How easily were you able to read the handwriting in each essay? Remember that examiners will have many scripts to mark and cannot afford to spend a lot of time deciphering illegible writing. If you know that your handwriting is difficult to read, then write on every other line and plan each essay effectively, allowing enough time to finish without rushing.

Examiner comments

Paper 4: British political and constitutional 1485 – 1750: Gender has been over-used as a tool for analysing the reign of Elizabeth I'. Discuss.

Candidate 1
76%
Takes issue immediately with the argument presented in the question and clearly states the angle h/she will take, introducing 'mis-used' and 'under-used' in place of the question's 'overused', thereby making the argument their own.

Interesting introduction suggests gender has sometimes been 'under-used' or 'misused.' Good historiography. Occasionally over-reaches argument and is led into dubious interpretations. Excellent essay: both answers the question and provides a critique of the current scholarship. One of the best essays I've marked this year.

Candidate 2
54%
Competent answer. Bad habit of assuming that marriage and succession issues apply only to women. By way of an argument, seems content to list factors which had nothing to do with gender - this is too easy. Another moralising conclusion criticises historiography for using 'modern gender stereotypes' - but cites no specific works at all.

Historical argument and practice: 'Class and social status are essentially the same'. Discuss

Candidate 3
Examiner comments 74%
A very coherent and well-argued account of class and social status that successfully draws in debates around gender, ethnicity and other forms of social delineation. This candidate is aware of the recent historiographical developments in the study of class and is able to chart its currency amongst
historians. An excellent account, marred slightly by deteriorating handwriting and a sense towards the end that the argument had already been made and further examples simply repeated established points.