

# AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

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Paper 0409/01  
Making of a Nation

## Key messages

- To gain full marks in **part (a)** questions candidates should provide description containing relevant factual material with reference to the date range and focus of the question. Marks are awarded on a point system for relevant knowledge and development.
- **Part (b)** questions require that candidates **explain** their ideas in some depth. This necessarily goes beyond describing events or issues that relate to the question. Candidates should make a pertinent point, explain how it links to the question and support it with precisely chosen evidence.
- High marks for **part (c)** responses are achieved by providing balanced ('for' and 'against') and developed arguments. Candidates should attempt to build an argument in relation to the question; thinking about whether they agree with the statement or assertion in the question and building a balanced foundation of evidence. Comments should be supported with a reasonable range of detailed material.
- Candidates must observe the examination rubric. In this paper there are two sections, and all of the questions should be taken from one section, i.e. **A** or **B**. The rubric states that candidates must '*Answer three questions from one section. For each question you choose, answer every part, (a), (b), and (c).*' These instructions are stated at the beginning of the paper, and while most candidates adhered to them, there was a significant minority that did not. Some candidates answered only one part **(a)**, **(b)**, and **(c)** taken from three different questions. Others answered only one question and a few answered all twelve questions. There were also some candidates who answered questions across **Sections A** and **B** which was not allowed within the examination. Rubric infringements had an impact on the marks awarded in this examination session.

## General comments

Many scripts were well-focused on the syllabus material. This was shown particularly in the **part (a)** questions where some candidates received high marks by clearly focusing on the question and the dates, events or figures included. Stronger candidates showed excellent knowledge of the required ideas here. With **part (b)** questions some responses were aware of the need to explain rather than just describe and this was shown in the way answers were structured into reasons/factors/causes and used language such as 'this showed that' or 'this meant that'. Many responses struggled to gain marks in **part (b)** questions because they did not demonstrate the necessary knowledge to link general comments to the particular question and were not focused on explaining. Many responses were placed in the lower part of Level 2 because they did not move beyond description of some relevant knowledge.

Stronger candidates were aware of the need to offer balanced comments in response to **part (c)** questions. Some of these responses revealed clear exposition, structure, organisation and a good range of supporting material before arriving at a consistent judgement in a conclusion. Such responses usually started with a clear introduction before moving to a 'point per paragraph' approach. The balance in such responses was often sign-posted by the second half of the answer starting with; However...; or; On the other hand, I disagree with the statement because...; However, although this style was seen, responses which approached the questions in this way were still in a minority and many candidates struggled to display the knowledge and skills required for these questions. It is acceptable, especially with **part (c)** responses, for candidates to write in the first person, (i.e., informally) but slang and colloquialism should be kept to a minimum.

The best overall responses showed a strong approach to learning specific historical material. They moved beyond the over-generalized material of weaker responses to show awareness of organisation; structure; explanation and specific detail.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### ***Section A: Emergence of a Nation 1754–1890***

##### **Question 1**

- (a) This question was popular, and most candidates were able to offer basic points about the Articles of Confederation as a new system of government for an emerging nation.
- (b) Many candidates offered general descriptions, and some showed knowledge of why a Constitution was needed. Successful answers used knowledge to structure an explanatory answer, within the specific dates between 1787 and 1788.
- (c) Strong responses were able to discuss economic factors such as trade restrictions and taxation, along with other reasons for rebellion such as the stationing of British troops. Weaker responses made general comments about taxes but were unable to move beyond this idea or included knowledge which was not relevant to the question.

##### **Question 2**

- (a) Many candidates who attempted this question did not have specific knowledge of how the United States took control of Florida. Some had basic knowledge of events but were unable to use it to make clear descriptive points.
- (b) The best responses to this question were able to give a clear explanation of why it took a decade for Texas to be admitted to the Union and show their understanding of the concern around allowing another slave state to join. Candidates who understood the chronology were better able to develop clearly explained points which were relevant to the question. Weaker responses only had a basic knowledge of the period.
- (c) Stronger responses were able to select relevant examples of France's importance to the expansion of the United States, e.g., the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and contrast these interactions with other countries in the period, e.g., the impact of the Oregon Treaty with Great Britain in 1848. Weaker responses included some relevant knowledge but needed to explain how these ideas linked to the question or form an argument to support either side.

