



Nat 5 History

GOLDEN GUIDE

How to answer N5 History exam questions

EVALUATE THE USEFULNESS (HOW USEFUL):

Aim:

- To understand how to answer '**Evaluation**' questions.

These questions ask you to evaluate the usefulness of a source as evidence of an event. You will recognise these questions because they will ask you to "**evaluate the usefulness**" of a source. You must learn and use this formula to answer these questions:

GOLDEN RULES

1. Answer the question directly by making a judgement – eg. 'Source A is partly/fairly/relatively useful as evidence of ...'
2. Comment on **who** wrote the source, **when** the source was made, and **why** the source was made. You must explain how each of these affects the usefulness of the source.

HINT: You do not need to read the source to answer this part. You can get all the information from the Provenance (the information above the source)

3. Comment on the **content** of the source – what relevant information is contained within the source?
4. Comment on the **limitations** – are there any problems with the source? What relevant information has been missed out?

Example Question:

- **Evaluate the usefulness of Source A as evidence of conditions in the trenches for soldiers during the First World War**

6 marks

Example Answer:

Source A is relatively useful as evidence of conditions in trenches for soldiers during the First World War. The source was written in 1915 at a time when many Scottish soldiers would have been experiencing trench life. The author is a soldier with first-hand experience of trench life so is likely to be useful. The source was written to describe what conditions were like in the trenches, so may be exaggerated. This reduces the usefulness of the source. The source describes going into no-man's land as 'instant death', which seems to be an exaggeration. However, the source does describe the trenches as being in not too bad a state when the soldiers first arrived. The source fails to mention positive aspects of trench life, such as time behind the lines. The source also fails to describe the daily duties of the soldiers in the trenches.

SOURCE COMPARISON:

Aim:

- To understand how to answer “**Comparison**” questions.

These questions ask you to compare the information contained in two historical sources. You will recognise these questions because they will ask you to “**Compare the views**” of two sources about a historical event or development.

GOLDEN RULES

1. State whether the sources mostly agree or disagree about the topic in question:
e.g. ‘Sources A & B mostly agree about the conditions on the middle passage’
2. Support this with two developed comparisons. Simple!
For a developed comparison you must:
 - **Explain what the sources agree upon**
 - **Provide a quote from each source to back this up**

Example Question:

- **Compare the views of Sources A and B about conditions on the middle passage.**
(compare the sources overall and in detail) 4 marks

Example Answer:

Sources A and B mostly agree about conditions on the middle passage. For example, the sources agree about the smell below deck. The author of source A states ‘I was so overcome by the stench I nearly fainted’, whilst Source B also describes the foul smell saying ‘I had never smelt anything so bad in my life. The sources also agree that the heat caused problems. Source A states that ‘the heat was unbearable’ whilst source B describes the heat of the climate made slaves sweat a lot.

HOW FULLY QUESTIONS:

Aim:

- To understand how to answer “**How Fully**” questions.

For these questions you have to use your **background knowledge** to show you have a wider knowledge of the topic introduced by the source. You will recognise these questions because they will ask you “**How fully**” a source explains a historical event or development.

GOLDEN RULES

1. Your first paragraph should mention 3 points from the **source**. You must explain the points in your own words, do not quote.
2. Start a second paragraph with the phrase ‘However, the source fails to mention several other...’
3. Your second paragraph should mention 3 points from **recall** (your own knowledge), which are not mentioned in the source.
4. You should finish with a one sentence that answers the question directly. (eg In conclusion, source A explains quite fully the...)

Example Question:

- **How fully does Source A explain why so many Scots volunteered for the armed forces in 1914?** 6 marks

Example Answer:

Source A mentions that many Scots joined the armed forces because at first the war seemed very exciting. The source also describes how many men felt pressured into joining because they didn't want to miss an adventure with their pals. Finally, the source tells us that Scots were also influenced by anti-German propaganda which told stories of babies being killed by German soldiers.

However, source A fails to mention several other reasons why Scots joined the armed forces. For example, the source fails to mention that many Scots were attracted by the wages you could earn in the army. The source also fails to mention that many Scots wanted to join the army through pride in their country. Finally, the source does not mention that the strong military tradition of places like the Highlands was another factor in Scots joining the armed forces.

