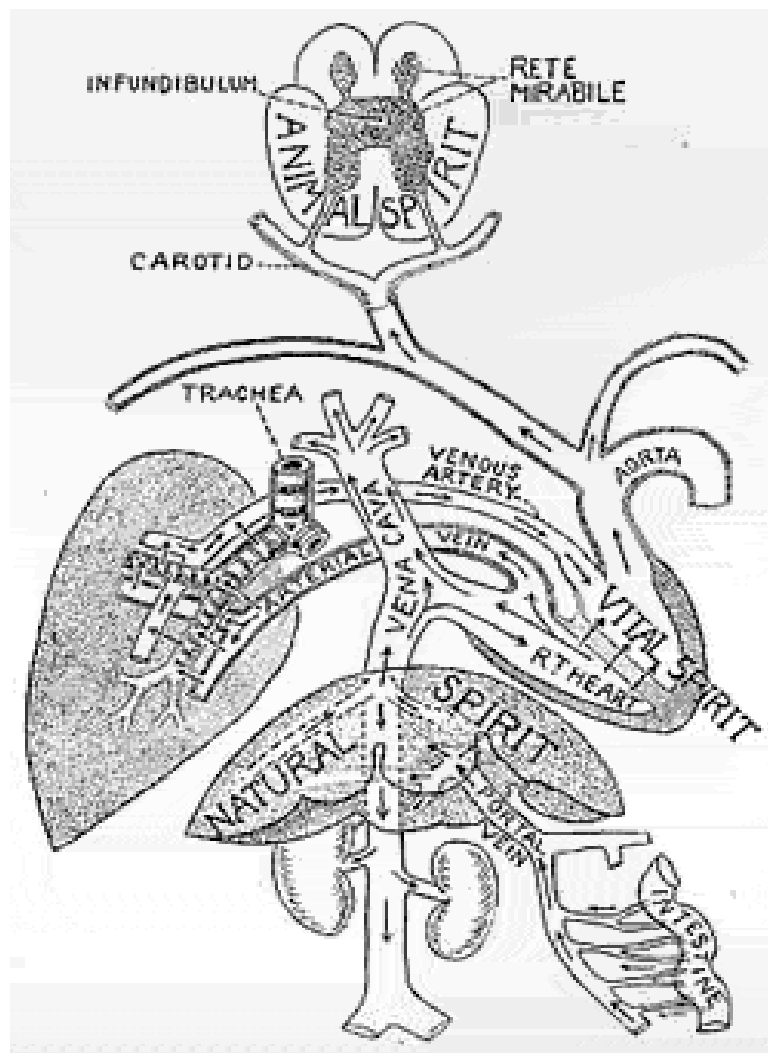


Working With Sources



A Guide to Paper 2

Introduction

Paper 2 of your GCSE exam will ask questions on a certain aspect of the 'Medicine Through Time' section of your course, using SOURCES. Many students think this paper is difficult. This guide is intended to help you to develop the skills you will need to perform to your best on the day of the exam. It includes advice on how examiners want the questions to be answered and sample questions with worked through answers.

It is of course impossible to cover every type of question that may be asked in an exam, but this guide will focus on 5 main types of questions:

- 1) Comprehension.
- 2) Comprehension in context.
- 3) Reliability/Usefulness/Value of sources.
- 4) Source comparison.
- 5) Interpretation.

- do not worry if you do not know what all of these terms mean yet, that is what the guide is for!

The best way to become confident with historical sources is to practise, and your teacher will give you plenty of opportunity to do that.



What is a Source?

A source is a piece of evidence that historians use to find out about the past.

There are many different types of sources that can be used, such as; letters, diaries, texts from books, pictures, cartoons etc.



Whenever you see this symbol there will be essential tips and hints. If you take notice of them, your answers will improve. Here are some general hints to help you when working with sources.

