

## Assessment Strategies for a History Exam, or, Why Short-Answer Questions are Better than In-Class Essays

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THE IN-CLASS ESSAY is not an effective means to assess student ability in a history exam. History teachers should instead ask short-answer questions in order to test what the American Historical Association calls “objective” knowledge: the ability to identify concepts, historical actors, organizations, events, and so forth. Such questions, admittedly, do not measure the analytical and cognitive skills that most historians consider a central goal of humanities education. Nevertheless, factual knowledge tests cultural literacy, which should remain an important part of history teaching.

At present, historians take diverse approaches to end-of-semester tests and final exams. An informal poll of my own department found that 70% of faculty ask essay questions, though some with qualifications. One colleague only assigns them in first-year courses, another only in second- and third-year courses. A full 80% of instructors ask short-answer questions of varying genre and length. Diverse strategies of assessment have consequences for students. As Catherine Horn noted in a discussion of standardized testing, “different approaches provide different types of information, and the choice of measurement method can have serious implications for the conclusions drawn about a student’s competency.”<sup>1</sup>

Methodological diversity may itself be desirable. Different students have different learning styles, perhaps reflecting different backgrounds or cultures, so perhaps multiple assessment strategies best serve the student

body.<sup>2</sup> Education researchers Jerry Spoon and John Schell have even speculated about coordinating students and instructors on the basis of their learning styles.<sup>3</sup> Such considerations may have influenced the History Teachers Association of Australia to support “decision making at the classroom level.”<sup>4</sup>

An argument for one specific approach should facilitate discussion by showing points of agreement and discord. It may also help instructors articulate their preferences for one strategy over another. The argument given here, therefore, is directed at individual instructors, not would-be homogenizers of a national educational system.

Any discussion of assessment strategies should start from pedagogical objectives. History faculty are idiosyncratic, and their diverse approaches to student assessment reflect diverse ideas about what undergraduate education should accomplish. Most historians, however, would probably endorse a 1997 report from the Teaching Division of the American Historical Association (AHA) suggesting that

Students need to be aware of the kinds of sources used by historians, and they should become adept at extracting meaning from these sources, comparing their findings with other evidence from the period, formulating conclusions about the issue under study, and testing these ideas against additional evidence and the ideas of other historians. Students should be taught to think historically, to have the opportunity to develop their own historical interpretations.<sup>5</sup>

Peter Seixas of Vancouver’s Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness concurs, writing that “at the most sophisticated level, students will be able to . . . use several primary sources to construct an original account of a historical event.”<sup>6</sup>

If historical narratives created from primary sources are the central goal of history teaching, then assessment strategies should test student’s ability to create them. How can this ability be tested? The 1997 AHA report, cited above, advocated research essays:

Although objective testing may be useful to prompt students to read assignments, it should never represent the bulk of student evaluation or be the final measure of student success. [...] the excellent history course revolves around analysis and interpretation, student evaluation must be based on written or other work that allows students to develop and present their own analyses.<sup>7</sup>

Prose, whether in the form of a student essay, journal article, or research monograph, remains the foundation of the historical endeavour. Education researchers have also emphasized the importance of writing assignments in student learning.<sup>8</sup> As long as the student-teacher ratio permits, the most

heavily weighted item of student evaluation in a history course should therefore be a substantial piece of written work.

Yet while the AHA report underscores the importance of writing, its reasoning does necessarily imply the necessity of writing in-class essays during final exams. An essay written for an exam is, by definition, a rush-job. Essays written two, three, or even four at a time during a two-hour exam will never be profound examples of historical analysis. Mature history writing requires extended hours sifting for primary sources in libraries or archives, followed by a lengthy process of reflection. Students write in-class essays either from memory or from a small number of sources provided by the instructor. To expose students to the best practices of the discipline, history teachers should perhaps require students to conduct independent research in the university library, and write a lengthy essay over a period of weeks or months.

