divided', 1850–1865

Titles

Candidates provided a range of titles including the collapse of the two-party system, role of women, and the contribution of African-Americans. Candidates should be aware of the timeframe of questions so that they can be as thorough as possible. Also, on the topic of the question, for example those on the role of African-American soldiers, candidates referred to non-military factors, which were not relevant to the question. Some on 'Women sustaining both sides' were overly narrative.

Candidates used the 'Approved list of dissertations', but when candidates alter an approved title, they can unwittingly alter the parameters within which they will be writing. It is important to keep in mind that the title should allow for the depth and breadth required.

Structure — abstract introduction

There were mixed responses. A few chose to have an introduction only and did not deal with the abstract. A few did not include a line of argument. A few did not address research methods. Most candidates produced a structured piece of work. Some outlined the methods used and how these helped them in their research.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

Candidates were able to sustain the argument well and a number developed this effectively with a combination of historiography and primary evidence. It was encouraging to see the breadth of reading undertaken. This included a lot more online resources, including many more articles being used as part of bibliography, but not always showing the pages used by footnoting. A few web-based resources were not analytical. A few candidates used quotes and statistics that they did not reference, and a few historians' viewpoints were not footnoted. Most had relevant evidence, but occasionally markers found irrelevance when the material was outwith the timeframe.

Line of argument

Markers noted that the arguments were quite strong and highlighted that the analyses on Fogel and Engelman were very detailed and high quality. Some candidates used the abstract to focus their work. Other markers noted that the line of argument was not always clear in the introduction, especially in a few on the collapse of the two-party system or those on the outbreak of war due to a single cause. Sub-conclusions when used were very effective in advancing the argument and focusing on the issue. However, a few candidates' sub-conclusions were merely a summary of what had been covered.

Historical sources and interpretations

Candidates should engage with primary evidence and not just 'bolt it on'. A few dissertations used soldiers' letters effectively as well as others which used Lincoln or Lee quotes. Footnotes were not always present to back up points made in the dissertation. Occasionally the historian's view was presented instead of the candidate's own analysis or to illustrate knowledge.

Referencing and bibliography

Referencing was very mixed across responses. Some candidates seemed unfamiliar with the methods that should be used.

Field of study 5 — Japan: the modernisation of a nation, 1840–1920

Titles

Those titles relating to the Meiji reforms were quite popular this year.

Structure — abstract introduction

Some candidates approached the abstract very successfully. Candidates clearly approached this last and gave a highly effective and succinct overview of historical perspectives, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of accessible evidence. The most successful work was when candidates clearly set out the parameters of their dissertation in their abstract or introduction, which helped explain the breadth and depth of evidence they were using — and any omissions.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

Some candidates are really benefiting from extensive access to online libraries. A few candidates submitted work that had been based on a limited range of standard texts and, as such, there was an overall lack of engagement with historiography and supporting evidence.

Line of argument

Analysis of factors was in the main successful, but there were a few candidates who asserted without evidence or historians' views. Evaluation can be more challenging but there were excellent examples of real synthesis between ideas, factors and perspectives. The line of argument was most successful when candidates spent time reflecting on it to drive forward their view. Some candidates departed from their argument and fell into description.

Historical sources and interpretations

Historical interpretations were integrated and there was real engagement with views in such a manner that the line of argument flowed. The strongest responses were those where engagement and acknowledgement of differing perspectives was made obvious.

Some candidates used primary evidence to take forward the argument. Others tended to use primary evidence as evidence without any substantial examination.

Referencing and bibliography

Referencing was appropriate and the annotated bibliography provided a reflection on the use of resources used.

Field of study 6 — Germany: from democracy to dictatorship, 1918–1939

Titles

Many dissertations were on the Third Reich — issues such as, Hitler: Strong or Weak dictator? Volksgemeinschaft, the role of women in the Third Reich, the SS and Gestapo and the maintenance of power. There were very few on the earlier period, perhaps because of the modifications for this year.

Structure — abstract introduction

There were mixed responses, though in most cases the abstract introduction was tackled quite well.

However, while there was an attempt by some candidates to discuss the research process, many seemed to follow the format of the traditional introduction. Most included context, sub-issues outlined, engagement with the historical debate, the line of argument. A few lacked the line of argument, did not make the factors or aims clear, and had far too lengthy contextualisation. When this was the case the lack of organisation at the outset continued throughout the dissertation.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

Most candidates provided a good amount of relevant content. Markers noted that there was more use of websites. There was a lack of awareness, in very few responses, to stay within the set dates.

Line of argument

The quality was variable. Several submissions showed a real attempt to prioritise or show relationships between the sub-issues. A few were excellent, but others produced narrative and added on analysis by stating 'this shows that...' and the comment that followed did not always reflect the prior information. For others, paragraphs were driven by the narrative with a 'bolt-on' analysis sentence at the end. It was here that some submissions did not address the question and/or sustain the response.

Historical sources and interpretations

Some candidates used primary sources and applied a critical approach to advance the argument. They used impressive contemporary evidence on their topic and issue. Primary evidence in a few was used as illustration of the argument — the value of the evidence not questioned.

