

# Examination Assessment and Grading

## **90–100% – Outstanding First Class**

### **Structure and focus**

- Work which engages incisively with the question set, and shows a discerning appreciation of its wider implications.
- Has a coherent structure, demonstrating excellent critical synthesis of secondary materials, and innovation in its organisational form. Argued with impeccable consistency.
- Precisely selected factual evidence is deployed in order to support the writer's argument, using a vigorous sense of relevance and an appropriate economy of expression.
- Descriptive material and factual evidence will be deployed in order to support and develop the writer's argument, with a vigorous sense of relevance and appropriate economy of expression.

### **Quality of argument and expression**

- The writing will be outstandingly eloquent and accurate. There will be a compelling range of vocabulary and linguistic idioms.
- Complete conceptual command of the historical (and, where appropriate, historiographical) issues at stake. There will be no errors of spelling and grammar.
- Exceptionally original in ideas and approach, and developing notably independent lines of thought. Fully confident and articulate intellectual independence, grounded in a penetrating consideration of available evidence.
- Ability to move between generalisation and detailed discussion, and to synthesise as well as particularise to a notably illuminating effect.

### **Range of knowledge**

- Overwhelming evidence of in-depth reading, with additional clear indications of substantial independent reading beyond limits of reading lists, and exceptionally intensive, detailed and critical reading of recommended texts.
- Deep and comprehensive understanding of the subject, and outstanding originality in interpretation and analysis of the question.
- Exceptionally clear sense of the nature and complexity of historical development.
- Exceptionally informed and secure understanding of the historical period and periods under discussion.

## **80–89% – Strong First Class**

### **Structure and focus**

- Engages closely with the question set, and shows a mature appreciation of its wider implications.
- The structure of the answer will facilitate a lucid and convincing development of the writer's argument.
- Descriptive material and factual evidence will be deployed in order to support and develop the writer's argument in a concise and relevant manner.

### **Quality of argument and expression**

- Eloquent and accurate writing.
- Fully informed conceptual command of the historical (and, where appropriate, historiographical) issues at stake.
- Evidence of originality of thought and analytical skill.
- Discerning consideration of available evidence.
- Clearly constructed and well-presented argument.
- Ability to move between generalisation and detailed discussion, and to synthesise as well as particularise.
- Ability to identify contradiction and achieve a resolution.

### **Range of knowledge**

- The answer clearly demonstrates in-depth reading and critical analysis of recommended texts, contemporary sources and secondary literature, including recent articles and reviews.
- Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the subject.
- Clear grasp of the nature and complexity of historical development.

## **75–79% – Clear First Class**

### **Structure and focus**

- Engages closely with the question set, and shows a clear appreciation of its wider implications.
- The structure of the answer will facilitate a lucid, coherent, and convincing development of the writer's argument.
- Descriptive material and factual evidence will be deployed in order to support and develop the writer's argument.
- The answer will be concise and relevant.

### **Quality of argument and expression**

- The writing will be clear, fluent, and accurate. The range of vocabulary and linguistic idioms will be appropriate to the case being developed.
- The answer demonstrates conceptual command of the historical (and, where appropriate, historiographical) issues at stake.
- Gives some evidence of originality of thought.
- Clear line or argument.
- Accurate sense of the evidence.
- Ability to identify contradiction and attempt a resolution.

### **Range of knowledge**

- Broad knowledge of the subject, including contemporary sources, historiography and secondary literature.
- Demonstrate a clear sense of the nature and complexity of historical development.
- Ability to move between generalisation and detailed discussion, and will be able to synthesise as well as particularise.
- The answer will demonstrate an informed and secure understanding of the historical period or periods under discussion

## **70–74% – Marginal First Class**

### **Structure and focus**

- Engages with the question set, and shows an appreciation of its wider implications.
- The structure of the answer will facilitate a coherent development of the writer's argument.
- Descriptive material and factual evidence will be appropriately deployed in order to support and develop the writer's argument.

### **Quality of argument and expression**

- The writing will be clear and accurate.
- The answer will encompass a good survey of the available evidence.
- The answer will demonstrate good understanding of the historical (and, where appropriate, historiographical) issues at stake.
- The answer will be well-organised.
- There may be evidence of originality of thought.

### **Range of knowledge**

- Knowledge of relevant contemporary sources, historiography, or secondary literature will be shown where appropriate.
- Develops both general arguments and demonstrates knowledge of necessary detail.
- The answer will demonstrate an informed and secure understanding of the historical period or periods under discussion.

