

May 2017 subject reports

## Brazilian Social Studies

Overall grade boundaries

### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-13	14-28	29-38	39-50	51-62	63-74	75-100

Standard level internal assessment

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-3	4-6	7-8	9-11	12-13	14-16	17-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As in May 2016, the popular choice of topics for historical investigations ranged, chronologically, from slavery, the rise and fall of Empire, through the crisis of the 1920s and Vargas's rise to power, and ending in the military regime and its aftermath.

Candidate performance against each criterion

In general, good quality research, leading to the presentation of focused and relevant detail, and good links between criteria B, C and D are essential for success.

**Criterion A** (plan of the investigation): more clarity is often needed about the scope of the investigation and the methodology to be used.

**Criterion B** (summary of evidence): more relevant, researched, supporting information is often needed, and this should be evaluated (in historical investigations particularly), and the reason for choosing it justified (geography investigations), in order to earn marks under **Criterion C** (evaluation of sources/ justification for selection of evidence/information)

**Criterion D** (analysis) and **Criterion B**: there was often a lack of linkage between these two - evidence gathered **must** be appropriate and useful to the analysis.

**Criterion E** (the conclusion): this needs to be short and succinct.

**Criterion F** (list of sources and word limit): there was some lack of attention to detail in the presentation, for instance in the listing of sources, or in giving the word count. Sources listed in the bibliography should be ones that are cited within the text.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

These recommendations were given in 2016, but it is worth repeating them in 2017. To achieve successful investigations:

- there must be a coherent plan that covers the scope and method of the investigation, and that leads on naturally to an analysis of the chosen sources.
- several sources may be referred to, but three to four foundation sources may often be sufficient *if* they are good ones and are fully used: quality is sometimes better than quantity.
- the sources chosen should demonstrate awareness of different interpretations of, and viewpoints on, the topic discussed.

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-5	6-11	12-16	17-20	21-25	26-29	30-40

### General comments

#### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Analysing the sources properly seemed to be a challenge to many candidates – often not all aspects would be taken into consideration when formulating the answers to the questions posed.

The final question of each section was the most demanding. There was a clear lack of organization when students had to use information acquired from the sources and their own knowledge to formulate the expected answer.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates appeared to be well prepared to answer questions that only demanded simple and straightforward use of the sources.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

### Question 1 (a) and (b)

Question (a) was in general answered very well, whereas (b) proved to be a challenge for many different candidates when it came to creating the logical sequence of facts that the answer required.

### Question 2

The question asked candidates to analyse both sources A and B. Most of the answers were limited to a commentary on source B, never mentioning A and its relation to the Brazilian exports topic.

### Question 3

This question required a combination of interpretations of sources C and D; it was mostly answered well.

### Question 4

Most of the answers produced did not effectively address the demands of the question. Most of the time, candidates would either concentrate on source analysis or on their own knowledge – the expected answer should have contained both of these aspects, evaluating effectively the negatives and positives of the process of economic opening in Brazil.

### Question 5 (a) and (b)

There was good factual recall, but still a lot of mistakes were made. There were several cases where students did not know what “Política café-com-leite” meant. Responses to question (b) were more on target.

### Question 6

The interpretation of sources E and G was done, but not to the full extent required.

### Question 7

This question asked candidates to evaluate the historical worth of a document. Answers addressing its value and limitations were overall good, but candidates frequently forgot to state the origin and/or the intended purpose.

## Question 8

As with question 4, this was more difficult for candidates since they had to refer to their own knowledge as well as to the sources. Most of the answers were basically a recollection of the sources, with minimal or no discussion on the role of the “tenentes” during the Vargas government or afterwards.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

It is important to remind students that the answers usually need an interpretation of sources, not just a reproduction of what is written in them. Also, students need to practice answering questions using the sources and their own knowledge, in the format required of the last question in each section. Finally, it is important to ensure that basic topics from the Core syllabus are taught in full, including considerations of their possible implications as regards the other topics, even if those are not addressed throughout the course.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-5	6-11	12-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-40

## General comments

In the May 2017 session, candidates seemed to be more prepared than last year in terms of knowledge of the content of the syllabus, as was evident in the results. Looking at the questions in each section, it seems that the questions from Section A (geography) were more easily answered by students than the questions in Section B (history). Some questions seemed to cause particular difficulties: these were questions 1, 7 and 12. Question 1 caused some confusion due the fact that not all candidates were able to discuss the concept of “agroindustrial” complex. Question 7 required discussions about historiography, and since most of the students didn’t discuss the different views of different authors, as required in the mark scheme, most of the students that answered this question got a lower grade. Question 12 also wasn’t very understood by candidates, probably because it was from a recent period of Brazilian history and teachers in general seem to avoid teaching this.

Most of the candidates tried to answer with information that was somehow related to the questions, but the information was not necessarily relevant to what was being asked; this suggests that candidates had issues with interpreting the demands of the questions, and that maybe this is a skill that teachers should start practising more with their students.

## The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The areas that appeared most difficult for students were in Section B. Questions 11 (Vargas's suicide) and 12 (Collor's election) were the most difficult for them.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The areas where students appeared well-prepared were in section A, especially in questions related to the construction of Brazilian geographical space, and to energy generation.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The strengths of the candidates were mainly demonstrated in questions 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, and the weaknesses were in questions 3 (they had difficulty in explaining the reasons for emigration from Brazil to other countries); 7 (they didn't compare different historical views, as required in the mark scheme); 9 (they had difficulty in identifying liberal ideals and in relating these to the Brazilian constitution); 11 (candidates had difficulty in identifying the politics aspects of Vargas's suicide, instead focusing only on the facts), and question 12 (most candidates who answered this question didn't focus on Collor's election, but instead wrote about the end of dictatorship and the process of re-democratization).

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers are recommended to discuss historiographical skills with candidates, *eg* the importance of analysing different viewpoints held by different historians, how to analyse these, and what could be the possible reasons for these differences of opinion, as was required in question 7 this year.
- It is important that teachers focus on explaining the basic historical and geographical concepts of the syllabus, such as *liberalismo*, *agroindustrial*, *macrocefalia*, for instance.
- Teachers should insist on the importance for candidates of answering what is required in the question, and not what they want to answer. Most of the candidates wrote information that was related to the topic, but not necessarily related to what was asked in the question.