##### **Question 3**

- (a) A few strong responses were able to offer a clear description of what happened at Sand Creek in 1864. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge to describe precise events.
- (b) Most candidates struggled to answer this question using specific knowledge of Tecumseh's rebellion. Some responses were able to make general points about the causes of conflict between native peoples and the US government but very few knew precise details of the confederacy and the threat it posed during the War of 1812.
- (c) Strong responses displayed knowledge of the Reservation System and its impact on the destruction of Native American culture, e.g., the forced settlement of nomadic tribes, and other factors such as the Dawes Act of 1887. Better responses showed chronological understanding of the whole period, which helped candidates to make and develop relevant points.

##### **Question 4**

- (a) This question was popular and generally produced responses which displayed good knowledge of the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858. There were some weaker responses which confused the Senate election of 1858 with that of the Presidential election of 1860.

- (b) Many candidates were able to describe the election of 1860 and showed knowledge of Lincoln's minority share of the popular vote. The best responses were able to link these descriptions to the question by explaining why Lincoln's election led to secession.
- (c) Strong responses to this question were able to provide specific knowledge that was relevant to the question on Reconstruction. These candidates were able to discuss both the successes and failures of Reconstruction in reuniting the country. Weaker responses struggled to restrict their answers to the period of Reconstruction and moved away from the timeframe into the twentieth century.

#### Question 5

- (a) Some responses showed an awareness of the Farmers' Alliance and were able to offer some description of their ideas. However, many candidates struggled with this question as they did not have specific knowledge of the main aims and policies of the Farmers' Alliance.
- (b) Strong responses to this question were able to give a clear explanation of the economic factors in the building of a transcontinental railroad and its beneficial impact on the transporting of goods across the country. Weaker responses suggested ideas of it being easier and taking less time than other methods of transport but needed to add detail and further explanation.
- (c) Responses showed knowledge of the causes of the Industrial Revolution but struggled to use specific knowledge of natural resources, e.g., timber and iron ore and how their availability contributed to the industrialisation of the North. Counter arguments discussed new inventions or new systems for organising factories. Weaker responses were unable to move beyond general comment about industrialisation or included knowledge which was not relevant to the question.

#### Question 6

- (a) This question was popular, and a minority of strong responses were able to offer specific knowledge of the Homestead Act and its focus on the distribution of public land to settlers. Much more common was generalized knowledge which scored a mark or two but did not move beyond this.
- (b) Candidates who attempted this question often struggled to move beyond general comment because they did not show enough knowledge about the topic. Some managed to identify general problems such as different groups fighting over jobs. Weaker responses focused on opposition *towards* immigrants rather than *violence between* different immigrant groups.
- (c) The best responses were able to look at religious and cultural issues with some specific examples, such as the Know Nothing movement's objection to Catholics holding public office. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge of immigration in this period which meant that their answers remained quite general and did not build an argument in relation to the question.

#### Section B: Consolidating the Nation 1890–2000

#### Question 7

- (a) This question was very well answered with most responses able to offer points about the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory. The strongest responses gave details of why so many died and how some tried to escape the locked building.
- (b) Most candidates struggled to answer this question using specific knowledge of the 'Wisconsin idea'. Some responses were able to make general points about the Progressives and the involvement of Robert M La Follette, but very few knew precise details of La Follette's work with the University of Wisconsin on how to make the state more democratic.
- (c) There were some excellent responses to this question which not only showed knowledge of the work of specific unions, such as the Knights of Labor, but also how there was little real success because of child labour and long hours. Weaker responses tended to give generalised knowledge and struggled to move beyond basic description.

### Question 8

- (a) This question was popular and generally produced responses which displayed good knowledge of new advertising methods in the 1920s. The best responses described the methods clearly and with precise knowledge. There was some confusion in weaker responses as some included details of how people paid for the consumer goods being advertised.
- (b) Many candidates were able to give solid descriptions of 'buying on the margin' and hire-purchase. Strong responses were able to use their knowledge to form an explanation as to why the increased availability of credit impacted the wider economy. Weaker responses need to become more adept at moving from description to explanation.
- (c) This question provoked some thoughtful and considered responses where candidates were able to use clear knowledge to test the assertion, including many who successfully argued both for and against the assertion. These responses included specific historical knowledge of women's lives in the 1920s, e.g., the right to vote in 1920, flappers and a recognition that little changed in rural areas. Weaker responses lacked historical knowledge and relied on generic assertions or narrative overview which did not address the question asked.