- Always read the sources and the questions carefully.
- Make sure you relate your answer to the question, don't get bogged down writing everything you can think of.
- Read and use the captions underneath pictures and cartoons they can be hugely helpful.
- Think carefully about timing yourself. Look at how many marks the question is worth and then work out how much time you should spend on it.
- **REMEMBER.** An 8 mark question does not require you to make 8 points, it is the level of analysis in your answer that gets you marks.

1. Comprehension

There are no 'easy' questions in History, but comprehension source questions are the *easiest* on paper 2 - they are usually the first questions asked and carry the lowest marks.

Comprehension questions will usually look something like this:

- *What can you learn from Sources A and B about*
- *What impression do Sources A and B give of*
- *What message does the cartoon in source C give about*

All you have to do is write down what the source is telling you about the person or situation mentioned in the question.

- 1) Firstly read or look at the source or sources carefully and write down the obvious things it is telling you. Make sure you keep the question in mind.
- 2) Secondly look beyond the obvious and see what you can infer. What can you work out from what you have read or seen in the source even though it may not be immediately obvious?
- 3) Write down what you have inferred and use the source to back you up.

Infer = To work something out from what you have read or seen.



Let's have a look at a real 'comprehension' source question.

Study the sources and read the question and then work through the 'Hints for your answer.'

SOURCE A: A painting showing Archie McIndoe working with his team in the operating theatre at East Grinstead. It was painted by Anna Zinkeisen, a nurse at the hospital, in 1944.

Image unavailable due to copyright.
Cut and paste image in for school use.

SOURCE B: *From the book The Last Enemy, by Richard Hilary, written in 1950. In this book Richard Hilary describes his experiences as a fighter pilot. He was shot down in the Battle of Britain in 1940 and was badly burned. In this extract he describes what also happened to a friend.*

Edmonds was placed in the bed next to mine. He was trapped inside his aircraft when it turned over and burst into flames. He fried for several minutes before they dragged him out. When he was first brought to Archie McIndoe he was unrecognisable. Never once did Edmonds complain although it would take years to build him a new face.

Three days after his operation to replace his eyelids I noticed a dribble from under the dressings across his eyes. It was the streptococcus* at work again. It was a bitter shame that McIndoe's first eyelid failure was Edmonds.

(* = the deadly germ which often infected minor wounds.)

QUESTION

Study Sources A and B.

What can you learn from sources A and B about the work of Archie McIndoe?

(5)

HINTS FOR YOUR ANSWER.

1) After reading and looking at the sources carefully, ask yourself what are the obvious things that these sources tell you about the work of Archie McIndoe.

- Facts such as he was a plastic surgeon; he worked with a large team; he was not always successful.

2) These facts are all fine, but will only gain you 2 marks at the most. Now look beyond the obvious, what do these sources infer about his work. What can you work out from what you have seen and read?

- Inferences such as he was highly skilled because eyelid operations were complex; he was usually very successful because a failure was unusual; he was respected because a nurse took the trouble to paint him at work; he was dedicated because he was prepared to spend years to rebuild the pilot's face.

3) These are all good inferences and will gain you 3 or 4 marks. To get a full 5 marks, you need to make sure you use both of the sources, use several points from the sources to back up your inferences and bring all of your points together to make a general but substantiated comment. E.g.

- He was very highly respected as shown by the fact that a nurse has painted him at work, that the burnt pilot was taken straight to him and that people wanted to observe him at work.
- 'Overall the sources tell me that Mcindoe was a highly skilled, successful and well respected plastic surgeon who was dedicated to the complex and difficult work that helped rebuild many lives.'



- If a question asks you to use more than one source, you must use more than one source.
- DO NOT paraphrase or describe everything in a source - it is a waste of time, it will not get you any marks.
- Always keep referring to the question asked, it will help you to avoid getting side-tracked.

2. Comprehension in Context

These questions require you to understand what a source tells us about a person or situation and then link it with knowledge you already have which is also relevant to the question.

