



Exam Technique Booklet

AD America, 1920–1973: Opportunity and Inequality

Name: _____

Class: _____



Paper 1 Exam Breakdown

Section A: Period Studies

1

How does Interpretation B differ from Interpretation A about...

Targets: AO4

Skills: Explaining difference (how)

4 marks

How confident do you feel?

2

Why might the authors of Interpretations A and B have a different interpretation about...

Targets: AO4

Skills: Explaining difference (why)

4 marks

How confident do you feel?

3

Which interpretation gives the more convincing opinion about...

Targets: AO3

Skills: Suggesting a follow-up enquiry

8 marks

How confident do you feel?

4

Describe two...

Targets: AO1

Skills: Describing key features/characteristics

4 marks

How confident do you feel?

5

In what ways were the lives of... affected by... Explain your answer

Targets: AO1/AO2

Skills: Explaining consequence/change

8 marks

How confident do you feel?

6

Essay question asking you to make a judgment between two bullet points

Targets: AO1/AO2

Skills: Making judgments about causation, consequence, change and/or continuity

12 marks

How confident do you feel?

How to answer... Paper 1a Question 1

4
Marks

How does Interpretation B differ from Interpretation A about...

This question will ask you to identify a difference between each interpretation's views on a particular topic, using the source's content

This question is only worth 4 marks, so you need 1 clear and concise paragraph

You could structure your answer as follows:

Argument: 'The main difference between Interpretation A and Interpretation B is...'

Explain Interpretation A:

- Identify Interpretation A's view on the topic
- Explain how you know this using details from the source

Explain Interpretation B:

- Identify Interpretation B's view on the topic and highlight how this differs from Interpretation A
- Explain how you know this using details from the source

Remember to refer back to difference throughout your response

Grade 9 Answer Interpretation Differences

4/4
Marks

Question:

**How does Interpretation B differ from Interpretation A about McCarthyism? Explain your answer based on what it says in Interpretations A and B.
(4 marks)**

Answer:

Interpretation A focuses on how McCarthyism negatively impacted the US government, as the 'government thus suffered from a debility among diplomats'. This suggests that McCarthyism was extremely damaging to the government, and that it created a climate of fear in politics. Interpretation B focuses on how the HUAC was popular within government, as 'liberals and conservatives alike voted to fund it year after year'. This suggests that the actions of the HUAC were popular, and that McCarthyism was welcomed by government officials.

Feedback:

This answer would get 4/4 marks because it recognises a difference between the interpretations, and gives a developed analysis of these differences using content from the interpretations.

Interpretation A

An except from Raymond Gram Swing's autobiography published in 1964. Swing was a liberal journalist and was a strong opponent of Joseph McCarthy.

In those four years he thrived as a demagogue, and frightened many, if not all, diplomats into failing to give their frank opinions to the government for fear of being falsely accused of Communist tendencies. The government thus suffered from a debility among diplomats. Employees in the Information Agency had to smother their political judgments lest they be pilloried by Senator McCarthy's congressional committee.

Interpretation B

An excerpt from Howard Zinn's book 'A People's History of the United States' published in 1980. Zinn was a Professor of History at Boston University, and wrote about the HUAC - a committee that investigated those thought to have communist ties.

In the early fifties, the House Un-American Activities Committee was at its heyday, interrogating Americans about their Communist connections, holding them in contempt if they refused to answer, distributing millions of pamphlets to the American public...Liberals often criticized the Committee, but in Congress, liberals and conservatives alike voted to fund it year after year. By 1958, only one member of the House of Representatives (James Roosevelt) voted against giving it money.

How to answer... Paper 1a Question 2

4
Marks

Why might the authors of Interpretations A and B have a different interpretation about...

This question is only worth 4 marks, so you need 1 clear and concise paragraph on each interpretation.

You should:

- **Identify differences in the interpretations' provenance**
- **Explain why these caused differences in views**

Why might interpretations differ?

- **Consider the author's background, beliefs, location and time of writing - what information was available to them?**
- **What form is the interpretation (newspaper, journal, speech, etc) - who was the intended audience and what purpose were they writing for?**
- **Authors may have chosen to place emphasis on different factors, leading to differences**
- **Authors may have different perspectives, approaches and focuses, leading to differences**

Grade 9 Answer Reasons for Differences

4/4
Marks

Question:

Why might the authors of Interpretations A and B have a different interpretation about McCarthyism? Explain your answer using Interpretations A and B and your contextual knowledge. (4 marks)

Answer:

Interpretation A, by Raymond Gram Swing, was written in 1964, shortly after the peak of McCarthyism in the 1950s. Swing was a liberal journalist and a direct opponent of McCarthy, so his perspective reflects the personal and professional impact McCarthyism had on him and others in government, and his perspective reflects the resentment of McCarthy's tactics that were still fresh in the 1960s.