### Question 9

- (a) This question was popular, and most responses knew that the Wall Street Crash caused unemployment to increase significantly and quickly and were able to gain some marks for this question. Strong responses were able to describe how some industries and regions were hit harder than others.
- (b) Weaker responses struggled to move beyond general comment because they did not know enough about the topic. Some stronger responses were able to identify buying shares 'on the margin' and that people lost money through shares, but few used this knowledge to structure an explanatory answer to the question.
- (c) This question was generally well answered with clear knowledge and explanation which enabled candidates to build an argument in relation to the question. The best responses were able to use precise knowledge of the aims and purposes of the New Deal to write balanced answers which argued for and against the most important part of the New Deal being the creation of jobs. Responses which struggled to move into the higher levels of the mark scheme needed to explain the purposes of the New Deal or link them clearly to the question.

### Question 10

- (a) Some responses showed an awareness of the Black Power movement and were able to offer some description of their ideas and activities. Weaker responses did not have the required knowledge of Black Power and were not able to distinguish their activities from other groups in the Civil Rights Movement.
- (b) Many candidates struggled to answer this question with any knowledge beyond very general descriptions. Some candidates had some basic knowledge of the Plessy vs Ferguson judgement but could not use this to structure an explanatory answer to the question. Many responses also included details of other Supreme Court rulings from the twentieth century, e.g., Brown vs Board of Education.
- (c) Some candidates were able to use detailed knowledge to show the effectiveness of Martin Luther King's campaigns such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Candidates found it more difficult to give a counter argument to the question which could have discussed King's visit to Chicago in 1966 and the less successful outcome of his work in the North. Weaker responses often relied on narrative which did not attempt to build an argument and had more generalised knowledge.

### Question 11

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

**Question 12**

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

# AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

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Paper 0409/02  
Depth Study

## Key messages

- This paper requires the examination of sources provided in the Insert. The sources provide evidence about each of the four Depth Studies and all the questions require this evidence to be used by candidates in their answers. As such, successful answers must identify specific details from the source(s) that are relevant to the question. Generalised comments about the content or a paraphrase of the source will limit the answer to Level 1.
- The command for every question states that the answer should not only use details from the source but also 'your knowledge'. It is important that candidates include information that either supports or challenges the details in the content to 'interpret and evaluate the sources', as the instruction at the top of each set of questions for all four Depth Studies makes clear.
- Evaluation of the sources as evidence is necessary when answering **Question 2, Question 3, Question 4** and **Question 5**. To do so, candidates should consider the nature of the source considering some of the following points of provenance: the authorship of the source, the date of the source, the type of language expressed in the source, the audience for whom the source was intended, and the accuracy of the information contained in the source. As in previous years, many candidates seemed to accept the content at face value rather than examining its accuracy, purpose, and the broader context in which it should be viewed.
- Answers to the **first question** of the Depth Study should aim to identify evidence from the source that is relevant to the question and try to show their understanding by the addition of knowledge and commentary that develops the content.
- Answers to the **second question** of the Depth Study should aim to identify points of content that would be useful to the historian. However, to access the higher marks it is important that candidates show they appreciate both the use and the limitations or shortcomings of the source as evidence.
- Answers to the **third question** of the Depth Study should aim to assess the reliability, not its utility as many candidates are tempted to do. Unless there are obvious factual errors, consideration of the nature of the source, its authorship, and the context in which it was written are routes into assessing the reliability of the source.
- Answers to the **fourth question** of the Depth Study should aim to explain why the two sources differ. To do so, candidates are advised to identify how they differ and then to provide reasons for the difference based on the context and the provenance of the sources.
- The **fifth question** of the Depth Study carries one third of the total marks available, so it is really important. Candidates should construct an argument for and against the statement in the question. In previous reports it has been recommended that candidates group the sources for and against the statement by letter, as shown in the mark scheme. Candidates might be encouraged to start their answer 'Some sources contain evidence that supports the view that ...' and once the relevant sources have been evaluated move on to a counter argument starting 'However, other sources challenge the view'. Candidates also need to be reminded that all seven sources should be considered. To gain the higher marks on **Question 5** candidates need to evaluate the sources and use their contextual knowledge.