## **60–69% – Upper Second Class**

### **Structure and focus**

- Work which displays some understanding of the question set, but may lack a sustained focus and may show only a modest understanding of the question's wider implications.
- The structure of the answer may be heavily influenced by the material at the writer's disposal rather than the requirements of the question set. Ideas may be stated rather than developed.
- Descriptive material and factual evidence will be deployed, but not necessarily with the kind of critical reflections characteristic of answers in higher markbands.

### **Quality of argument and expression**

- The writing will be clear and generally accurate, and will demonstrate an appreciation of the technical and advanced vocabulary used by historians.
- The answer will deploy other historians' ideas and seek to move beyond them. The answer will also show an appreciation of the extent to which historical explanations are contested.
- Although the answer might not demonstrate real originality, the writer will present ideas with a degree of intellectual independence, and will demonstrate the ability to reflect on the past and its interpretation.

### **Range of knowledge**

- Knowledge is extensive, but might be uneven. Demonstrated knowledge will include reference to relevant contemporary and historiographical sources. The range of reading implied by the answer will be considerable.
- The answer will demonstrate a sense of the nature of historical development.
- The writer will show an ability to move between generalisation and detailed discussion, although there may be a tendency towards either an over generalised or an over particularised response.
- Writers will reflect on nature and status of information at their disposal, and will seek to use it critically.
- The answer will demonstrate a secure understanding of the historical period or periods under discussion.

## **50–59% – Lower Second Class**

### **Structure and focus**

- Work which displays some understanding of the question set, but may lack a sustained focus and may show only a modest understanding of the question's wider implications.
- The structure of the answer may be heavily influenced by the material at the writer's disposal rather than the requirements of the question set. Ideas may be stated rather than developed.
- Descriptive material and factual evidence will be deployed, but not necessarily with the kind of critical reflections characteristic of answers in higher markbands.

### **Quality of argument and expression**

- The writing will be sufficiently accurate to convey the writer's meaning clearly, but it may lack fluency and command of the kinds of scholarly idioms used by professional historians. In places expression might be clumsy.
- The answer will show some understanding of historians' ideas, but may not reflect critically upon them. The problematic nature of historical explanations may be imperfectly understood.
- The answer is unlikely to show any originality in approach or argument, and may tend towards assertion of essentially derivative ideas.

### **Range of knowledge**

- Knowledge will be significant, but may be limited and patchy. There may be some inaccuracy, but basic knowledge will be sound. The range of reading implied by the answer will be limited.
- The answer will show some limited awareness of historical development.
- The writer might be prone to being drawn into excessive narrative or mere description, and may want to display knowledge without reference to the precise requirements of the question.
- Information may be used rather uncritically, without serious attempts to evaluate its status and significance.
- The answer will demonstrate some appreciation of the nature of the historical period or periods under discussion.

## **40–49% – Third Class**

### **Structure and focus**

- Work which displays little understanding of the question, and may tend to write indiscriminately around the question.
- The answer will have structure but this may be underdeveloped, and the argument may be incomplete and unfold in a haphazard or undisciplined manner.
- Some descriptive material and factual evidence will be deployed, but without any critical reflection on its significance and relevance.

**Quality of argument and expression**

- The writing will generally be grammatical, but may lack the sophistication of vocabulary or construction to sustain a historical argument of any complexity. In places the writing may lack clarity and felicity of expression.
- There will be little appreciation of the problematic or contested nature of historical explanations.
- The answer will show no intentional originality of approach.

**Range of knowledge**

- There will be sufficient knowledge to frame a basic answer to the question, but it will be limited and patchy. There will be some inaccuracy, but sufficient basic knowledge will be present to frame a basic answer to the question. The answer will imply relevant reading but this will be slight in range.
- There will be understanding of historical development but it will be underdeveloped, and the ideas of historians and other writers may be muddled or misrepresented.
- There will be an argument, but writer may be prone to excessive narrative, and the argument might be signposted by bald assertion rather than informed generalizations.
- There will be sufficient information to launch an answer, but perhaps not to sustain a complete response. Information will be used uncritically as if always self explanatory.
- The answer will demonstrate appreciation of the nature of the historical period or periods under discussion, but at a rudimentary level.

**0–39% – Fail**