Referencing and bibliography

Markers noted that there were some good annotated bibliographies where candidates reflected on the value of the resources used.

Field of study 7 — South Africa: race and power, 1902–1984

Titles

A few candidates chose to answer, ‘What factors best explain the rapid extension of segregation after 1910?’. Some tackled this well, but a few answered this by giving the main factors with no evaluation. Markers noted that candidates did not always answer the question they had chosen.

Structure — abstract introduction

Most abstract introductions were good, and a few were excellent. In these, most candidates identified three sections that would be covered. Where this approach was not taken, candidates tended to do less well. Prioritising the interpretations was often not done.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

There was evidence of very extensive reading and excellent use of academic material online. Candidates benefited from some excellent online resources, for example South African History online, which has very good links to articles. There was good breadth of reading, sound understanding of the main issues related to their question, and identification of factors to advance their argument.

Line of argument

The arguments were generally sound, but some dealt with factors in isolation rather than ‘building and sustaining’ the argument. While it is important to look at the argument and the counter to that argument, when it is forced, its validity is brought into question.

Historical sources and interpretations

There was increased engagement and critical evaluation of historians’ viewpoints. The best work consistently identified the differing interpretations of the historians they used. A few tended to use historians to illustrate points made. Primary evidence tended to be limited and illustrative without any evaluation of the evidence itself.

Referencing and bibliography

Markers noted some excellent research evidenced by thorough annotated bibliographies that included comments on the use of primary sources. Some lacked footnotes and had very brief bibliographies.

Field of study 8 — Russia from Tsarism to Stalinism, 1914–1945

Titles

Although there was a broad range of titles, markers found that there was greater concentration on Stalinist Russia rather than the Leninist period. The exception was the Civil War. A few candidates found it difficult to engage with the meaning of 'spontaneous' in the February Revolution question. Some dissertations did not define the time period tightly enough.

Structure — abstract introduction

On the whole candidates adapted well to the approach of the abstract introduction. The discussion of certain academic texts and primary sources had influenced the candidate's argument. There were a few examples where the abstract introduction was treated as a mini-essay, or the traditional introduction format, and was written in the first person.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

In many, research showed thoroughness of approach and relevant content was selected. Markers noted excellent demonstration of depth in research and highlighted dissertations on Socialist Realism. It was obvious that candidates had immersed themselves in their reading. However, a few became so immersed in the facts that they lost sight of their question, for example the question on whether Trotsky's leadership in the Civil War had been exaggerated became an answer on why the Reds won the Civil War. Some submissions focused on the topic of the dissertation rather than the issue. There was a significant increase in the use of the internet and web pages for historians' views. In one or two cases only web pages were used and no books, with some candidates using non-academic sites. A few had an over-reliance on Corin and Fiehn, which at times made for limited detailed knowledge. A few submissions had word counts close to 3,000 words.

Line of argument

The best work led with the analysis and regularly evaluated the evidence in line with the issue. There were good examples of stating a school of thought, presenting the counter argument, and then deciding on the side favoured or presenting a new angle or approach. A few candidates had high-quality analytical work that synthesised their argument across factors — building their case. For some, analysis was 'bolted-on' to narrative and rarely did these have counter arguments. Markers saw sub-conclusions not backed by evidence or which had no logic in their assumption. Unfortunately, a few did not address the issue identified in the dissertation title.

Historical sources and interpretations

The strongest answers had a historical debate permeating the whole work. However, quality is better than quantity. Well-integrated historians' views used to further the argument is better than 20–30 unexamined quotes; the reader might wonder what view the writer has. Primary sources were used as illustration such as Lenin's Testament or a propaganda poster, but in better responses candidates used them to drive forward their argument, especially so in those assessing Trotsky. In a few there was an uncritical use of primary evidence.

Referencing and bibliography

Not all submissions had annotated bibliographies. There was evidence of poor proofreading and scant footnoting in other cases.

Field of study 9 — The Spanish Civil War: causes, conflict and consequences, 1923–1945

Titles

Candidates chose a broad range of titles and most selected from the 'Approved list of dissertations'.

Structure — abstract introduction

Most abstract introductions were good.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

Generally, there was an impressive depth of knowledge, which showed a wide range of reading from a variety of sources: books, journals, websites, documentaries. Most included an impressive amount of relevant detail and also followed a clear and sensible approach to answering their question. However, some chose to outline quite a considerable number of chapters for this length of work, which led to a lack of depth in answers. There were very few examples of irrelevance.

Line of argument

Most candidates wrote analytically and balanced their arguments. A few candidates formed extremely impressive, clear, and consistent arguments. Others found it hard to maintain focus.

Historical sources and interpretations

Markers noted the range of historical interpretations referenced in the dissertation. Most were used well to advance the argument. A few used multiple primary sources very well. However, for some the evidence was linked to the narrative, for example dissertations on the International Brigades. One or two had very limited primary evidence.

Referencing and bibliography

Most used an appropriate referencing system.