## General comments

- Depth Studies A and B were the most popular. Few attempted Depth Study D and only a small number answered questions on Depth Study C.
- Candidates would gain by first reading through all the sources relevant to the Depth Study they are going to tackle at the start of the exam to gain an overall sense of the material. This would also prevent them from rushing to answer questions and to better assess the demand of the paper before they begin.

- Candidates are advised to time their approach to the paper according to the marks allocated to each question. As the last question carries 15 marks candidates are advised to spend a third of the time on this question.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### ***Depth Study A***

##### **Question 1**

Many candidates wrote about the gold rush or migration west in general terms, rather than extract specific points from the poster. Better answers highlighted some points and developed them to show their understanding.

##### **Question 2**

The key point of utility was recognised by most, and many candidates were able to affirm that Manifest Destiny was based on the assumption that westward expansion was divinely ordained. Some responses also commented on the significance of the date or the influence of a newspaper; however only a minority considered the limitations of the source.

##### **Question 3**

Many responses asserted the source was reliable because it was the words of Lincoln. Some argued that as president-elect, Lincoln's comments were designed to please the audience. A minority attempted to set the speech in the context of the civil war, and Lincoln's concern to keep the West free of the issues at the heart of the conflict between North and South.

##### **Question 4**

Weaker responses were limited to how the sources differed, usually by summarising the content of D and then setting it against a summary of E. Better answers stressed the perspective of the two authors and/or applied knowledge about contemporary attitudes to the Mormons.

##### **Question 5**

Candidates who did not use Sources F and G were restricted in their argument, often reduced to using Source B only as supporting the view that Manifest Destiny was the main reason for westward expansion. The strongest answers considered the provenance and added knowledge of their own. Other candidates needed to address both sides or develop their ideas to include more detailed comments on the sources.

#### ***Depth Study B***

##### **Question 6**

Close scrutiny of the advert reveals many pertinent points about the suffrage movement in the 1880s, which some candidates identified. Unfortunately, others confused the rates charged for copies of the Woman's Journal with women's pay. Candidates need to apply their own knowledge to the source to answer this question effectively.

##### **Question 7**

Weaker answers highlighted the points about Mott's age and the elevation of others to take her place but often as a summary of the content. Stronger answers developed these points to address the question of her leadership arguing that it showed her realism about her age and her confidence in others younger than herself. Those who detected limitations about the source emphasised the fact that the source told you nothing about Mott's leadership prior to her retirement.

### **Question 8**

Better answers recognized the importance of the authorship to explain the uncritical nature of the source. Others applied knowledge of Mott's assertive methods and style on campaign to challenge the lady-like description of her. Candidates who merely summarised the content or stressed the utility of the source were limited to lower marks.

### **Question 9**

Candidates were able to show how the sources differed. Better answers realised that Source D was written by a man of traditional outlook, compared with Source E whose sympathetic view of Stanton was unsurprising given the authorship. Some candidates also recognised the importance of the different dates, explaining how the views of Source D were more widespread in 1868 when the suffrage movement was in its infancy and how, by 1902 when Source E was written, circumstances had changed.

### **Question 10**

Candidates needed to use the sources rather than commenting in general terms about the importance of public speaking. The best responses used the sources to address both sides of the question. Some candidates argued that Source A showed how speaking was the main quality of the suffrage leaders as they were good at writing, rather than see this as a distinctive quality. Those who did not use the last two sources missed the chance to argue that petitioning was another quality.

### ***Depth Study C***

#### **Question 11**

Many candidates appeared to struggle to understand the message, with some unable to identify Uncle Sam and others confused about the two figures fighting.

#### **Question 12**

Most answers were paraphrases or summaries of the content and were therefore limited to Level 1.

#### **Question 13**

Some candidates assumed the report was produced by the newspaper rather than the Court of Inquiry. As such, any attempt they made to consider the reliability of the source was compromised by this misunderstanding.

#### **Question 14**

Candidates used points of detail selected from the two sources. To gain higher marks, candidates' own knowledge needed to be included too.

#### **Question 15**

Answers were brief and some candidates seemed unsure of the meaning of the word 'humanitarian'. Candidates need to discuss the sources to answer this question effectively.

