



History 7042
Specimen Question Paper 1D (A-level)
Question 01 Student 1
Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0

Specimen answer plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Paper 1D (A-level): Specimen question paper

01 Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to divisions between Crown and Parliament in the early Stuart period.

[30 marks]

Student response

Extract A argues that the Political Nation should not have felt threatened by James's statement that 'monarchy is the supremest thing on earth'. In support of this when James declared this in his speech of March 1610 in the second half of the same speech James made clear that he understood the limits of his power by the traditions of the English unwritten constitution. James had, in the first part of his speech, strongly outlined the theoretical absolutism of his position of King of England but James did seek to reassure the Political Nation in the second half of the speech that he recognised their key role in ruling with him and thus, as Extract A argues, he 'acted within the common law and framework of the constitution' and that MPs had some control over the monarch. Extract A refers to monopolists requiring a legal basis and this can be seen in the Monopoly Act of 1624 that had sought to control even Buckingham, James's favourite and his exploitation of monopolies for his family. Extract A also argues that the 'personal exercise of royal power had long been regularised' and this can be seen in the accepted functions of the Privy Council but the extent that personal royal power had actually been 'regularised' is not that clear in the context of the functioning of Personal Monarchy in early modern England. Yet Extract A also points out that views of the constitution were open to interpretation and it is clear that towards the end of James's reign MPs such as Coke were becoming increasingly concerned about the exploitation of the prerogative leading to his attempts to codify the Common Law and, under Charles I, MPs use of the Three Resolutions. The 1621-22 dispute over the Commons Protestation under James I strongly shows that both the Crown and many in Parliament could have very different views of the constitution, in that specific case the issues of free speech and the extent of the prerogative in relation to foreign policy. What the 1624 Parliament showed, however, is that while Extract A points out that views could be different both James and the majority of the Political Nation recognised they had a vested interest in not letting any division between them getting out of control.

Extract B argues that it is 'difficult' to explain 'why distrust developed between Crown and parliament'. It claims that James's view of Divine Right were shared by MPs in general terms. It is indeed clear, as Extract B argues, that the Political Nation had a vested interest in accepted the doctrine of Divine Right in general terms as it underpinned the contemporary concept of the 'great chain of being' and thereby their own elevated position in the political hierarchy above the majority of the people. Extract B argues that 'religion and money were to become the most explosive issues of the next reign' and the immediate Crown-Parliament disputes in 1625 under Charles I over tonnage and poundage and the Arminian cleric Montagu strongly support this view. For Russell in Extract B it was 'money' not 'James' tendency to theorise' that 'caused most ill feeling between the King and his parliaments'. This can clearly be seen in 1610 with the Great Contract or concern over monopolies in 1621. At root of this was James's own extravagance

which made MPs even more reluctant to vote subsidies. It could be argued, however, that while money was a source of contention this, despite what Extract B argues, was also rooted in James's Divine Right as his exploitation of his prerogative to raise income, for example, the division between Crown and Parliament over Impositions that was an issue on 1606, 1610 and 1614.

Extract C argues that there was dispute over the interpretation of the nature and limits of the prerogative. This is clear across both the reigns of James and Charles from Shirley's Case of 1604 to Hampden's Case of 1637. Extract C also indicates that MPs denied the Crown had the 'prerogative right to take any action outside the law' and part of the questioning of Ship Money was the extent of 'emergency' claimed by the Crown after the treaties of Susa and Madrid. As Extract C argues men like Lord Saye and Sele or Pym doubted the motives of Charles, their distrust of his actions with regard to fiscal feudalism shaped by his support for the enforcement of anti-Calvinist Arminianism which for them was a means to introduce Catholicism and thereby absolutism. Extract C also argues that the King believed that MPs were 'acting in a merely negative and obstructive way' and this can clearly be seen in the wording of Charles' Declaration of 1629 after he had dissolved Parliament where he focused on the actions of a few evil men who believed subverted the well-meaning majority. Hill's value judgement that it was the MPs who 'were quite correct' is probably more a reflection of his Marxist interpretation of a 'Century of Revolution' favouring an anti-Crown view when in fact the unwritten nature of the constitution meant that the actual extent of the prerogative could not really be determined. Extract C also does not make the distinction between the approaches of James and Charles. James I was much more careful in his claims for his prerogative and balanced the theoretical scope of his powers by a public recognition of the scope of parliamentary privilege.

Commentary – Level 5

This response shows a very good understanding of the interpretations of all three extracts. It is able to isolate the main point made by each author but also the sub-sections of their arguments. There is direct support and evaluation of the weaknesses of each interpretation through very precisely selected contextual knowledge that is deployed in a convincing manner.