



NSW Education Standards Authority

2023 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

History Extension

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- General Instructions**
- Reading time – 10 minutes
 - Working time – 2 hours
 - Write using black pen

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- Total marks: 50**
- Section I – 25 marks** (pages 3–5)
- Attempt Question 1
 - Allow about 1 hour for this section
- Section II – 25 marks** (page 6)
- Attempt Question 2
 - Allow about 1 hour for this section

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Section I

25 marks

Attempt Question 1

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question on pages 2–12 of the History Extension Writing Booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

Your answer 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 comprehensive, logical and sustained response
-

Please turn over

Question 1 (25 marks)

Evaluate the role of historiographical debate in approaches to the construction of history over time.

Use Sources *A* and *B* and at least **TWO** other sources to support your argument.

Source A: An extract from a podcast in which Dr Samuel De Canio interviews historian Niall Ferguson.

Samuel De Canio:

‘And what is it about counterfactual* history that you think makes it so valuable, as opposed to other approaches historians might adopt?’

Niall Ferguson:

‘Counterfactual history is about making explicit the choices contemporaries confronted, and showing that ... at the point of decision, they had no certainty about the consequences of their actions ... there are forks in the road, there are paths that need to be chosen. If you lose that ... you write as if the path that is chosen is somehow predestined.

I [Ferguson] came to realise through doing history ... and trying to reconstruct the thought processes of the participants that there are multiple moments of choice and not just for the people at the top. For ordinary people ...

There is a tremendously strong strain of deterministic** thought in historical philosophy that ... has persisted in the historical profession.

I think historians should be alive to the counterfactual. And we should try to find all the ways that we can to recapture the uncertainty of contemporaries. We know how it turns out ... this is not an advantage.

DR SAMUEL DE CANIO
Counterfactual history: an interview with historian Niall Ferguson
The Governance Podcast, 2022

* counterfactual *what might have happened but did not happen*
** deterministic *events that are inevitable, predetermined or fated*

With kind permission
of Samuel De Canio,
Kings College, London

Question 1 continues on page 5

Question 1 (continued)

Source B

Counterfactual history is built on the belief that there exists a real history written on the basis of historical facts. If you see your own narrative as counterfactual, there must be a factual narrative it has to be counter to ...

The notion of factual history in counterfactual history implies that historians, through their methodological working-through of sources, are able to give valid and truthful descriptions that correspond with the events that have marked the passage of time ...

However, a central idea of writing counterfactual history, according to [Niall] Ferguson, is to ... unmask traditional historiography as a construction that has created a deterministic view about the past ... Ferguson admits that the form of the narratives in historiography has created what he calls 'narrative determinism' ... However, it seems that Ferguson has got it upside down ... Ferguson seems to find the problems with narrative determinism isolated to traditional history, but indeed counterfactual history has the same problems, since they are also constructed historical narratives.

MADS MORDHORST

From counterfactual history to counternarrative history
Management & Organizational History, 2008

Courtesy of Mads Mordhorst

End of Question 1

Please turn over

Section II

25 marks

Attempt Question 2

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question on pages 14–24 of the History Extension Writing Booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

Your answer 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 comprehensive, logical and sustained response
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Question 2 (25 marks)

Explain how the form of communication has influenced historical interpretations.

In your response, refer to at least ONE area of historical debate in your case study. Identify your case study at the beginning of your answer.

End of paper

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