### ***Depth Study D***

#### **Question 16**

The majority of candidates emphasised dance and music as the main aspects of popular entertainment revealed in the source. Some were able to add knowledge about 'flappers' and jazz. Others mentioned the mixing of men and women.

#### **Question 17**

The majority of candidates appreciated the utility of this source, and a minority suggested the limitations of

the source by stressing that this was the view of a teenager and one who lived in a small town and was not representative of other age groups or those in cities. Better responses also presented knowledge about the film and cinema sector.

### **Question 18**

Many candidates seemed to struggle to focus on the inquiry in the question. Essentially, the views expressed in Source C were reliable being representative of the conservative and religious members of society.

### **Question 19**

The majority of candidates understood the difference between the two sources. Many were able to comment on the provenance of both, aware of the political purpose of Source D. Similarly, there was understanding that the experience of a woman, the tendency of advertisements to exaggerate and the perspective of a feminist informs the thrust of Source E. Candidates should also include knowledge about mass production and the supply and demand for goods. Some utilised their knowledge of the depression successfully.

### **Question 20**

Most candidates argued that everyone's lifestyle changed whether directly or indirectly. The sources provided scope to construct a case for and against the view. Candidates should use the sources to offer more than their own opinion and stay focused on the 1920s and early 1930s.

# AMERICAN HISTORY (US)

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**Paper 0409/03**  
**Personal Study**

## Key messages

- Candidates clearly value the time spent on investigating a local history topic. It helps them to take pride in the place where they live as a place that is of interest, for example to visitors to the area. It helps them to understand their place in history.
- Tasks set by centres work best when candidates are provided with historical sources that are clearly open to interpretation. Where the study depends entirely on what historians have written about the topic there is no scope for the critical use of sources that is an essential element in AO4.
- Candidates need to be trained in the methodology of using historical sources critically. This applies particularly to the use of non-text sources including maps and photographs.
- Candidates need to be clear what the concept of ‘historical significance’ means and how it sits within the concept of change and continuity. They need to distinguish it from the concept of ‘consequence.’

## General comments

Centres all chose valid topics for the Personal Study. Usual practice is to provide candidates with a set of sources on which to base their study. Candidates should not be confined to these sources and nor should the marks awarded in AO4 depend on using a specific number of the sources. It would be helpful for candidates if centres were to distinguish between first-hand sources of evidence and history books or websites where the text is written by historians or others. This would allow candidates to focus evaluation on historical sources, as intended.

Most candidates included a bibliography. This is a required element of the Personal Study. Please ensure that candidates include a complete list of works cited and used, including a list of what is in the set of sources provided by the centre.

Administration was generally good. However, centres are reminded of the requirement to include the work of the top and bottom marked candidates in the sample selected for external moderation. They should also include the work of all candidates awarded ‘0’ (zero) marks.

This year most centres provided clear evidence of internal moderation. In some centres internal moderation had clearly taken place but there was no indication of mark changes made on the Coursework Assessment Summary Form.

Coursework should be annotated to indicate where the marker has identified the qualities that are rewarded and the level at which the candidate is operating. This is helpful in informing a second marker (whether internal or external Moderator) how the original marker formed a judgement about the script.

## Comments on specific assessment objectives

### **Assessment Objective 2**

Candidates need to focus on the historical significance of the chosen topic. This means that a distinction should be made, in awarding marks, between those who refer only to the results or impact of the chosen topic and those who see it in a broader temporal context. Many candidates begin with a ‘thesis’ that makes a claim about the significance of the topic. Annotations to show where this is supported would be helpful.

Candidates' evaluation of their study often provides useful evidence of their experience in using historical sources. This can contribute to their AO4 mark.

#### ***Assessment Objective 4***

Performance in this Assessment Objective is dependent on candidates having access to suitable first-hand sources and knowing how to use them critically. Most candidates can select and deploy evidence from sources effectively, but very few use sources critically. For example, where short extracts quoted in secondary sources are used, candidates need to be aware that these have been selected by the historian to illustrate the point the historian wants to make. They are not necessarily typical. Another strategy candidates can use is to cross reference sources. The weight of evidence might be considered greater if sources correspond. Conversely where there are disagreements between sources, candidates could try to explain why this is the case. When site visits are undertaken, candidates should be encouraged to use the information presented by guides as a source. Rather than accepting the account at face value, they should listen with a critical ear, identifying the 'message' or interpretation of the site that the guide presents.