In-class essay examinations do seem to have some pedagogical value in their own right. In the 1930s, a study in the *Journal of Educational Philosophy* “found greater achievement on any type of examination followed study in anticipation of an essay examination.”<sup>9</sup> More recently, Sara Sundberg has researched whether “students who are required to write essay questions on exams would perform better on objective post-tests.”<sup>10</sup> She gave thirteen sections of an American History survey a “pre-test” of multiple-choice questions, and then asked the same questions in the final exam. She gave nine sections an essay-based exam, which she compared to four control sections tested solely through multiple-choice tests. She concluded that “adding the writing of essay questions to exams [...] has a positive effect on student learning.”<sup>11</sup> Sundberg’s methodology raises some questions: she reports, for example, that she “did not simply add essay exams in some sections, [but] made them a part of a larger learning exercise.” This “larger learning exercise,” consisting of sample essay questions and study tips, might explain the improved test scores. Such quibbles aside, however, Sundberg’s conclusion remains plausible: “the retention of factual information was linked to the historical reasoning required for the essays.”<sup>12</sup>

Whatever their pedagogical virtues, however, in-class essays remain problematic means of assessing student achievement. Consider the irony that Sundberg’s study measured, and thus defined, pedagogical success in terms of “objective questions,”<sup>13</sup> specifically the ability to answer multiple-choice questions taken from the 1996 Advanced Placement exam.<sup>14</sup> Multiple-choice questions are precisely the sort of test question attacked in the 1997 AHA report, which Sundberg incidentally quoted approvingly. The fact that advocates of essay examinations support their case on the basis of data gathered through “objective testing” shows that even opponents of such

testing accept its greater accuracy in measuring student achievement.

William Coffman lists two main reasons why instructors might doubt the reliability of essay marks: “(a) different readers tend to assign different grades to the same paper, and (b) a single reader tends to assign different grades to the same paper on different occasions.”<sup>15</sup> The student’s perspective raises further concerns: recent research on the pedagogy of English composition reminds us that “writing an essay in class under time constraints is a situation that many students fear.”<sup>16</sup> Anxious students who become nervous under pressure may not write to their full ability, while relatively ignorant yet confident students may bluster their way to success. An assessment system that punishes “depression and exam-related stress,” as opposed to lack of study, should raise concerns, particularly when, as several researchers have found, such factors disproportionately affect disadvantaged social groups.<sup>17</sup> In-class essay-writing skills can, of course, be taught, but historians *qua* historians should try to teach and measure the student’s mastery of historical knowledge, not competency in a specific genre of test-taking.

Instructors should therefore be wary of assigning grades students solely on the basis of something as subjective as essay grades. Final exams are not only, or even primarily, a teaching tool: they measure academic achievement, or the absence thereof. School marks, furthermore, affect student’s lives, since scholarships, financial aid, and legal residency may depend on passing grades. Instructors thus have a responsibility to measure student achievement accurately and objectively. Instructors have other options besides essays for measuring student achievement.

Multiple choice questions can be objectively scored, but introduce a new set of problems. Firstly, students guess, and may adopt different strategies of guessing.<sup>18</sup> Guessing muddles the accuracy of assessment, and history exams should measure historical knowledge, not guessing ability. Guessing may also be teachable. In the United States, several profitable corporations sell tricks for beating standardized multiple-choice exams such as the SAT and the GRE,<sup>19</sup> though some researchers doubt the efficacy of their services.<sup>20</sup>

Most troubling for multiple-choice questions, however, is the difficulty of devising good “distractors” (incorrect answers). Consider the following question from a study guide for the American AP World History exam:

1. Which is NOT true of Russian expansion in the period 1500-1800?
  - A. It was stopped by the Ottoman Empire.
  - B. It included expansion into Siberia.
  - C. It expanded to the south and west.
  - D. It added territory by participating in the partition of Poland.
  - E. It forged a cultural alliance with the Slavic peoples in the Balkans.<sup>21</sup>

The “correct” answer (A) seems problematic: while the Ottomans could not prevent Russia from annexing large swathes of their territory, the southern extent of Russian expansion was nevertheless limited by contracting Ottoman power: after all, the Russians never reached Istanbul. Several of the distractors have equivalent problems. The “cultural alliance” mentioned in (E) seems misleading for the specified time period, since the Pan-Slavic movement had its greatest influence in the nineteenth century. Between 1500 and 1800, furthermore, the Russian Empire expanded most spectacularly to the *east*, so one might argue for (C) on the grounds that while Russia did indeed expand to the south and west, the question as stated implies the lack of expansion in other directions. Answer (B), finally, is undoubtedly incorrect, but could be too easily eliminated. Such quibbles would, of course, not arise if students were writing prose: three centuries of Russian expansion had many causes and many ramifications; a writing assignment would better gauge student understanding of such a complex phenomenon than multiple-choice questions.