Comprehension in context questions usually look something like this:

*Use Source A and Source B and your own knowledge to explain
How does Source A help you to understand? Use the source and your own knowledge to explain.*

- 1) Firstly study the source or sources - what does it tell you? Go through the same process as you would for a straight forward comprehension question, looking for inferences as well as the obvious.
- 2) Then think about what else you know about the particular issue. If it is relevant and it would help you to understand the source better include it in your answer.



Let's have a look at a real comprehension in context question.

Read the source and the question and then work through the 'Hints for your answer.'

SOURCE A: *Part of a letter from a Mr Perkins to the government's Board of Health in 1848.*

'...my impression is that [the gases] chemically infect exposed water; and the poorer classes using such water are consequently the greatest sufferers.'

QUESTION

Use the source and your knowledge to explain what Source A tells you about people's understanding of the causes of disease in the early nineteenth century. (8)

HINTS FOR YOUR ANSWER

1) Firstly read the caption and the source carefully and ask yourself what the source tells you about people's understanding of the causes of disease.

- For example the source tells you that some people believed that disease was caused by the drinking of water which was infected by gases.

2) This will only gain you a couple of marks because you have not used your own knowledge at all in the answer. Now think about **what you know**. What do you know about people's understanding of the causes of disease in the early nineteenth century?

- You know that the Germ Theory was not developed until 1861. People did not know that germs caused disease in the early nineteenth century.
- You know that many people believed in the **miasma theory**.
- You know that there were several cholera epidemics during this time which made people's search for the cause of disease more focussed.

3) You should now be aware of what the source is telling you and what your background knowledge is. However it is not enough to just write down *this is what the source tells me.....*, and *this is what I know ...*. To gain maximum marks you need to **link** your knowledge with the information in the source.

- You can link Mr Perkins' comment that 'gases chemically infect water' to your knowledge of the miasma theory. - give a brief explanation.
- You can link the fact that the source was written in 1848 to your knowledge that there was a cholera epidemic in 1848. Some doctors suspected that dirt and poor quality water may be in some way to blame although this was not proved until Snow in 1854.
- You can then link the two facts above, (i.e. that Mr Perkins believed that poisonous gases infected water which then caused disease), to your knowledge that there was no germ theory in 1848. Although people made links between dirt and disease, nobody knew about germs until 1861.

4) Linking what you already know to what the source is telling you creates a very good answer. Make sure it is written in a sensible way.



- If a question asks you to use the source and your own knowledge then you **must** use both.
- Start with the source and then add in what you can remember which will help you to understand the source better.
- Your own knowledge must be relevant to the question, keep referring to the question in your answer to keep you focussed.
- Do not start writing about the usefulness or reliability of sources in comprehension in context questions, it will gain you nothing.
- Do not paraphrase the source.

3. Reliability/Usefulness/Value of Sources

You are almost guaranteed to see a question of this type on your exam paper, so be prepared. The examiner wants you to recognise that some sources have more value to historians than others, some are more reliable than others, and some are more useful than others.

Reliability/Usefulness/value questions usually look something like this:

What is the value of Source A for an historian trying to find out about.....

How useful is Source B for an historian enquiring into

- 1) The first thing to ask of the source is, is it **reliable**? To do this think about:
 - **who** wrote it?
 - **when** was it written?
 - **why** was it written?

- 2) Then you should be able to identify whether or not the source is **biased**. If you believe it is biased you must be able to explain why you believe this.

- 3) You should then be able to make a judgement as to the source's reliability. Whether or not a source is biased affects its reliability. The more biased the source the less reliable it is, BUT sources are never completely reliable or unreliable.

4) The second thing to ask of the source is, is it **useful** or **valuable** to an historian? Remember just because a source is not very reliable does not mean it is not useful or of value to a historian.

e.g. A source written by a male doctor that gives an unfavourable view of a female doctor may be biased, and yet be useful in telling an historian about male attitudes towards female doctors at that time.

5) Usefulness/Value of sources can only be decided when you know what the historian wants to use the source for. Once you know the question being asked you need to make two lists.

What are the uses of this source to answer the question?	What are the problems of using this source to answer that question?

6) Finally once you have discussed all of the above in your answer, you need to make a final judgement. Sum up how useful or valuable you think the source is.