Field of study 10 — Britain: at war and peace, 1938–1951

Titles

More candidates chose to tackle social issues. Fewer focused on military titles. One or two candidates chose to change the title without getting this approved or limited themselves to past paper questions using the marking instructions as a template.

Structure — abstract introduction

Many excellent examples were noted. A minority did not provide an abstract.

Thoroughness and relevance of information and approach

More websites were accessed by candidates, but many candidates still used academic texts and journals, and TV documentaries. Candidates with limited research were generally compromised in the scope of their argument.

Line of argument

Candidates grappled well with their line of argument and evaluation especially when the abstract created the blueprint for their line of argument. A few candidates were able to argue coherently and with great clarity and maturity. A few, while having an awareness of the key

issues to be discussed, struggled to marshal the evidence in support of a coherent argument.

Historical sources and interpretations

Many candidates really engaged with historians' views and outlined the debate rather than simply using quotes to illustrate. In other cases, it appeared that historiographical understanding had come from class notes or even SQA marking instructions. A few used primary evidence for illustrative purposes without an explanation or examination of the source.

Referencing and bibliography

Most used an appropriate referencing system.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Essays

Candidates should be encouraged to read the questions carefully and avoid using pre-prepared responses that do not answer the question.

The isolated factor means that significant attention should be given to it, not just a cursory comment.

Candidates may refer back to the question and line of argument in discussion of subsequent factors. This is good practice but should be done in a succinct fashion. It is also good practice to use sub-conclusions to build argument as the essay progresses.

Historians' views are vital to attain more than 9 out of 25 marks. These views should be used to back up the line of argument and not just as factual illustration. Candidates should also be encouraged to cross-reference views.

Balance in the discussion is also vital. However, this does not mean that candidates must find a balance overall. Historians should be used to highlight the range, or not, of arguments — not as 'history' but as evidence of the arguments. Candidates should be encouraged to challenge views as long as they can justify this.

Conclusions should include the candidate's view, not a synopsis of the viewpoints currently held.

Source-based questions

To ensure the best answers to source questions, centres and candidates should familiarise themselves with the course specification.

Candidates should be reminded that interpretation is more than repetition of sources — they need to explain why their selected point is important to the issue being discussed, and adding further recall will gain more marks as up to 2 marks for wider contextual development are available for each area of recall.

Candidates should be reminded that the 'Evaluate the usefulness...' question is about its provenance. It is a primary source of evidence. From 2020 this is identified as rubric provenance (the author, timing, and purpose of the source) and content provenance (where the points in the source should be contextualised in terms of their value as evidence, and in this way commenting on the provenance of the source content).

The two-source question has the viewpoints of two historians in an academic work. Candidates should not expect a binary approach in two-source questions. It is better to look for nuances, not distinctly opposed interpretations. In the two-source question it is better to preface comments with 'This view given by the historian is' rather than state it as if it is a matter of factual accuracy. The two-source question is not a comparison question. Differing

viewpoints may be read but these sources are not set out to contrast one another. Candidates are required to provide a substantial amount of wider contextual development. Teachers and lecturers should refer to the 2022 question paper marking instructions.

Project–dissertation

Titles

Centres are encouraged to consult the ‘Approved list of dissertations’, which has been updated. If the title diverges from this in a significant way, centres are encouraged to seek approval of the title from SQA.

Abstract introduction

This should be concise. Guidance on this is available in appendix 2 of the course specification and in the Understanding Standards webinar on the project–dissertation.

Presentation and referencing

Candidates should be encouraged to follow these guidelines in terms of the presentation of work:

- ◆ proofread the final piece
- ◆ double-line space their work
- ◆ use font size 11 or 12
- ◆ reference quotes, statistics and arguments, in some cases, by using footnotes; this gives the work validity
- ◆ include a word count on each page
- ◆ include a contents page
- ◆ include numbers on pages
- ◆ include an annotated bibliography, which reinforces research undertaken
- ◆ print single-sided
- ◆ do not staple

In terms of referencing, candidates should use footnotes rather than embedding in the body of the work. Historical opinions or debates should be embedded throughout the work. Quoting historians without footnoting or including their work in the bibliography and/or having an uncritical over-reliance on internet sites can hinder attainment.

Candidates and centres should refer to the detailed marking instructions in the coursework assessment task document to help understand the progression in this assessment. Detailed marking instructions should not be seen as a catch-all or must include list, rather a suggestion about what may be included. However, they are a very useful guide in terms of the detail, argument and historians’ viewpoints.

Centres and candidates should also note the expectation of primary evidence in the project–dissertation. These should be more than a ‘bolt-on’ reference point. In the detailed marking instructions, you will see that it is the use of the evidence not the quantity of primary evidence used.

Appendix 1: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures including assessment modifications and revision support, was introduced to support candidates as they returned to formal national exams and other forms of external assessment. This was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, SQA adopted a more generous approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses than it would do in a normal exam year, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams have done so in vastly different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2022. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2022 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2022 Awarding—Methodology Report](#).