Perhaps multiple-choice questions can more usefully target discrete pieces of cultural knowledge, such as names, places, organizations, terms, concepts, slogans, and so on. Consider two less ambitious questions from the AP World History exam:

2. The millet system in the Islamic empires
  - A. was especially effective in India.
  - B. created cooperation among the ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire.
  - C. was a system of slavery.
  - D. interfered with religious freedom.
  - E. promoted nationalist sentiment within the Ottoman Empire.
3. Which peninsula has been the scene of ethnic cleansing?
  - A. Iberian
  - B. Balkan
  - C. Italian
  - D. Scandinavian
  - E. Yucatán.<sup>22</sup>

Both of these questions focus on a specific issue, and both address important subjects: knowledgeable students should be familiar with both the millet system and the term “ethnic cleansing.”

Yet one could still raise technical objections to both questions. Most Ottoman historians would probably agree that (E) is the best answer to question 2, yet a student could plausibly argue for (D) on the grounds that the millet system only recognized certain religions, thus interfering with the religious freedom of those following unrecognized faiths, such as Shi’a Islam. As for question 3, the term “ethnic cleansing” is indeed most strongly associated with the Balkans, but one could argue that both

the Christian reconquest of Spain, with the subsequent expulsion of Spanish Jews, and the Spanish conquest of the New World, including Mexico's Yucatán peninsula, qualify as ethnic cleansing. My own secondary school history teacher gave a multiple-choice quiz each week, which was an understandable pedagogical choice given his large student numbers. But each week, he faced a crowd of students, often his best students, arguing for alternative answers.

Many problems with multiple-choice tests can be overcome with open-ended short answer questions. To test student knowledge about the millet system or ethnic cleansing, for example, one could ask students to define them in a few short sentences:

Define the following terms in the space provided:

*Millet system*

*Ethnic cleansing*

My personal grading rubric gives three points of five for a “basic and correct” answer, with additional points added for additional details. A student who gives basic and correct answers for all questions would receive 60%, which makes a respectable B- according to the grading scheme of my institution in New Zealand. Instructors teaching to a different standard may adjust as appropriate.

Short-answer questions have several advantages over multiple-choice tests. Firstly, there is no need to find distractors, and thus no difficulty of finding good distractors. Unusual students with idiosyncratic yet defensible interpretations are free to suggest them. Wild guessing no longer affects student marks: a student simply gets zero points for defining the Huguenots as “a Russian political party that supported the Bolsheviks” or Charles de Gaulle as “a French painter” (both answers from actual student papers).

An objective grading scheme is particularly useful when dealing with exceptional students at both ends of the grading scale. Failing students

cannot defend catastrophic answers as a difference of interpretation, or the persecution of their social group: they are decisively and objectively wrong. This objectivity can be beneficial if a litigious student files a grade grievance. In essay exams, even the worst drivel can expect to receive some credit: what instructor would dare give an essay grade of 25%? Most instructors give essay grades that cluster around the centre of the bell curve: a student who received an essay mark of 25% would feel unfairly singled out. Short-answer questions, however, create the theoretical possibility of a zero, and justify low marks for dramatically under-performing students.

A recent first-year class on “Modern Europe,” for which 217 students wrote two essays and a final exam based on short-answer questions, provides anecdotal evidence for these claims. The two tutors who marked the first essay assignment never assigned a grade lower than 40%; the lowest marks were 40%, 43%, 45%, and 46%. In other words, the bottom 0.4% of students received credit for achieving 40% of learning objectives. Multiple-choice exams have a similar problem: a wholly ignorant student taking an exam of multiple choice questions can expect to score around 25% through the law of averages. The short-answer exam, by contrast, yielded low scores of 18%, 16%, 14%, and 10%. Such scores probably reflect the low achievement of the lowest percentile more accurately than essay marks. Conversely, the best students benefit from objective grading. In this same class, the tutors gave top essay grades of 83%, 84%, 85%, and 85%, all exceptional grades at my institution, but the top exam scores were 91%, 92%, 96%, and 99%.<sup>23</sup>