Interpretation B, written by historian Howard Zinn in 1980, takes a broader and more detached view. Zinn's interpretation reflects his historical perspective with the benefit of hindsight and academic analysis many years after the events, rather than taking from personal experience.

Feedback:

This answer would get 4/4 marks because it recognises a difference in the provenances, and explains why this would lead to a difference in the interpretations.

How to answer... Paper 1a Question 3

8
Marks

Which interpretation gives the most convincing opinion about...

You are required to use both interpretations and your knowledge of historical context

You could structure your response as follows:

Evaluation of Interpretation A:

- **Point** - state the view of Interpretation A about the specific topic in the question
- **Evidence** - identify specific details in the source that convey this view
- **Explain** - explain how these details are supported and/or contradicted by your historical knowledge
- **Link** - link back to the question - based on your analysis, are you convinced by this interpretation?

Evaluation of Interpretation B:

- **Point** - state the view of Interpretation B - this Interpretation will disagree with the former
- **Evidence** - identify specific details in the source that convey this view
- **Explain** - explain how these details are supported and/or contradicted by your historical knowledge
- **Link** - link back to the question and other interpretation - are you convinced by this interpretation? How does it compare to the other interpretation?

To get top marks on this question, you need to make a clear judgement on which interpretation you find more convincing and sustain this throughout your response

Grade 9 Answer Interpretation Evaluation

8/8
Marks

Question:

Which interpretation gives the more convincing opinion about McCarthyism? Explain your answer based on your contextual knowledge and what it says in Interpretations A and B. (8 marks)

Answer:

Interpretation A is more convincing in its portrayal of McCarthyism because it focuses on the direct impact Senator Joseph McCarthy's actions had on individuals within the government and on the general climate of fear he created. Raymond Gram Swing, a liberal journalist and opponent of McCarthy, highlights how McCarthy's tactics led diplomats and government employees to censor themselves out of fear of being falsely accused of communist sympathies. This aligns with historical evidence, as McCarthyism caused widespread fear, especially during his Wheeling Speech where he claimed to have a list of 200 known communists in the US State Department, leading to government officials and ordinary citizens being blacklisted, losing their jobs, or being imprisoned based on unfounded accusations.

In contrast, Interpretation B by Howard Zinn, while accurate in its description of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), focuses more broadly on the political environment in the early 1950s, including support for anti-communist investigations by both political parties in Congress. Although Zinn is correct in stating that the HUAC received continuous funding and that there was public support for it, McCarthy's actions were not supported by everyone, and by mid-1950s his actions were seen as reckless and his influence declined.

Overall, Interpretation A provides a more convincing analysis of McCarthyism because it captures the fear, intimidation, and suppression of dissent within the government, which were central to the movement's impact. Interpretation B offers important context but does not account for the unpopularity of McCarthyism within the US government, especially into the mid-1950s.

Feedback:

This answer would get 8/8 marks because the pupil has given a complex evaluation of the interpretations based on contextual knowledge, and they have given their overall judgement on which interpretation is more convincing, with reasoning.

How to answer... Paper 1a Question 4

4
Marks

Describe two..

To achieve full marks on this question you need to:

- **Identify one valid feature (+1 mark)**
- **Give supporting contextual evidence (+1 mark)**

Do this twice, so you have two features and supporting evidence for each one

For example, if you are asked to identify two problems people faced during a specific event or time period, you should:

- **Identify a problem they faced**
- **Explain why this problem impacted their lives, using historical knowledge to back up your claims**

Keep it brief - remember this question is only worth 4 marks

Grade 9 Answer

Describe two...

4/4
Marks

Question:

Describe two problems faced by immigrants in 1920s America.

(4 marks)

Answer:

The first problem faced by immigrants in 1920s America was prejudice during the Red Scare. This was the paranoia of communist threat of immigrants, and many harsh raids against suspects took place with thousands of immigrants being arrested without trial.

The second problem faced by immigrants in 1920s America was economic problems. Many immigrants had no option than to work in low-paid, low-skilled jobs, and many businesses took advantage of immigrants with poor working conditions.

Feedback:

This answer would get 4/4 marks because it recognises two problems faced by immigrants in 1920s America, and then describes both problems using additional information.

How to answer... Paper 1a Question 5

8
Marks

In what ways were the lives of... affected by...

This question requires you to write about change. You should identify 2 or more ways the lives of people were affected and explain them using a range of historical knowledge.

2x { P - Point
E - Evidence
E - Explain
L - Link

Point: 'One way in which [group's] lives were affected by [event in question] is...'