<p>Reliable - can be trusted or made use of at face value. Biased - gives a one-sided point of view. Useful - can be used by an historian to answer a given question. Valuable - can be used by an historian to answer a given question.</p>
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Let's have a look at a real reliability/usefulness/value question.

Read the source and the question and then work through the 'Hints for your answer.'

SOURCE B: *From the book The Last Enemy, by Richard Hilary, written in 1950. In this book Richard Hilary describes his experiences as a fighter pilot. He was shot down in the Battle of Britain in 1940 and was badly burned. In this extract he describes what also happened to a friend.*

Edmonds was placed in the bed next to mine. He was trapped inside his aircraft when it turned over and burst into flames. He fied for several minutes before they dragged him out. When he was first brought to Archie McIndoe he was unrecognisable. Never once did Edmonds complain although it would take years to build him a new face.

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(* = the deadly germ which often infected minor wounds.)

QUESTION

How useful is Source B for an historian enquiring into advances in surgery in wartime?

(6)

HINTS FOR YOUR ANSWER

- 1) The first thing to ask the source is, is it reliable? The information for this part of your answer is in the caption that introduces the source.
 - Who wrote it? *Richard Hilary, a fighter pilot, ordinary man with no medical training,*
 - When was it written? *1950, Hilary had been an eye-witness to the event ten years ago, had some time after the war to research for his book.*
 - Why was it written? *Book of memoirs, to celebrate his and his fellow pilots' achievements - not to give details of medical advances.*

2) This initial search through the source will really help with the rest of your answer. From this information, you can make a judgement as to whether the source is reliable.

- Your answer could be that the pilot has no obvious motive to lie or exaggerate, yet there may be errors as about the medical facts involved because he is not a trained doctor.

3) Now that you have picked out all of these facts, you need to use them to answer the specific question. How useful is the source for an enquiry into the advances in surgery in wartime?

- It is very important that you keep the question in mind. For example the fact that the source tells us of the bravery of pilots in the second world war is irrelevant. If we were enquiring into bravery then it would be useful, but we are not, we are enquiring into advances in surgery and therefore it that question against which we should judge the source’s usefulness.

4) At this point it would be useful to draw up a table.
(Never include such a table and include it in your answer - draw it in rough and then cross it out. Don’t worry about it looking neat either, you haven’t got time.)

What are the uses of this source to tell me about advances in surgery in wartime?	What are the problems of using this source to tell me about advances in surgery in wartime?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An eye-witness account gives detailed description of plastic surgery. • Gives the name of a plastic surgeon able to carry out such operations. - no reason to doubt that name. • Gives details of failure. • He wrote 10 years after the event so had time to reflect and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pilot was not medically trained and may have made inaccurate medical statements, or not recognised other advances • It tells us more about the emotions of surgery rather than what was physically done. • It is only one account, it does not provide details of any other medical advances or cover any other wars. • It was probably written to

	<p>glorify the achievements of fighter pilots not to give detail of advances in surgery and therefore lacks the detail required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was written only 10 years after the event the extent of the advances made may not have been obvious at that time.
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5) You now have the information that you require to write out a balanced answer as to how useful the source is. It should be quite obvious that although the source is useful for some things it is not very useful in this particular enquiry. You would need to write both sides of the argument but then sum up your judgement as to its usefulness at the end.



- A source is never completely useful or useless.
- Biased, unreliable sources can still be useful.
- Usefulness or value can only be judged when you know the question you need to answer with it.
- Make sure your answer is relevant. Keep referring back to the question.
- The planning of your answer (e.g. the table) is very important to a good answer, nevertheless don't waste too much time.
- It is very likely that you will be asked to compare the usefulness(utility) or value of sources, in which case you would go through this process for each one and state a **preference** as to which is more useful.

4. Source Comparison

Once you are happy with the skills required to answer the 3 previous types of questions, comparison questions are a piece of cake.