Objective measures of achievement, however, come at a price: such questions no longer measure critical thinking. Instead, they test mastery of what Samuel Wineburg, using a common pejorative phrase, calls an “endless parade of names and dates.”<sup>24</sup> Nobody, one hopes, would advocate the sort of history teaching that George Orwell remembered from his unhappy childhood:

History was a series of unrelated, unintelligible but—in some way that was never explained to us—important facts with resounding phrases tied to them. Disraeli brought peace with honour. Clive was astonished at his moderation. Pitt called in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. And the dates, and the mnemonic devices. ... I recall positive orgies of dates, with the keener boys leaping up and down in their places in their eagerness to shout out the right answers, and at the same time not feeling the faintest interest in the meaning of the mysterious events they were naming.<sup>25</sup>

More recently, Anna Clark’s recent survey of Canadian and Australian history classes found that students “frequently criticized teaching approaches that rely too heavily on rote learning,” though she also found that students

“acknowledge there was a place for learning ‘the facts’.”<sup>26</sup>

Some historians may object that short answer questions reduce historical knowledge to the sort of trivia used to humiliate contestants on TV quiz shows. For instance, the successful quiz programme *Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?* tests contestants on factual knowledge questions, usually through multiple-choice questions.<sup>27</sup> Yet even television quiz shows seem less banal when examined cross-culturally. *Das weiß doch jedes Kind!*, the German version of *Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?* has asked “What town did Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller call home?”<sup>28</sup> This question reflects important cultural knowledge: Goethe and Schiller’s residency in Weimar turned the town into an important symbol of Germany’s liberal, philosophical, and humanist traditions. The Danish version of the show, *Er Du Klogere End En 10-Årig?*, once asked “Which Danish King had the most children: Christian IV, Frederik III, or Valdemar the Great?”<sup>29</sup> This question would probably stump most of the Anglophone world, but the conflict between Christian IV’s twelve illegitimate children from Vibeke Kruse and his six legitimate children from Christiana Munk had important consequences for Danish history. If these questions count as remedial in their home countries, then Anglophone students able to answer them have acquired significant knowledge of the relevant cultures and societies. Assessment strategies may legitimately reward such knowledge.

Cultural literacy has practical benefits for students outside of academia. Consider two example from the business world: the ice-cream company Ben & Jerry’s paid a high price for its lack of cultural knowledge in 2006, when it introduced the flavour “Black and Tan” for Saint Patrick’s Day apparently unaware that the phrase describes not only a mixture of ale and beer, but a paramilitary force that committed several atrocities during the Anglo-Irish war.<sup>30</sup> The firm promptly apologized (“Any reference on our part to the British Army unit was absolutely unintentional . . . Ben & Jerry’s was built on the philosophies of peace and love.”<sup>31</sup>), but the damage had already been done: British journalists printed stories about unfortunate flavours the company might hypothetically introduce, including “Guantánamo Surprise” and “Vanilla Parker Bowles.”<sup>32</sup> The Taiwanese branch of German electrical goods manufacturer DBK encountered similar problems when it tried to advertise radiators with the image of a saluting Hitler bearing the firm’s name on his armband in place of the swastika.<sup>33</sup> Students might not expect to need historical knowledge while pursuing a career in ice cream sales or radiator manufacturing, yet a little knowledge of history might have saved these two companies money and bad publicity.

Some scholars, unfortunately, treat factual information as secondary to the historical educational mission. David Trask of the AHA has urged

teachers to assess “student understanding of historical thinking and important, in-depth, contextualized subject matter rather than discrete historical ‘facts’.”<sup>34</sup> S. G. Grant condemned the (multiple-choice) New York Global History exam for emphasizing “low-level knowledge questions rather than high-order thinking questions.”<sup>35</sup> By using the phrase “rather than,” scholars such as Grant and Trask implicitly contrast historical understanding with factual knowledge, as if instructors had to choose between the two in a zero-sum game. This dichotomy, however, is false: the historical context itself consists of names, dates, slogans, books, ideologies, and similar bits of factual information. Martin Ashley’s dictum that historical facts are “necessary but not sufficient,”<sup>36</sup> remains equally true when the final clause is omitted: historical facts—the much-reviled names and dates—are necessary. Students can hardly have “high level thought” about, for example, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians if they do not understand the term “Zionism” or, like 30% of university students in Minnesota, cannot locate a single country on a map of the Middle East.<sup>37</sup>