Evidence: provide relevant precise historical evidence (stats, places, names, events, dates, etc)

Explain: using the evidence, explain why this change impacted people's lives

Link: link back to the question - 'therefore [group's] lives were affected by [event in question] because...'

Tip: if you are aiming for top marks, consider how changes were affected by differences such as time, group or social/economic factors

Grade 9 Answer

Lives Affected By Question

8/8
Marks

Question:

In what ways were the lives of Americans affected by the Red Scare in the 1920s? Explain your answer. (8 marks)

Answer:

The Red Scare of the 1920s significantly impacted the lives of Americans by creating widespread fear and suspicion, particularly towards immigrants and those with left-wing political beliefs. Following the Russian Revolution in 1917 and a series of labor strikes in the U.S., many Americans became fearful of a potential communist uprising. This fear was exacerbated by the discovery of anarchist plots, such as the 1919 bombings targeting prominent figures. The government responded by launching a series of raids, known as the Palmer Raids, led by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. Thousands of suspected radicals, many of whom were recent immigrants, were arrested without evidence, and hundreds were deported. This crackdown intensified anti-immigrant sentiment, as many Americans associated immigrants with radical ideologies.

The Red Scare also affected the freedom of expression and civil liberties in America, as fear of communism led to increased restrictions and suspicion toward labor unions, socialist organizations, and activists. Many union members and political activists were harassed, fired from their jobs, or even jailed for their beliefs, as their involvement in labor strikes was often seen as unpatriotic or subversive. The media and government spread anti-communist propaganda, leading many Americans to distrust neighbors and colleagues who held unconventional views. This atmosphere of fear stifled open political debate and limited individuals' rights to express their beliefs freely. Consequently, the Red Scare fostered a climate of intolerance and conformity, pushing Americans to avoid any association with left-wing ideas and undermining the democratic ideals of freedom and equality.

Feedback:

This answer would get 8/8 marks because the pupil has given a complex explanation of changes, and demonstrated a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question.

How to answer... Paper 1a Question 6

12
Marks

Which of the following... (2 prompts)

This question asks you to make a judgement between two bullet points in relation to a particular topic.

You could structure your response as follows:

Evaluation of first bullet point:

- **Point** - state your argument
- **Evidence** - provide relevant precise historical evidence (stats, places, names, events, dates, etc)
- **Explain** - using the evidence, explain to what extent this point had the effect specified in the question
- **Link** - link back to the question - based on your analysis, how important is this point?

Evaluation of second bullet point:

- **Point** - state your argument
- **Evidence** - provide relevant precise historical evidence (stats, places, names, events, dates, etc)
- **Explain** - using the evidence, explain to what extent this point had the effect specified in the question
- **Link** - link back to the question - based on your analysis, how important is this point? Is it more or less important than the other point?

You may wish to explain the **relationship between both points to make your argument about which is more significant**

To get top marks on this question, you need to make a clear judgement on which bullet point you find more important and sustain this throughout your response

Grade 9 Answer 12 Mark Essay Question

12/12
Marks

Question:

Which of the following had more impact on post-war American society?

- McCarthyism
- Popular culture?

Explain your answer with reference to both bullet points.

(12 marks)

Answer:

Firstly, McCarthyism had a very important impact on post-war American society. Communism was seen as the opposite of everything America stood for - capitalism and democracy, and McCarthy was a senator that was extremely anti-communist, and stirred up a lot of fear around communism in post-war America. During a speech in February 1950, he claimed to have a list of 200 known communists within the US State Department. However, his methods of finding communist spies were very controversial, as he often had little evidence and used intimidation against suspects. These tactics made him well-known, and those who spoke against him risked being accused of being communist and blacklisted. This had a large impact on post-war American society, as it created widespread fear of communism, and also produced a fear of being accused of being a communist, due to his sensationalist accusations.

Secondly, popular culture had a very important impact on post-war American society. In the 1950s, rock'n'roll music became extremely popular with artists such as Elvis, and more white youths began listening to R&B music by African American artists such as Chuck Berry. Additionally, television viewing increased drastically in post-war America, and shows such as *I Love Lucy* became key in American popular culture. Television also helped break down regional differences as most Americans watched the same TV programmes. Therefore, changes in popular culture had an impact on post-war American society because pastimes such as listening to music or watching television changed enormously.

Overall, the most important impact on post-war American society was McCarthyism. Although changes in popular culture did impact Americans' lives greatly, with the introduction of new music and television. However, the impact of McCarthyism was far greater, as this created widespread fear of communism and led to the blacklisting of many innocent Americans.

Feedback:

This answer would get 12/12 marks because the pupil has explained each of the given points (McCarthyism and popular culture) in depth using historical information, and directly linked to the question throughout. The pupil has also included a judgement at the end, explaining which point was more important and why.