



2010
HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION

History Extension

General Instructions

- Reading time – 5 minutes
- Working time – 2 hours
- Write using black or blue pen

Total marks – 50

Section I Pages 2–3

25 marks

- Attempt Question 1
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

Section II Page 4

25 marks

- Attempt Question 2
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

Section I

25 marks

Attempt Question 1

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question in a writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant issues of historiography
 - use relevant sources to support your argument
 - present a detailed, logical and cohesive response
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Using the Source, answer the question that follows.

Source

History's popularity on television is part of what is perceived as a wider revival of media's interest in the past. Richard Evans is typical of those historians who emphasise the current boom in history in the media. According to Evans we are living through a period in which there is a 'hunger for history among the adult book-reading, television-watching, movie-going public.' It is not only the ratings success of history on television that excites Evans; he also notes that 'the best-regarded fiction of the 1990s and early 2000s most often takes the past as its setting' and the film industry 'has turned to the past for its themes' . . .

While many historians might not share Evans's enthusiasm they do accept that today 'history and the media are more completely interconnected and more variedly intertwined than ever before' (Cannadine).

This interconnectedness has posed dilemmas for historians; with gatherings of the profession debating the issues raised by the media's representation of

history, in particular that of television. Varying degrees of unhappiness have been expressed. The primary concern has been with questions of accuracy and truthfulness, highlighted by the title of a conference held at the Imperial War Museum in 2004, *It May be History but is it True?* TV producers and film-makers are criticised for sacrificing accuracy, information and analysis for entertainment and drama . . .

The recent growth of interest in history reflects changes in the media as much as it represents a revival in popular interest in history. Digital technology has allowed more access to archives and opened up more than a hundred years of footage to film, documentary and television producers. Smaller cameras have made interviewing a more intimate and relaxed experience, better suited to oral history and personal testimony (Ellis). Technological developments, in particular the advent of computer generated imagery (CGI), allow innovative ways in which the visual media can reproduce the past.

Source continues on page 3

Source (continued)

Computerised reconstruction is able to take viewers back into the temples of ancient Greece or the forums of ancient Rome or Hitler's bunker; it is seen as 'easier to achieve' the 're-creation of visually accurate historical spectacles than in previous decades' (McKechnie).

CGI and other technical developments may raise questions about the 'ethics' of reproducing 'archive' like scenes and vivid dramatic reconstructions of past events and actors which can blur our understanding of what is 'real' but they have enhanced the capacity and ability of television – and other visual media – to represent history . . .

Central to the debate about history in the media is the notion of historical truth. Historians seek to draw a clear boundary between fact and fiction with the commitment to factual objectivity serving as the basis of the profession's authority. Since the early days of mass popular entertainment, professional historians have complained about the accuracy of media representations of the past . . . The reality is that the process of interpretation is infused with human prejudices and presuppositions . . .

The past is a site of contestation. Calls for public history or the rediscovery of narrative form in historical writing are but two examples of where historians struggle over how they should 'do' their

profession. Many of the debates about how history is done in the media correspond with debates about what is history . . .

To draw in larger audiences, producers are finding more and more ways of making their programs entertaining. This has broken down the barrier between fact and fiction, producing new formats in which to present history. The early days of television history was presenter led; the authoritative expert leading the audience through the past. History from below fuelled the trend in television history to personal testimony, in the process of 'democratising' history. The 'new TV history' focuses on more individualistic, subjective and celebrity-associated accounts of history. The space for challenging, critical and unconventional interpretations of the past is shrinking. There is less time and resources to research historical topics and consult historians. Money more than ever speaks. What is produced is not 'bad' history but a different kind of history which has implications for how we understand the past.

KEVIN WILLIAMS, *Flattened Visions from Timeless Machines: History in the Mass Media*, 2008.

Flattened Visions from Timeless Machines: History in the Mass Media in Sian Nicholas, Tom O'Malley and Kevin Williams, pp 7,9,10,17,18,22,23, *Reconstructing the Past: History in the Mass Media 1890-2005*, London Routledge, 2008

Question 1 (25 marks)

To what extent do forms of historical communication influence the way history has been constructed and recorded over time?

Support your argument with sustained integration of the Source and at least TWO other sources.

Please turn over

Section II

25 marks

Attempt Question 2

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of an appropriate case study
 - engage with the historiography of the areas of debate selected for discussion
 - present a sustained, logical and cohesive response
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Question 2 (25 marks)

Awaiting Copyright

To what extent do the contexts of historians shape historical debate?

In your answer, make close reference to at least ONE area of debate from your chosen case study.

Identify your case study at the beginning of your answer.

End of paper