Comparison questions usually look something like this:

*Compare the value of Sources H and K for an historian enquiring into....
Do you think that Source B is more useful than Source C for an enquiry into.....*

In what ways do Sources D and E agree about

To what extent do Sources A and B agree about

In many ways there are two types of question in source comparison, those that wish you to compare their value and those that wish you to look for differences and similarities. You know how to tackle the former from the last chapter.

- 1) The question may well ask you to compare two sources, but more likely you will be asked, what do these sources agree on, or how do they differ. Whichever way the question is worded, you **MUST** always look for both **SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**.
- 2) As with usefulness/value questions it is often useful to draw up a table.

Similarities	Differences



Let's have a look at a real source comparison question.

Read the source and the question and then work through the 'Hints for your answer.'

SOURCE G : *An account of Florence Nightingale's work from a school text book written by John Robottom in 1991.*

By 1856 most people knew of Florence Nightingale's work from the many pictures of the 'Lady of the Lamp'.

The pictures of the gentle lady with the lamp were only part of the truth, but they touched people's imaginations. They sent the huge sum of £40 000 to the Nightingale Fund for training nurses.

Back in England, Florence Nightingale spent three years advising the government on changes in army hospitals. Then in 1860 she chose St Thomas' Hospital for the first nurse-training school.

SOURCE H : *An account of Florence Nightingale's work in the Crimea, from the Oxford Children's Encyclopaedia', 1991.*

Florence Nightingale set sail in 1854 with 38 nurses. Within a month they had 5 000 men to look after. Florence worked 20 hours a day to improve the nursing of ordinary soldiers. Every night she visited all the wards, and the soldiers loved her as 'the lady with the lamp'.

Her story was published in newspapers back home and she became a national heroine. £45 000 was collected from the public for her to spend as she saw fit. In 1860 she spent it on the Nightingale training school for nurses at St Thomas's hospital, London.

QUESTION

To what extent does Source H agree with Source G about the work of Florence Nightingale?

(6)

HINTS FOR YOUR ANSWER

1) Although the question asks you to look at how far the sources agree, to answer the question fully, you must also consider the areas of disagreement. The best way to plan your answer, would be to draw up a table.

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• She was known as the 'Lady with the Lamp'.• The public donated money to her cause.• Money was used by Nightingale to found a training centre for nurses at St Thomas's hospital.• She was well known.• She worked in army hospitals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The figure donated by the public.• Only Source G mentions she had an advisory role to government.

2) Having completed the table you should be clear on whether the sources agree on a great deal, on some aspects but not others, or not at all. You can therefore now write a solid answer.

3) For a well-structured answer, first write about the points on which the sources agree, then write about the points on which they do not agree. Finally write a small conclusion commenting on the extent to which they agree.



- When a question asks you to compare sources, it expects your answer to include similarities **and** differences.
- Draw up a quick table to focus your thoughts.
- Even if the details are slightly different, the sources might agree on a broader issue.

5. Interpretation

These questions are usually the last to be asked on Paper 2 and carry the most marks. You should be prepared to spend more time on these questions. They will ask you to explain or make a judgement about the past. You are usually required to use the sources and your own knowledge.

Interpretation questions usually look something like this:

Do you agree that there were very few advances in surgery prior to Pasteur's development of the Germ Theory in 1861? Use all the sources and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

Source E suggests that Fleming played the greatest role in the development of Penicillin. How far do you agree with this statement? Use the sources and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

- 1) It would not be feasible to go through a sample interpretation question due to the number of sources and the length of the answer. Nevertheless the important thing to remember in answering this type of question is to produce a **balanced** and well **structured** response. You should also plan what you are going to say - again maybe in the form of a table.
- 2) You should structure your answer like this:
 1. An opening paragraph which refers to the question and suggests your opinion.
 2. Points from the sources and your own knowledge that support the view in the question.
 3. Points from the sources and your own knowledge that oppose the view in the question
 4. A closing paragraph, which again refers to the question and sums up your opinion.



- Plan your answer and your time carefully.
- Use the sources **and** your own knowledge.