Some instructors opposed to teaching “names and dates,” furthermore, show an alarming preference for exciting narratives at the cost of historical accuracy. Anthony Pattiz, consciously invoking the movie *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure*, urges teachers to “transform the classroom into a ‘time machine’ through a series of concrete instructional activities” that supposedly turns boring history classes into “a powerful shared experience in which [students] are active interpreters” instead of “a laundry list of names, dates, and places to be recorded, memorized, and then quietly forgotten when the test is over.”<sup>38</sup> Allan Yarema similarly suggests that assigning historical fiction, or even “popular movies,” can “provide a human aspect that names, dates, and places cannot.”<sup>39</sup> Historians concerned with the ways in which fictional and cinematic portrayals of history distort popular understandings of the past must, however, be suspicious of cinematic approaches to history teaching.

In conclusion, history exams should avoid essay questions, and ask short answer questions instead. Short answer questions may not be a good means of assessing higher-level analytical or historical skills, but neither are in-class essays. Exams should thus measure an equally important skill that historians should attempt to impart to their students: cultural literacy. Such literacy should be measured with objective questions. Since difficult yet unproblematic multiple choice questions are almost impossible to devise, instructors should ask short-answer questions.

## Notes

1. Catherine Horn, "The Technical Realities of Measuring History," in *Measuring History: Cases of State-Level Testing Across the United States*, ed. S. G. Grant (Charlotte, NC: Information Age, 2006), 60.

2. See Ronald Simms and Serbrenia Simms, eds., *The Importance of Learning Styles* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995); Charles Claxton and Patricia Murrell, eds., *Learning Styles: Implications for Improving Educational Practices* (College Station, TX: Association for the Study of Higher Education, 1987). On the cultural dimension to learning styles, see Rita Dunn and Shirley Griggs, *Multiculturalism and Learning Styles* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995). For a psychological approach, see Stephen Rayner and Richard Riding, *Cognitive Styles and Learning Strategies: Understanding Style Differences in Learning and Behaviour* (London, U.K.: David Fulton, 1998). For a critique of this approach, see Lynn Curry, "A Critique of the Research on Learning Styles," *Educational Leadership* 48, no. 2 (October 1990): 50-56.

3. Spoon and Schell concluded that "effective learning/teaching strategies may require more than simply identifying and matching of the preferred learning style of students with the teaching styles of instructors." The research population, furthermore, consisted of "adult basic skills students and teachers in a public, coeducational, two-year technical institution," a setting in which course content presumably varied little. History courses, however, are not interchangeable: a student cannot study German history with the Chinese history professor, even if the latter's teaching style better matches the students' learning style. See Jerry Spoon and John Schell, "Aligning Student Learning Styles with Instructor Teaching Styles," *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education* 35, no. 2 (Winter 1998): 41-56.

4. "Educating teachers ... Educating Australians for the Twenty-First Century," (June 2008), <[http://www.historyteacher.org.au/files/20080617\\_statement.pdf](http://www.historyteacher.org.au/files/20080617_statement.pdf)>.

5. "Statement on Excellent Classroom Teaching of History," Endorsed by the AHA Teaching Division, 4 November 1997, <<http://www.historians.org/teaching/policy/ExcellentTeaching.htm>>.

6. Peter Seixas, "Benchmarks of Historical thinking: A Framework for Assessment in Canada." (18 August 2006), 5, <<http://www.histori.ca/benchmarks/documents/Benchmarks%20of%20Historical%20Thinking%20A%20Framework%20for%20Assessment%20in%20Canada.pdf>>.

7. "Statement on Excellent Classroom Teaching of History."

8. Mark Thompson, "The Effect of a Writing Across the Curriculum Program on Students in an American History Class: Report on an Empirical Study," (Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1989), 21-40.

9. Cited in William Coffman, "Essay Examinations," in *Educational Measurement* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1971), 275; Coffman cites G. Meyer, "An Experimental Study of the Old and New Types of Examination," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 25 (1934): 641-661.

