History National 4

How to answer

Source Questions

The National 4 unit assessments will test 3 types of Source questions: ***Evaluate the usefulness*** *…..* ***Compare the sources***…. ***How fully*** *does the source show…*

In your answers make sure that you put EACH point into a separate sentence. Always use the wording of the question as part of your answer. Actually answer the question.

1. **Evaluate the usefulness…**

***Evaluate the usefulness of Source X in explaining why…***

In this type of question you should discuss how useful the source is by commenting on things like:

* The **author** (*who wrote it, said it, photographed it, drew it*)
* The possible **purpose** *(for information, to educate people, to communicate their experiences)*
* When it **dates** from
* **Content** *(what the source says, shows, tells us about the topic)*
* What’s **missing** *(what you know about the topic that is not in the source)*

**Example A**

**Source A** Luzena Stanley Wilson lived in a gold mining town in 1849. Her memoirs were written down by her daughter in 1881.

**Source A**

Everybody had money, and everybody spent it. The most profitable employment of the time was gambling…. Stakes ran high into the thousands. Fortunes were won or lost on the turning of a card.

Men sang, danced, drank and caroused all night, and worked all day. They were reckless. Nearly every man carried in his belt either knife or pistol, and one or the other flashed out on small provocation to do its deadly work.

Evaluate the usefulness of **Source A** for someone studying the problems in early gold mining towns. (4 marks)

*Source A is useful as it is information from 1849 which was* ***during the time*** *of early gold mining towns (date - 1 mark). The information comes from Luzena Stanley Wilson’s personal experiences which makes it a* ***first-hand account*** *of the problems in early gold mining towns which is useful (author – 1 mark).* ***The source tells us*** *about the lifestyle of miners who had plenty of money to spend on gambling and drinking which makes it useful (content – 1 mark). Finally, the source is limited in its usefulness because* ***it doesn’t describe*** *the poor conditions that the miners lived in and dangerous environment of new settlements (missing – 1 mark).*

**Example B**

**Source B:** is adapted from Robert E. Lee’s Report (1859) on the capture of John Brown at Harpers Ferry.

**Source B**

The raiders were headed by John Brown, an anti-slavery abolitionist, who in June, began preparing to capture the United States armoury at Harper's Ferry.

He vows he planned to free the slaves of Virginia, and of the whole South. He was disappointed that he received so little support from either the black or white population, both in the Southern and Northern States.

Evaluate the usefulness of **Source B** for someone studying John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry in 1859. (4 marks)

*Source B is useful for finding out about John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry because it was written by Lee; the man in charge of capturing Brown. This makes it a* ***first-hand account*** *(author – 1 mark). The information came from Lee’s report which makes it useful, being form* ***just after the time*** *when Brown made his raid (date – 1 mark).* ***The source tells us*** *that John Brown was an abolitionist which is useful for finding out why he raided Harper’s Ferry (content – 1 mark). Finally, the* ***purpose of the source*** *was an official report on the attack but for the Southern authorities. This may make it biased and so slightly less useful (purpose – 1 mark).*

1. **How fully..?**

***How fully does Source X describe…***

In this question you should make a judgment about how well the source provides a full description of an event or issue. You should:

* Comment on what **the source** does tell you about an event or issue using your own words.
* Comment on what the source fails to mention about the event or issue using **what you know** from the course. This is called recall.

**Example A**

**Source C** is from the book *A Slave’s Life* published in 2001 by the historian M. Clark

**Source C**

Slaves on Southern plantations suffered great hardship. They were treated as less than human, like animals to be beaten and controlled. They were often punished in cruel ways such as getting a lashing and then left out in the sun with salt on their wounds. They had no rights at all, having to ask permission to leave the plantation.