In conclusion, source A explains quite fully the reasons why so many Scots volunteered for the armed forces in 1914 but it misses some important factors out.

'TO WHAT EXTENT' QUESTIONS:

Aim:

- ❑ To understand how to answer **"To What Extent"** questions.

Of the eight marks available, three are awarded for **structure:**

- ❑ 1 for organisation of the argument/main body
- ❑ 1 for making a conclusion
- ❑ 1 for giving a reason to support your conclusion

The remaining five marks are awarded for the content of the main body. Each point of correct, accurate information gets 1 mark.

- ❑ You must mention more than 1 factor
- ❑ Do not list! Take a separate sentence for each point

GOLDEN RULES

1. Start your answer by explaining how the factor mentioned in the question led to the event. Try and provide 3 points to support this.
2. Start a new paragraph: 'However, there were other factors which led to...'
3. Try and provide 3 different points to support this. These can be from one factor or three - as long as they are different from the factor in the question.
4. Take a new paragraph and write a short conclusion (2 sentences). Remember to provide a reason for your conclusion.

Example Question:

- ❑ **To what extent was the abolitionist movement important in ending the slave trade?**
8 marks

Example answer:

The abolitionists were an important factor in the abolition of the slave trade. William Wilberforce was one abolitionist who supported an end to the slave trade in Parliament. He put forward over 20 Bills to end the slave trade. Abolitionists had many other tactics to end the slave trade, including organising petitions to show public support. All of this put pressure on Parliament to end the slave trade.

However, there were other factors which were important in ending the slave trade. Indian sugar could be produced at less cost and without the use of slaves. Furthermore, many British people choose to boycott slave grown sugar and buy sugar from India. This meant slavery was growing less profitable, making it harder to argue in favour of slavery.

Overall, the abolitionist movement played an important role in ending the slave trade. It put pressure on Parliament to end the slave trade.

DESCRIBE QUESTIONS:

Aim:

- To understand how to answer “**Describe**” questions.

These questions ask you to describe an event or change. They are worth 5 or 6 marks. You will recognise them because they start with the word “**Describe**”. There is no real formula for this, but there are some basic rules to follow:

GOLDEN RULES

1. You need to write about 5 or 6 sentences.
2. You get a mark for each point you make relevant to the question.
3. If you list points in one sentence, you will only get 1 or 2 marks.
4. Make sure that you link everything to the question.

Example Question:

- **Describe the use of new technology in the First World War.**

6 marks

Example Answer:

New technology played an important role in the First World War. The introduction of the tank by the British ultimately helped the Allies to gain an upper hand in the conflict. Although the tank had many disadvantages, it proved useful in helping to breakthrough German trenches. Gas was another new technology used in World War One. Chlorine gas was first used by the Germans in 1915. However, gas became unreliable as a weapon once soldiers were equipped with gas masks. Other new technologies were experimented with including flame throwers; however, these were risky for soldiers to use. Machine guns were perhaps the most effective piece of new technology, capable of killing large numbers of soldiers.

EXPLAIN QUESTIONS

Aim:

- To understand how to answer “**Explain**” questions

These questions ask you to explain why an event or change happened. They are usually worth 5 or 6 marks. You will recognise them because they will start with the words “**Explain why...**” Again, there is no formula, but there are some basic rules:

GOLDEN RULES

1. You need to write about 5 or 6 sentences.
2. You get a mark for each point you make relevant to the question.
3. Each point you make must be linked to the question.
4. You must do more than just describe the issue/situation/change – use words/phrases like “because”, “therefore”, “this meant that” etc.

Example Question:

- ***Explain the reasons why it was difficult for slaves to resist on plantations.***

6 marks

Example Answer:

Resistance on plantations was difficult for slaves for a number of reasons. Slaves were faced with strict codes and harsh punishments for stepping out of line. These punishments would be carried out in front of other slaves to deter them from resisting. Punishments for escaping were severe and often included having a foot chopped off. If slaves did run away it was difficult to evade capture as plantations were often on small islands. Another reason it was difficult to resist was that slaves did not have access to weapons and whites could easily crush attempts at resistance. Slaves also faced organisational difficulties – many slaves did not speak the same language as each other so could not make effective plans to resist.