10. Sara Brooks Sundberg, "An Investigation of the Effects of Exam Essay Questions On Student Learning in United States History Survey Classes," *The History Teacher* 40, no. 1 (November 2006): 7, <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ht/40.1/sundberg.html>>.

11. Sundberg found a statistically significant difference in improved scores ( $P=0.017$ ). Sundberg, "Exam Essay Questions."

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Advanced Placement exams are run by the College Board, the same company that operates the infamous SAT. A good score on these exams may earn students university credit. For more on the test, see “United States History, Course Description” (New York: College Board, 2007), <[http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/ap/students/ushistory/ap-cd-ushist-0708.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/ap/students/ushistory/ap-cd-ushist-0708.pdf)>.

15. Coffman speculated that one might “identify subgroups of readers who are applying common criteria,” but implementation would be difficult even if such identification were possible. Coffman, “Essay Examinations,” 276-277.

16. Donald Pharr and Santi Buscemi, *Writing Today: Contexts and Options for the Real World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 43.

17. For a British study on the relatively poor performance of women at Oxford, see Jane Mellanby, Maryanne Martin, and John O’Doherty, “The ‘Gender Gap’ in Final Examination Results at Oxford University,” *British Journal of Psychology* 91, no. 3 (August 2000): 377-390, especially 386. Judith Judd, education editor for *The Independent*, pithily summarized Mellanby’s research findings as “men ‘bullshit’ their way through exams.” See “Secret of Mens’ [sic] Success at Oxford is Bluffing their Way Through Exams,” *The Independent* (14 August 2000), <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/secret-of-mens-success-at-oxford-is-bluffing-their-way-through-exams-710376.html>>. For a more general survey of test anxiety, see Mohse Zeidner, *Test Anxiety* (New York: Plenum, 1998), 271-277. Zeidner elsewhere found that anxiety most strongly affected girls, members of ethnic minorities, and students from poor families; see Moshe Zeidner and Marilyn Safir, “Sex, Ethnic, and Social Differences in Test Anxiety Among Israeli Adolescents,” *Journal of Genetic Psychology* 150, no 2 (June 1989): 175-185.

18. On various techniques to counter student guessing, see H. J. Rogers, “Guessing in Multiple Choice Tests,” in *Advances in Educational Research and Assessment*, ed. Geoffrey Masters and Johyn Keeves (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Pergamon, 1999), 235-243.

19. The leading companies are Kaplan and The Princeton Review. For an example of their products, see Monty Armstrong, *Cracking the AP World History Exam, 2004-2005* (New York: Princeton Review, 2004); Mark Bach, *Kaplan AP World History 2005: An Apex Learning Guide* (New York: Kaplan Publishing, 2004); etc.

20. One study of medical exams found that “evidence in support of the [prep] courses is weak or nonexistent,” and explained the success of the relevant companies through “aggressive marketing.” See William McGaghie, Stephen Downing, and Ramune Kumbilius, “What is the Impact of Commercial Test Preparation Courses on Medical Examination Performance?” *Teaching and Learning in Medicine* 16, no. 2 (April 2004): 202-211.

21. Peggy Martin, *American AP World History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 294; answer on 301.

22. These questions come from different tests. See Martin, *American AP World History*, 24, 37, 271.

23. Alexander Maxwell, History 118 “Making Europe Modern,” Victoria University, 1<sup>st</sup> semester, 2008.

24. Samuel Wineburg and Suzanne Wineburg, “Models of Wisdom in the Teaching of History,” *The History Teacher* 24, no. 4 (August 1991): 408.

25. George Orwell, “Such, Such were the Joys,” originally published in 1952, reprinted in: *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (London, U.K.: Secker and Warburg, 1968), 337.

26. Anna Clark, “A Comparative Study of History Teaching in Australia and Canada, Final Report,” Monash University (April 2008), 9, <[http://www.historyteacher.org.au/files/200804\\_HistoryTeachingReport.pdf](http://www.historyteacher.org.au/files/200804_HistoryTeachingReport.pdf)>.