How fully does **Source C** describe the life of slaves on Southern plantations? (4 marks)

*Source C describes the life of slaves reasonably fully.* ***Clark describes*** *how they were not treated as human beings (source - 1 mark).* ***The source*** *also tells us the type of punishments they could receive were cruel like whippings with salt (source – 1 mark).* ***The slaves*** *even had to ask permission to leave the plantation (source – 1 mark). However,* ***the source fails to mention*** *the type of work that slaves had to do like carrying the backbreaking bales of cotton (recall – 1 mark).*

**Example B**

**Source D** is from Private Dan Kramer’s journal; a soldier at the massacre

Those Indians got what they deserved at Sand Creek. They been murderin Whites and goin against the Government since day one. We came into the camp peacefully. The number of scalps we found at the Creek was enough to make you weep. We killed them all good.

How fully does **Source A** describe what happened at the Sand Creek Massacre? (4 marks)

*Source D gives some information about the massacre but there is also a lot missing.* ***The source tells us*** *that the Government troops went into the Indian camp at Sand Creek (source – 1 mark).* ***The source also says*** *that many Indians died at the massacre (source – 1 mark).* ***Kramer gives us*** *the White point of view saying that the Indians deserved the attack by going against treaties (source – 1 mark). However,* ***the source clearly doesn’t tell us*** *the Indian side of the story and how they were unarmed mostly women and children (recall – 1 mark).*

1. **Compare the views …**

***Compare the views of sources X and Y…***

In this question you should compare evidence between 2 sources. You should compare evidence on a point by point basis to make your answer clear.

* Give a developed comparison where you give the comparison in your own words and then give quotes from each source to back up your point
* ALWAYS give developed comparisons!

**Example A**

**Sources E** and **F** describe some of the causes of the American Civil War.

**Source E** is from a BBC documentary about the American Civil War made in 1996

The causes of the civil war are quite clear. Lincoln’s views on slavery alarmed and frightened Southerners which divided the USA. The growing tension between slave and free states over the years had also divided the north and south. Finally, the attack on Fort Sumter was the trigger that started the war.

**Source F** is from a British newspaper printed in 1861

It is obvious that while we agree with Lincoln that slavery should be abolished the Southern States would not tolerate him as President. They would rather go to war. The division between the north and south is now so deep that when the attack was made at Fort Sumter this was the spark that set the flames of war alight.

Compare **sources E** and **F** about the causes of the American Civil War. Compare them overall and in detail.

**4 marks**

*Overall sources E and F mostly agree that one of the main causes of the civil war was division between north and south with source E saying “over the years had also divided the north and south” and source F stating “the division between north and south is now so deep” (developed comparison – 2 marks). The sources also state that the attack on Fort Sumter was the spark for the war with source E stating “the attack on Fort Sumter was the trigger” and source F says “Fort Sumter was the spark” (developed comparison – 2 marks).*

**Example B**

**Sources G** and **H** describe how slaves were treated after the war.

**Source G** is from the memoirs of Thomas Cropper; a freed slave in Louisiana

It’s true; I’m a free man now. I neva thought this day would come. And it make me sad to see that life ain’t no different now than under the massa. I live on the edge of town in a shack with the other black folks. I got a curfew and if those white men see me out at night they beat me. That KKK is evil white folks.

**Source H** is from the book *The American Dream* by S. A. Adamson.

Freemen were often treated just as badly as when they were slaves. Blacks had to live in separate areas away from towns and Whites. They would be cheated by Whites under the share-cropping system so they never seemed to make money. Very often there would be curfews in place to stop Blacks getting together at night.

Compare sources G and H on how freed slaves were treated after the civil war. Compare them overall and in detail.

**4 marks**

*Overall sources G and H agree about the fact that life didn’t improve that much for freed slaves with source G stating “it make me sad to see that life ain’t no different now than under the massa” and source H stating freemen were often treated just as badly as when they were slaves” (developed comparison – 2 marks). However, the sources disagree on how freed slaves were cheated when they shared the produce from their farm with their landowner as source H states “cheated by Whites under the share-cropping system so they never seemed to make money” but source G doesn’t mention anything about how freed slaves made a living (developed comparison – 2 marks).*