27. The show has spawned 42 imitators across the world, and regularly asks basic

historical questions. Questions from an online based quiz based on the American version include “The Battle of Bunker Hill occurred during which U.S. War?” (The American Revolutionary War) and “Which of the following did the U.S. *not* gain as a result of its victory in the Spanish American War?” (U.S. Virgin Islands). Questions available at <<http://www.fox.com/areyou smarter/>>.

28. *Das weiß doch jedes Kind!*, see sample questions at the link “Trainings Quiz,” <[http://www.sat1.de/comedy\\_show/dwdjk/quiz/](http://www.sat1.de/comedy_show/dwdjk/quiz/)>.

29. *Er Du Klogere End En 10-Årig?*, see sample questions at the link “Spiller,” <[http://tv3.dk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=1499&Itemid=1634](http://tv3.dk/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=1499&Itemid=1634)>.

30. This particular incident stuck in my mind because I had covered the Black and Tan paramilitaries in my “Twentieth Century Europe” course just a few months previously. See the press release “Erin Go Bragh! Taste What’s on Tap at Ben & Jerry’s—Toast St. Patrick’s Day with New Black & Tan Ice Cream,” press release of 2 March 2006, <[http://www.benjerry.com/our\\_company/press\\_center/press/](http://www.benjerry.com/our_company/press_center/press/)>; on the hostile reaction in Ireland, see Owen Bowcott, “Ben & Jerry’s new flavour leaves a bad taste,” *The Guardian* (19 April 2006), <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/apr/19/ireland>>.

31. “Ben & Jerry’s Apologize over Ice Cream Name,” *CBCNews.ca* (21 April 2006), <<http://www.cbc.ca/money/story/2006/04/21/ben-060421.html>>.

32. Tim Dowling, “Black and Tan Ice Cream leaves the Irish Cold,” *The Guardian* (20 April 2006), <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2006/apr/20/foodanddrink.timdowling>>.

33. The slogan urged consumers to “declare war on the cold front!” The modern German “democratic” tricolour flag in the background of the advertisement rules out the possibility of genuine neo-Nazi sentiment. See Leslie Ware, *Selling it: The Incredible Shrinking Package and Other Marvels of Modern Marketing* (New York: Norton, 2002), 20.

34. David Trask, “Benchmarks for Professional Development in Teaching of History as a Discipline,” AHA Website, <<http://www.historians.org/teaching/policy/benchmarks.htm>>.

35. S. G. Grant, “When an ‘A’ isn’t enough: Analyzing the New York State Global History Exam,” *Educational Policy Analysis Archives* 9, no. 39 (October 2001): 6.

36. Martin Ashley, *Improving Teaching and Learning in the Humanities* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 1999), 21.

37. Students of St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, as quizzed by Political Science professor Guhlan Haniff. Although bashing American ignorance is popular internationally, it is worth observing that similar studies reveal similar ignorance elsewhere in the world. A 2005 poll found that 40% of Japanese university students could not find Iraq on map, even though Japanese soldiers were then stationed there. In 2006, similarly, the *Khronika Turkmenistana* [Turkmenistan Chronicle] lamented that only 1 secondary student in 98 had read Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*. See Jayme Klein, “Students Lack Basic War Knowledge,” *University Chronicle* (6 December 2007), <<http://media.www.universitychronicle.com/media/storage/paper231/news/2007/12/06/News/Students.Lack.Basic.War.Knowledge-3137261.shtml>>; “40 percent of Japanese University Students Cannot find Iraq on a Map” (22 February 2005), <<http://www.mywire.com/pubs/AFP/2005/02/22/732172?extID=10037&oliID=229>>. TIHR, “Pushkin and Cheburek,” *Khronika Turmenistana* (9 August 2006), <[http://www.chrono-tm.org/?025504253600000000000000000000011000000](http://www.chrono-tm.org/?0255042536000000000000011000000)>.

38. Anthony Pattiz, “Stimulation through Simulation: Creating an Excellent Adventure as Students have a Blast with the Past,” *World History Connected* 5, no. 1 (October 2007), <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/whc/5.1/pattiz.html>>.

39. To his credit, Yarema concedes that “a movie may say more about an era in which the film was made than the time period it purports to show.” Alan Yarema, “A Decade of Debate: Improving Content and Interest in History Education,” *The History Teacher* 35, no. 3 (May 2002): 12.

